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The Implementation of Student Admission Based on Zoning in Indonesia : Problems, Challenges, and Solutions

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the problems that arise when implementing zoning as a method of student admission and find possible solutions. This study used the systematic literature review method with a qualitative approach. The data collection method used was documentation, namely examining documents in the form of books, literature, and scientific journals related to the topics written in this journal. Data was collected from reviewing the official website of eric.gov, Sinta, Scopus, and Garuda. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The result of the study showed some of the main problems in implementing zoning-based admissions. These include the problem of establishing fair and equitable zoning boundaries, enrollment procedures that often need to be more transparent, the accumulation of students in good schools in the zone, and the need for more awareness and active participation from parents. Several solutions can be considered to address these issues. Such as increased investment in education infrastructure development by the government and the implementation of a strict monitoring system for the admission process based on zoning, and the government also needs to strengthen schools in vulnerable zone areas with various quality and facility improvement programs. This policy will help provide a more inclusive and high-quality education for all students by analyzing and addressing the issues that arise when implementing zoning-based admissions.

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Introduction

Zoning-based student admissions in Indonesia refer to the policy or system used in determining the admission of new students to schools by prioritizing the area or zone where students live (Purwanti et al., 2019). Zoning-based enrollment is a policy many countries and regions adopt to ensure fairer and more equitable access to education (Prasetya & Pribadi, 2021). In the Indonesian context, the policy was introduced through Permendikbud No. 14/2018 on the Admission of New Learners (PPDB) (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 20, 2003). Every learner is given priority to enter schools located in the zone or area where they live.

Implementing zoning-based admissions aims to create more equitable access to education (Afiefa & Liyanawati, 2023) and reduce disparities between urban and rural areas and between rich and poor areas (Risna et al., 2020). By following the zoning system, learners can enter schools close to where they live and have an equal opportunity to get a proper education. In zoning-based student admissions, local governments or educational institutions set criteria such as residential addresses or zone boundaries (Syusilayarni et al., 2021). Prospective students are given priority admission to schools in their residential zone (Purwanti et al., 2018). Usually, these zones are divided based on geographical boundaries

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(Raharjo et al., 2020), such as subdistricts, neighborhoods, or the distance from the learner's home to the school.

Although the goal is good, implementing zoning-based student admissions must be balanced with several problems that must be overcome. In analyzing the problems of implementing zoning-based student admissions, other aspects such as social justice (Aristo & Meo, 2020), transportation availability (Rachmadhany et al., 2021), and socioeconomic inequality should also be considered. All of these factors can affect the success of zoning policy implementation, and the right solutions must be found to overcome the problems that arise. It is essential to analyze the problematic implementation of student admissions based on zoning. The novelty of this research from other studies is that it considers alternative policies or to improve the zoning admission system. It also explores the extent to which the zoning admission policy can achieve the goals of inclusiveness and equity in the education system.

By comprehensively analyzing the problematic implementation of zoning-based student admissions, the government and education stakeholders can identify existing problems and take the necessary solutions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the policy. This study aims to analyze some problems in implementing the zoning system and possible solutions.

Research Method

This study used the systematic literature review method with a qualitative approach. This method was chosen to determine how to search, collect, process, and analyze data from the research results. The research approach was descriptive research with a document/text study approach. The purpose of a document or text study is to examine the level of readability of a text or to determine the level of achievement of understanding specific topics from a text (Melfianora, 2019). In this study, researchers tried to examine how the problematic implementation of the zoning system policy in education and the solutions that might be applied.

The data collection method used was documentation, namely examining documents in the form of books, literature, and scientific journals related to the topics written in this journal. The data in this study come from various research sources from various articles and research results related to the case under study. Data was collected from reviewing the official website of eric.gov, Sinta, Scopus, and Garuda. Then, data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques.

Results and Discussion

Education equity implemented in various regions of Indonesia has various obstacles. These problems are caused by remote rural areas and far from urban areas accessing education services that still need to be distributed (Purwanto, 2006). It shows limitations and injustices (Aristo & Meo, 2020) caused by the uneven accessibility of education services, limited educators, inadequate regional infrastructure, road infrastructure, and transportation facilities that are still not fulfilled.

According to (Aristo, 2019), education equality is constrained and poorly implemented due to the lack of socialization and government attention to educational conditions in distant areas, namely in rural, inland, and border areas. Meanwhile, according to (Castelli et al., 2012), equality is one of the topics identified to study indicators of the scholastic system and other aspects, including issues of inclusion, selectivity, guarantees of proper study, and equal opportunities.

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When viewed from its implementation, education equity is divided into two of the most important educational categories: learning or schooling opportunities and equitable access (Aristo & Meo, 2020). Learning opportunities or schooling is the level of participation of the population at a certain age in getting an education at a certain level. The higher the percentage who get the opportunity to participate in education, the better the implementation of education equity. Second is access to education services to facilitate and facilitate educational activities or operations; adequate access to services is needed.

In its implementation, the school zoning system policy has drawn many pros and cons in various regions (Syakarofath et al., 2020); in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), hundreds of parents held demonstrations at the NTT DPRD office and the NTT Education Office, protesting the PPDB zoning system which caused their children not to be accepted into public schools. Even though the distance between their residence and public schools is very close. A similar action occurred in Tangerang on July 9, 2018, where hundreds of parents held an action in front of SMP Negeri 23 Tangerang. The action became even more heated when the Head of the Tangerang City Education and Culture Office, Abduh Surahman, only had a solution to enroll in a private school first for one year, then move through a mutation mechanism, not the PPDB system (Aristo & Meo, 2020).

Based on the implementation of the zoning system policy in the various regions described, implementing the zoning system can involve several challenges. Here are some common challenges that may be faced, along with possible solutions. More details can be seen in the Table. 1.

1) School Quality Imbalance

One problem that often arises in implementing zoning-based student admissions is the imbalance of school quality in different regions (Andina, 2017). Some areas may have low-quality schools, while others have high-quality ones (Handoyo & Zulkarnaen, 2019). This causes a gap in access to education for students. The solution is that government action is needed to improve the quality of schools in less developed areas. Infrastructure improvements, curriculum development, and teacher training can be the first steps in addressing this imbalance (Widyaningtyas et al., 2021). In addition, it is necessary to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of education in each region (Rasinan et al., 2021), to identify problems and take appropriate action.

2) Population Mobility

Another problem often faced in implementing zoning-based student admissions is population mobility. Many families move from one region to another due to economic, work, or other reasons (Prasetya & Pribadi, 2021). It can cause a mismatch between the learner's residential address and the designated school zone. In overcoming the problem of population mobility, the government can consider several solutions. One of them is to consider the address of both parents or guardians of students as a consideration in admitting students (Mustari et al., 2021). In addition, creating a mechanism for applying for school zone changes with clear and transparent procedures (Widyastuti, 2020) can also help overcome this problem.

3) Limited School Capacity

Implementing zoning-based enrollment can also face challenges in terms of limited school capacity (Sari et al., 2021). In some areas, especially urban areas, more than available schools may be required to accommodate all learners within a zone. Solution: The government needs to increase school capacity in high-demand areas (Nurlailiyah, 2019). This can be done through constructing new schools, optimal use of existing educational facilities, or cooperation with the private sector to establish new schools. In

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addition, adjusting the school travel distance system can also be considered to ensure students are manageable.

4) The Role of Parents and Communities

The successful implementation of zoning-based enrollment also relies heavily on the active role of parents and communities in supporting the system (Safitri & Istiyono, 2022). A challenge that may arise is the need for more understanding and participation of parents in recognizing the importance of zoning and being satisfied with the schools determined by the system. Solution: The government needs to effectively socialize with the community about the benefits and objectives of zoning-based admissions. Active involvement of parents in the decision-making process and open communication between schools, parents, and communities can help strengthen understanding and support for the system (Handani & Frinaldi, 2020).

5) Data and Technology Management

Implementing a zoning system requires good data management and adequate technological infrastructure to process and monitor related information (Widyastuti, 2020). This challenge includes a reliable information system, easy accessibility, and guaranteed data security (Kosasih et al., 2023). The solution is to develop effective information systems, involve information technology experts, and ensure proper privacy policies to protect data.

Table 1. Challenges and Solutions for Zoning System Implementation

Challenges	Solutions	
School Quality	Improved school quality in less developed areas	
Imbalance		
Population Mobility	Taking into account the addresses of both parents or guardians of	
	students and creating a mechanism for applying for school zone	
	changes with clear and transparent procedures.	
Limited School	The government needs to work on increasing the capacity of schools	
Capacity	in high-demand areas and regulating the school travel distance	
	system.	
The Role of Parents	Need to conduct effective socialization to the community about the	
and Communities	benefits and objectives of zoning-based student admissions.	
Data and Technology	Development of effective information systems, involving	
Management	information technology experts, and ensuring appropriate privacy	
	policies are in place to protect data.	

A policy is expected to solve existing problems to eliminate or minimize a problem in a region or country. However, although policies are steps or ways to avoid problems, there are still obstacles to implementing these policies (Triana, 2023). There are positive and negative impacts that arise from various policies implemented. The benefits of positive impacts felt from this zoning system school policy include the following.

1) Equalizing Access to Education

Zoning can reduce the education access gap (Raharjo et al., 2021), between urban and rural areas and between rich and poor areas (Anwar, 2022). By prioritizing learners by area of residence, each area has schools that serve the local population, ensuring that every child has fair and equal access to quality education.

2) Reduce Transportation Burden

By organizing admissions based on zoning, schools near where learners live are more likely to be occupied (Chotimah et al., 2023). This can reduce the transportation burden for learners, saving time and money previously required to travel to distant schools.

3) Increasing Parental Involvement

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With the zoning system, parents tend to be more involved in their children's school life (Apriyanti & Trihantoyo, 2022). They have the opportunity to interact with other parents who have children in the same school. This can encourage parents' participation in school activities and committees and improve school and family relationships.

4) Strengthening Local Communities

Admission of learners based on zoning can strengthen local community ties. With learners coming from the surrounding area, the school becomes the center of the local community's social life (Apriyanti & Trihantoyo, 2022). This can strengthen identity and a sense of belonging to the school, encouraging collaboration between schools, parents, and communities to improve education quality.

5) Reducing Socioeconomic Inequality

In zoning-based admissions, all learners have an equal opportunity to access quality schools near their homes (Riyanti et al., 2020). It can reduce socioeconomic inequality in education (Karmila et al., 2020), as better opportunities are no longer available only to those who can afford to choose or pay for better schools.

6) Reducing Commercialization Practices

With the zoning system, the practice of commercialization of education can be suppressed (Aswat, 2020). Parents no longer have to compete to get their children into the best schools by paying high enrollment fees. This helps ensure that education is the right of every child and not just privatized for those who can afford it.

The negative impacts that may arise from the admission of students based on zoning are as follows.

1) School Quality Imbalance

Implementing zoning may lead to an imbalance in the quality of schools in different regions (Andina, 2017). Some areas may have low-quality schools, while other areas have high-quality schools. This can result in inequality in educational opportunities for learners, especially those living in areas with quality schools.

2) Limited Population Mobility

Zoning-based admissions can limit population mobility (Hasbullah & Anam, 2019). If a family moves to another area with a different school zone, learners may face difficulties accessing the school that has been assigned based on the previous zone (Noor et al., 2020). This may cause a mismatch between the learner's residential address and the applicable school zone.

3) Restriction of Parental Choice

The zoning system can limit parents' choices in selecting schools for their children (Vatresia et al., 2023). Parents may have certain preferences or specific needs for their child's education, but the zoning system may limit their ability to choose a school that matches those preferences or needs. This can lead to parental dissatisfaction and lack of flexibility in meeting their child's educational needs.

4) Overcrowding or Underutilization

Sometimes, zoning-based admissions can cause overcrowding or underutilization problems in school capacity (Rudi, 2018). If there is high demand in one school zone while other zones have unfilled capacity, there can be overcrowding or imbalance in the distribution of learners in schools.

5) Address Manipulation Practice

Some parents may try to manipulate their residential address to influence the school zone applied to their child. Such practices can disrupt the integrity of the zoning system and cause inequity in learner enrollment (Handayani et al., 2022).

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6) Lack of Choices for Learners

The zoning system can limit learners' choices in selecting schools that suit their interests and needs. Learners may want to follow certain programs or curricula only available in schools outside their zone (Saharuddin & Khakim, 2020). This can lead to a mismatch between learners' preferences and school placement.

The positive and negative impacts of implementing student admissions based on zoning can be seen more briefly in Table. 2 below.

Table 2. Impact of Implementation of Student Admission Based on Zoning System

Impact of Implementation of Student Admission Based on Zoning System		
Positive Impact	Negative Impact	
Equalizing access to education	School quality imbalance	
Reduce transportation burden	Limited population mobility	
Increasing parental involvement	Restriction of parental choice	
Strengthening local communities	Overcrowding or underutilization	
Reducing socio-economic inequality	Address manipulation practices	
Reduce commercialization practices	Lack of choice for learners	

One problem in implementing zoning-based student admissions in Indonesia is the inequality of school quality between certain zones (Anwar, 2022). Some areas have less qualified schools, while other areas have better schools. This results in inequity in access to education for students. The following are some obstacles that can be explained regarding the zoning system PPDB.

1) Complicated Zone Boundary Determination

Determining zone boundaries in zoning-based student admissions is often complicated and triggers controversy (Saharuddin & Khakim, 2020). Sometimes, the zone boundaries set can lead to disputes between related regions. This issue can affect the clarity and effectiveness of zoning system implementation.

2) Increased Population Mobility

High population mobility, especially in urban areas, challenges implementing zoning-based enrollment (Syakarofath et al., 2020). Many families move from one area to another, leading to mismatches between learners' residential addresses and the designated school zones.

3) Intense Competition in Quality Schools

Some schools considered high quality or good reputations can face intense competition in zoning-based admissions (Thoha, 2014). The number of prospective students who want to enter the school exceeds the school's capacity, creating fierce competition and increasing pressure on learners and parents.

4) School Capacity Constraints

In some areas, especially urban areas, school capacity may need to be improved to accommodate all learners within a zone (Thoha, 2014). This constraint may result in some learners needing to be accepted into their desired school and looking for alternative schools outside their zone.

Admission based on zoning conceptually implies that it can provide equal access to education for all learners without discrimination or exceptional advantages for specific groups. The implication is that it provides more equitable opportunities for all citizens to access nearby schools without considering social or economic status. Next is student diversity, which can create diversity in each school based on the neighborhood around the school. This way, schools reflect diverse cultural and social backgrounds, creating a more inclusive learning environment. In addition, it simplifies the education system. By

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implementing zoning, the admission system becomes more straightforward and more transparent. Parents and students know which areas are included in a particular school zone, reducing confusion and difficulty in understanding the admission process.

The practical implication of zoning-based admissions is that authorities can manage school capacity more efficiently and avoid overloading certain schools while others have unmet capacity by organizing zoning areas. Learners are closer to school, which reduces their travel distance, and transportation costs and potentially reduces traffic around the school. By basing admissions on zoning, students are more likely to learn together with their peers from the neighborhood, which can strengthen the sense of local identity and build ties between the school and the surrounding community.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature study research that has been conducted, implementing student admissions based on zoning is an important step in improving access to education in Indonesia. Implementing the zoning system does have challenges, but with a planned approach and involving various relevant parties, these solutions can help minimize the obstacles and achieve the desired goals. The challenges in implementing the zoning system may vary depending on the context and regional characteristics. Therefore, the above solutions should be tailored to local needs and conditions. Through improving school quality, adjusting to population mobility, increasing school capacity, and active participation of parents and communities, the zoning system can become more effective and positively impact creating equitable educational opportunities for all learners. To improve this system, it is important to pay attention to equitable education quality, accessibility for learners, balanced distribution, considering special needs, and providing wider choices for learners.

Recommendation

Some recommendations that can be given for further research are (1) to create a conducive and accommodating school environment that teachers and students in Indonesia can accept, it is necessary to analyze the implementation of student admissions based on zoning in a smaller scope (2) comparing zoning policies with other student admission systems, such as achievement-based admissions or invitations. (3) Conduct comparative studies on implementing zoning policies in different regions or countries. This will help identify best practices and understand the impact of implementing learner admissions based on the zoning system. Therefore, other factors must be investigated for future research to determine the effectiveness of zoning admissions further.

As education and school policymakers, several recommendations can help implement zoning-based student admissions. Before implementing a zoning-based admissions system, consult with stakeholders, including parents, teachers, the local community, and education experts. Ensure that zones are defined by region or region considering equal opportunity and accessibility. Avoid creating too small or too large zones to avoid an unhealthy concentration of students from low economic backgrounds in one area or vice versa. If there are differences in school quality between zones, consider providing public transport or subsidized transportation for students living in zones with quality schools. By considering some of the recommendations above, education policymakers and schools are expected to be able to create a more equitable zoning-based admissions system, equalize opportunities for access to education, and improve the overall quality of education.

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