

Analysis of How Zoning Policies with A Focus on Achieving Equitable Access to Quality Education through New Student Enrollment Strategies



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ABSTRACT: The issue of education equity has always been a problem of education in Indonesia. The government policy on the zoning system for new student admissions is one of the solutions offered to support the education equity program. The implementation of the zoning system policy has an impact on improving the quality of schools and students because the registration path for students by the provisions of the domicile zoning area determined by the local government. This study analysis raises the topic of improving the quality of schools and learners to encourage education equity through the implementation of the zoning system for new student admissions. The purpose of this analysis is to examine the implementation of school and learner quality management as a form of support for equal access to education, which is one of the objectives of the government's policy on the zoning system for new learners. A descriptive qualitative approach through a literature study traced in official documents, reference books, websites, government policies, and journals related to the research topic is used in this study. The results of the study on the above topic can be concluded that the new learner admission zoning system policy encourages the improvement of the quality of schools and learners through the quality of services, teacher competence, availability of facilities and infrastructure, and participation of education stakeholders including the government by adhering to the principles of quality assurance for equitable, objective, transparent, and fair education.

KEYWORDS: Quality, School, Students, Equity, Zoning System

INTRODUCTION

One of the indicators of a prosperous nation can be judged by the right of its citizens to obtain proper education. A developed country, to ensure the welfare of its citizens, can be measured by quality, fair and equitable education outcomes. The mandate of the opening of the UUD 1945 is to educate the nation's life. In fact, development is only focused on the physical development sector. If observed, the basis for the success of developed countries is to prioritize the education sector in every plan to build and develop their country. Indonesia has declared education to be the right of every citizen. This is stated in Article 31 paragraph (1) of the UUD 1945 (the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia), which states that every citizen has the right to education.

The state guarantees and regulates its citizens to obtain the right to education in order to advance the general welfare and intellectual life of the nation. The state through the government seeks and organizes an education system that is regulated in policy. (The constitution of the Republic of Indonesia) Undang-undang No 20 of 2003 confirms that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state. Educational institutions, in this case, schools play a major role in achieving the objectives of the law by providing superior quality education. In addition, the law also states that stakeholders in the national education system are students, educators, and education personnel.

At the beginning of each academic year, primary and secondary education institutions carry out admission activities objectively, transparently, accountably, nondiscriminatorily and equitably. The government then issued a zoning system policy for new student admissions in 2017. This zoning system policy is strengthened through Permendikbud Number 1 of 2021 (regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia) by carrying out the spirit of comprehensive school reform through four channels, namely zoning, affirmation, parental transfer, and achievement channels. The implementation of the zoning system is expected to be one of the strategies to accelerate equal distribution of quality education. In addition, the implementation of the zoning system policy is the government's response to various issues such as the quality selection of new student candidates and school favouritism (Kemdikbud.go.id., 2022).

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In formal education, the initial stage in participating in an education is the admission of new students. Learners are pupils or students who will take part in the education or learning process. Learner admissions are expected to run objectively, transparently and not discriminate against prospective new students so that education services can be enjoyed by every group of society equally. Therefore, the government's effort in equalizing education is the issuance of rules in the admission of students through the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation number 1 of 2021 concerning Acceptance of New Learners in Kindergartens, Elementary Schools, Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, and Vocational High Schools. Schools organized by the government must accept students with the closest distance radius from the school with a minimum of 50% of the total number of prospective students accepted.

The zoning system policy is the government's concern in an effort to ensure equitable access to services and quality of education still faces various problems in its implementation. Some parents still complain that their children's test scores are not optimal because they do not have the opportunity to enter favorite schools. In addition, the implementation of the zoning system creates polemics for teachers who teach in favorite schools. Teachers who are used to teaching in favorite schools with students who have above-average academic abilities need to change their teaching strategies and methods because of the diverse abilities of students. The implementation of the zoning system also has an impact on school quality because there is no longer the term favorite school (Widyastuti. 2020).

Problems related to the zoning system policy are very diverse, including: inadequate classroom capacity, zoning area equalization, verification of achievement pathways, and population migration that is difficult to control. The challenge is how to improve the quality of schools and students in response to the government's policy on the zoning system. The consequence is to improve the quality of education comprehensively. Thus, this analysis examines the implementation of school and learner quality to support equitable access to education, which is one of the objectives of the government's policy on the zoning system for new learners. The zoning system policy initiated by the government can have implications for the preparation of schools that have the same and equal quality.

METHOD

A qualitative methodology is applied to this study. The method used in this analysis is a qualitative method, this method was chosen because it aims to determine how to search, collect, process, and analyze data from the results of the analysis descriptively. The Data was taken from literature studies traced in official documents, reference books, websites, government policies and journals relevant to the topic of study. The purpose of document or text studies is to assess the readability of a text, or to determine the level of achievement of understanding of certain topics from a text. In this study, the author tries to analyze how the implementation of the zoning system policy in education is. The data taken in this study comes from various sources and research results related to the topic being analyzed. Data were collected through manual or digital reference searches. In advance of the data selection, the data were and analyzed the data source taken is the zoning system policy for new student admissions that has an impact on the implementation of improving the quality of schools and students. In addition, The study in this analysis also includes examples of zoning system implementation in several regions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term zoning refers to the division of an area into several parts. The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defines zoning as the division or division of an area into several parts, according to the function and purpose of management, zoning. If we relate it to government policy, the zoning system has implications for preparing schools that are equal and of equal quality rather than classifying schools using favorite or superior labels. Permendiknas Number 17 of 2017 concerning the admission of new students, then its amendment with Permendiknas Number 14 of 2018, Number 51 of 2018, Number 20 of 2019, Number 44 of 2019, and the last amendment through Permendikbud Number 1 of 2021. The kemdikbud.go.id page reports that, with the issuance of Permendikbud Number 1 of 2021, the zoning route is given a quota of 50 percent of the school's capacity, 15 percent affirmation, and a maximum of 5 percent parental transfer route and the rest can be used as an achievement route.

Apart from aiming for equitable distribution and access to quality education, the zoning system policy also ensures the availability and readiness of education units, especially public schools, to provide quality education services. In practice, the zoning system policy has encountered many obstacles in its implementation. The PPDB in 2019 showed that students with below-average economic status entered low-quality schools because quality private schools were expensive and many new learners competed to enter government-subsidized public schools (Kasiati, et al, 2019). Prospective new learners also have to compete in academic scores, the ever-changing zoning percentage quota, and selection using age limits. The kompas.com page (2019) notes that parents still complain about the difficulty of getting the school they want, because restrictions on student quotas outside the zoning radius even eliminate students with high academic results failing to enter superior schools. Many parents and prospective new students desperately hope that this policy change provides equal opportunities to attend public schools subsidized by the government. The impact of the implementation of the zoning system in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is good because it triggers innovation, easy access to education, and efficiency in time and transportation costs. The bad impact is that schools cannot control inputs that

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affect the teaching and learning process (Munadi, et al, 2020). Implementation of the zoning system policy at Jati Utara Elementary School, Padang Timur, Padang City by parents of students is considered to make it difficult for prospective students to continue their schooling, parents and students experience confusion due to the lack of socialization about the zoning system, quota restrictions, and schools that are in accordance with the zone sometimes do not match the child's wishes so that it affects the child's enthusiasm for learning (Anisha, et al, 2020). The implementation of the zoning policy in DKI Jakarta DKI Jakarta Governor Regulation Number 21 of 2022 published on April 28, 2022 the zoning system is divided into three priorities. The first priority zoning is for prospective students who live in Rukun Tetangga (RT). The second is for prospective students in the neighbourhood around the school based on mapping. Third, it is given to prospective students whose domicile is the same or close to the school's urban village. In practice, these three zoning priorities have not been practiced optimally (Agne, 2023).

Another issue related to the implementation of the zoning system is that the increasing student achievement has not been matched by the capacity of the school of choice. For example, SMPN 107 has a limited capacity so that many prospective new students cannot register at the school. The community then protested because their human rights in the freedom to choose education were not fulfilled (Kasiati, et al., 219). JPPI National Coordinator Ubaid Matraji said that the implementation of zoning so far has not had an impact on equitable distribution of education quality and school quality. The implementation of zoning every year has the potential to invite polemics, especially if it is not accompanied by other efforts related to school quality that are more comprehensive. There are several points that need to be criticized, namely: the implementation of zoning has not yet answered the problems of school quality and quality, teacher competence needs to be improved, school infrastructure needs to be prepared, an adequate education budget, political will of stakeholders, transparency and accountability of new student admissions, and the level of participation of school residents which is still considered low (Zaman, 2019).

One of the mandates of the zoning system policy is to ensure equitable access and quality of education in each zone or area that is determined to be close to where students live. The implementation of this zoning system policy is that public schools are required to accept prospective students who live in the closest zone radius from the school at least 50% of the total number of students accepted. However, the practice has not been as expected. One of the abuses that often occurs in the zoning system for new student admissions in 2023 is prospective students who move their Family Card (KK) to a domicile that is closer to the public school of their choice. This initiative usually comes from parents who want their children to be accepted at favorite schools (Ombudsman.go.id., 2023). The West Java Provincial Government even canceled the names of 4,791 students who were suspected of cheating by manipulating data in the admission of new students for senior high school (Bempah and Kuwado, 2023).

Favorite schools are generally expensive so the competition for access to education is mostly only a competition for people with middle to upper-economic backgrounds. This indirectly closes off access to educational opportunities for the lower-middle economic class due to financial constraints. The desire to gain knowledge at school (Nora, 2022). There is another opinion that zoning policies can reduce school quality. Schools cannot screen outstanding students because this system prioritizes the area of residence over student achievement. In addition, the zoning system is considered to weaken the motivation of schools to compete to become an excellent school with a favorite label because in the zoning policy, every school is considered the same (Mareta, et al., 2021).

The cheating practices range (are observed) from falsifying certificates of inability, falsifying various championship certificates for the achievement pathway, and manipulating population data. The complaint that often arises is that there are students who are accepted at a school even though their home distance is farther than students who are not accepted. Admission of students with the zoning system contains a gap of injustice for parents who want to enroll their children in school. The implementation of the zoning system is also still poorly socialized to parents and prospective new students and there is still a lack of in-depth studies related to other aspects such as population data, school distance and school access from each region and residence. Researchers from Al Azhar University Indonesia quoted by Iman Herdiana on the bandungbergerak.id page revealed the need to improve the zoning system in PPDB starting from equalizing the quality of education through variables of teacher qualifications and distribution, curriculum, facilities, and educational infrastructure. The availability of facilities and infrastructure needs to be designed based on zoning. The distribution of teachers also needs to consider the quantity, ratio of teachers and students to be equitable. The government needs to set qualification standards for teacher needs in each region. It is hoped that competent teachers will no longer be centered in big-city flagship schools (Herdiana, 2023).

The current problems of education in Indonesia include the quality of education, education equity and education management. The polemic over the implementation of the zoning system policy in accordance with Permendikbud Number 1 of 2021 proves that it is still very clear and real that there is a gap in the quality of education in almost every region in Indonesia. The zoning system is a new student admission system that is enforced by determining zoning by the local government and schools are required to accept prospective students who live in the nearest radius with a certain percentage of the total number of students to be accepted. The quality of education is the basis for strengthening the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects that will form an adaptive national character. Therefore, the government has the responsibility to organize the education process for its citizens fairly

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and equitably. One of them is to make improvements to the quality assurance system through collaboration with various education stakeholders.

Quality improvement involves all elements of organizational processes, practices, systems, methodologies, and all parties involved (Stanciu in Khurniawan, et al, 2020). The main purpose of improvement is to create a climate in the organization where all resources are used creatively and efficiently to improve performance and enhance performance. It is concerned with techniques and planned actions taken to achieve, maintain and improve quality. Education quality is critical since it is considered that a quality education system may develop a workforce with superior personal traits such as being inventive, hardworking, skilled, competitive, resilient, and creative (Mahmood, et al, 2020). Integrated quality schools can be strengthened with several pillars of change. Each pillar must be realized in schools to achieve a culture of quality. To achieve a culture of high-quality education, educational institutions need to make long-term efforts.

The zoning system policy for new student admissions provides an opportunity for each school to provide the best to its citizens. This policy needs to be balanced with the education quality zoning system by preparing quality, equitable and fair education services in an area. Education quality zoning requires medium- and long-term program schemes to prepare schools to have relatively the same quality in a certain zone or area with teacher competencies, curriculum, and learning infrastructure facilities that provide space for students to develop and achieve. Education Quality Zones are created based on mapping that is guided by the National Education Standards (SNP) in accreditation. Synchronizing these two perspectives will produce schools that meet the national standards of education in each region that are ready to accept and serve the various characteristics of students to produce competent graduates at every type and level of education throughout Indonesia (Karmila, et al., 2019).

The quality of education is a key factor to improve and strengthen competitive advantage. Access to education and the quality of education should be considered as interdependent and inseparable needs and rights. Lack of education is a basic cause of poverty. Crosby (1979) defines quality as conformity to needs, while Juran and Gryna (1980) define quality as fitness for use. Deming (1986) defines quality as a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and by the market. These various definitions point more towards quality in the process. The way to improve school quality is to provide quality services to customers, especially students, parents, and to provide positive feedback for the school.

The main focus of education management is the quality of the learning and education system rather than concentrating on zoning school locations (Mahpudin, 2020). The ability to integrate quality principles into education governance, and improve school quality can be done by optimizing processes, improving products and services, and comprehensively promoting customer (parents and students) satisfaction. Based on the principles of quality assurance, there are several implementation steps to improve the quality of schools and students.

- 1) **Customer Focus:** customers in this case are parents of learners and prospective learners. Schools are involved in collecting feedback from parents, mapping, and using the information to improve educational products and services. By identifying students and parents as the main customers, schools can provide satisfactory services including in the community, school committee, and government (Effendi, 2017). On the other hand, at the same time external factors such as politics, economics and culture strongly influence national education, so education requires standardization to win the competition and continuous quality improvement.
- 2) **Continuous Improvement:** quality assurance encourages a culture of continuous improvement throughout the organization. It motivates teachers to actively participate in identifying opportunities for improvement, efficiency and implementing incremental improvements in processes, products and services. Quality assurance is a philosophy of participatory management. Without an educational process, schools will not gain the support of parents and learners.
- 3) **Employee Involvement:** integrated quality management recognizes the importance of involving teachers at all levels to take the initiative in improving quality. This fosters a collaborative and empowered work environment, where teachers are encouraged to contribute ideas, make decisions and take over responsibility for quality-related activities. Involvement presupposes that teachers have a work ethic, are compliant with school policies, have good relationships with co-workers and are oriented towards student and parent satisfaction.
- 4) **Process-Oriented Approach:** quality assurance focuses on managing and improving processes. This approach involves mapping, analyzing and optimizing workflows to improve efficiency, effectiveness and consistency. It is believed that student achievement will be better if principals, teachers and school stakeholders work together to identify the sources of student success. In addition, principals should communicate freely with teachers and stakeholders. Principals need to share achievement information, communicate the vision, mission, goals and ongoing processes to teachers, parents, students and the community.
- 5) **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** improving quality relies on collecting and analyzing relevant data to support decision-making. The use of facts and figures is essential for identifying areas for improvement, measuring performance and monitoring progress towards quality goals. By collecting and analyzing data, schools are able to know where the institution stands and where it wants to go. The evaluation process generates information that leads to an overall evaluation of quality and improvement. This evaluation can then be used to create a set of agreed and targeted actions that, in turn, drive continuous quality improvement.

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- 6) **Supplier Relationships:** improving quality recognizes the importance of strong relationships with customers. Quality assurance emphasizes collaboration, communication, and mutually beneficial partnerships to ensure the quality of new learner inputs and optimize the overall value chain. It is said that if one part of the system is not working then the whole system cannot work properly. All parts of educational activities must be interconnected. School stakeholders as quality control keep the focus on institutional improvement, time, budget and teacher competency development.
- 7) **Leadership Commitment:** Implementing the zoning system policy requires leaders who are committed to supporting and promoting quality principles. Leaders serve as role models, set clear quality goals, provide the necessary resources and foster a culture that prioritizes continuous improvement and parent and learner satisfaction. The school principal is an educational leader who influences quality improvement through role modelling and setting the direction of school policies.
- 8) **Integrated System:** improving teachers' skills and creativity requires a keen will, pedagogical and psychological knowledge, deep subject knowledge, literacy and reasoning. There is also a special responsibility for the moral character, intellectual potential and professionalism of teachers. Teachers are required to develop and implement educational programs, develop teaching methods, as well as use teaching disciplines, courses, modules, be creative and apply an integrated approach in the classroom.

The zoning system as a policy creates equality between schools in their roles and duties so that all schools in Indonesia are all the same and equal there is no difference between favorite schools and ordinary schools. The principle of equity provides access for each region to experience educational services with a decent number of students so that the government will be easier in distributing educational facilities and infrastructure. In addition, education personnel must also be professional in facing this new policy so that professional education personnel also improve the quality of the education unit. The public perception of the superior school predicate is changed, this perception can be changed if there is an equal distribution of educational facilities & infrastructure, school quality, and curriculum (Widyastuti, 2020).

Increasing access to education is expected to encourage an increase in the participation rate of the population at school age who receive education. Completing access to education is a top priority in education development in Indonesia. The zoning policy can also improve the quality of schools because this policy regulates the choice of each student directly which can increase the choice of the school and improve its quality because it is chosen by people who have close access from home to the school. Equity in providing access to education, namely in the form of school infrastructure and facilities, learning methods, quality and distribution of teachers. Schools have the same infrastructure and school facilities, and the same quality and distribution of teachers. However, the facts found in the field are different. In fact, the community itself is able to differentiate between one school and another in terms of the quality of education.

RECOMMENDATION

All relevant parties mentioned in improving the quality of schools and learners take part of the whole education system. If parents and learners are identified as customers of education, we should try to satisfy them by knowing what they really want. Customers should make informed decisions in determining what they want, taking into account the cost, quality and their expectations of education. This adapted version of Deming is expected to encourage all school stakeholders to improve school quality (Hasan, et al, 2022).

- 1) Creating and maintaining goals to improve services to students and schools. The goal is to create the highest quality students who are able to compete in the world of work and have a role in society. Teachers have a central role in improving student achievement and graduate quality. The planning process entails the creation and preparation of a project plan, as well as the allocation of resources. Implementation and evaluation of activities in accordance with the plan and evaluation of results. Schools must plan carefully to avoid internal and external conflicts. Therefore, risk mitigation is the first step in the planning process to improve school quality.
- 2) School management should be aware of the challenges, take responsibility and apply the transformative leadership model. Building communication and collaboration with the school monitoring team (school committee) is a good step so that the school remains open to any input to improve itself or develop aspects of teaching and learning.
- 3) Schools focus on the learning process, not the assessment of students. Successful schools need to provide students with the necessary resources and support to achieve their academic and social goals. Schools must create maximum performance through learning experiences that motivate creativity and experimentation.
- 4) Planning requires a shared understanding of goals and objectives. Cooperation is the key to achieving school success. Planning is an important part of any organization and can help ensure that programs are organized efficiently and effectively. Participation in various trainings is one way to improve quality.
- 5) Continuous system improvement to enhance services for students and education stakeholders in order to improve the quality and productivity of education. By carefully planning and managing our resources, we can ensure that goals are achieved

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efficiently and effectively. It is impossible to separate the existence of a program in a school from the people who create and administer it.

- 6) Periodically conduct supervision to assist teachers and school staff in using creative materials and methods. The principal takes into account all school stakeholders in developing the school's vision, mission and goals. Parents feel their input is very important in developing programs to improve student achievement at school. The school holds joint meetings with several parties, including the principal, teachers, staff, committees, and parents. In order to improve student achievement while satisfying customers, the school conducts various activities. These activities are designed to stay focused on student achievement and ensure customer satisfaction.
- 7) Transformation of the collegial leadership style to improve quality and an enjoyable learning climate. A strong education and self-improvement program for everyone can be realized by providing opportunities for teachers to improve their competencies. Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to improve their quality. Everyone involved in education works to transform.

CONCLUSION

The concept of zoning in principle has a good purpose. The implementation of the zoning system not only aims to equalize the quality of education, but also encourages the active participation of schools, parents and students to realize the quality of education that is objective, transparent and equitable. The implementation of the zoning system in Indonesia requires improvement in the implementation at the local level. The implementation of the zoning system policy also needs to ensure the fulfillment of competent teaching and education personnel supported by adequate infrastructure and facilities that can be provided and shared by each education unit in the designated area or zone. The zoning system policy is expected to control and guarantee the quality of graduates and supervise the process and learning outcomes comparatively and competitively in the education service area or zone measurably and sustainably. As a policy, the implementation of the zoning system should be an action guide, directing school activities with the community and government to achieve comprehensive quality goals.

In the context of regional development, education should be able to respond well to the development demands and aspirations of the communities it serves. Therefore, the zoning system is useful for accelerating equitable, quality and equitable education development as a synergy and integration of education development services and building a sustainable education management strategy at every type and level of education. To develop education in the future, strategic steps are needed to integrate implementation policies to encourage the acceleration of equitable distribution of quality and equitable education according to development priorities in regional/regional zones. The local governments have the responsibility to ensure adequate education infrastructure for their citizens, and this effort should not only depend on zoning policies. The focus should be more on collaborative efforts between central and local governments to ensure equitable access to quality education across the country, whether through infrastructure improvements, educator support or holistic education policy reforms.

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