

Implementation of the Policy on the New Student Admissions Process at Public Middle Schools Zoned in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to understand and analyze the implementation of the new student admission process at SMP Negeri 7 and SMP Negeri 15 Palembang in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City. The focus of this study is how the New Student Admissions (PPDB) is implemented in accordance with the regulations set by the government, as well as factors that support and hinder its implementation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected by means of observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews, after which a qualitative descriptive analysis was conducted. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of PPDB in both schools is in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture concerning the zoning system. However, there are still a number of challenges in its implementation, including the lack of public understanding of the zoning system, damage to technological infrastructure, and the presence of outside expertise. Additionally, collaboration between schools and community organizations is crucial. The commitment of school officials and cooperation from the Education Office are the most important factors in carrying out this task. This study shows that the implementation of PPDB at SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang went well, although there is still a need for improvement in the areas of socialization and transparency.

Keywords: New Student Admission Process, Policy Implementation, Zoning System

A. Introduction

One of the strategic policies in the context of equalizing access to education in Indonesia is the New Student Admissions Process (PPDB). This policy is designed to regulate the mechanism for accepting education, which is an important factor in the development of a country. Equal access to quality education is the main goal of various government policies in both public and private schools (Saadah et al., 2023). The PPDB policy aims to ensure openness, fairness, and transparency in the process of accepting new students in both public and private schools (Aulia et al., 2025). The implementation of the PPDB policy is very important because it will affect public

access to quality and equitable education. The education system in Indonesia has been clearly regulated through Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the “National Education System must ensure equal access to education”.

Improving the quality of education, as well as relevant and efficient education management, in facing challenges that are in accordance with the dynamics of local, national, and global life (Zhao et al., 2023). Therefore, planned, directed, and sustainable education reform is needed. Article 11 of Law No. 20 of 2003 also emphasizes that the government and regional governments have an obligation to provide equal and quality education services and facilities for all citizens without discrimination. One of the government’s steps to improve education equality is to launch the latest education program related to New Student Admissions regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 17 of 2017, which was later updated through the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 44 of 2019 concerning New Student Admissions (PPDB). This policy includes the implementation of a zoning system that needs to be considered by each school in the process of accepting new students.

Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 44 of 2019 outlines six regulated pathways for the acceptance of new students (PPDB) based on zoning. First, the Zoning Pathway quota has been reduced to 50% of the capacity, previously 90%. Second, the Affirmative Pathway can fill at least 15% of the school’s capacity, which is intended for students who live inside or outside the school’s zoning area. Third, the pathway for parents/guardians to transfer is limited to a maximum of 5% of the school’s capacity. Fourth, the Achievement Pathway, which is based on school exam or national exam scores, as well as awards or achievements in academic or non-academic fields at the regency/city, province, national, and international levels, which were previously not accepted, is now one of the criteria for PPDB. Fifth, with the zoning system, educational institutions managed by the local government must accept prospective students who live in the zone closest to the school. Sixth, the student’s domicile must match the address listed on the family card issued no later than one year before PPDB.

The issuance of the ministerial regulation on the zoning system is expected to ensure that the acceptance of new students can run smoothly, there is no discrimination, and equal opportunities for all students to experience formal education, regardless of differences in cognitive abilities or low economics (Fadil et al., 2023). With the implementation of this regulation, there are several positive and negative impacts. Based on my observations in the surrounding environment, there are several parents who have children with more abilities who feel anxious about registering their children in favorite schools but outside their domicile area. Because the quota of 15% for the achievement path looks very small for prospective students outside their domicile. That is why many parents are worried about registering their children outside their domicile, where the favorite school is located (Khairil Aftar et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the school where prospective students reside is seen to have inadequate facilities compared to the favorite school they want outside their domicile, so that from this problem, most parents use several ways to send their children to a superior school (Ishak, 2020). SMP Negeri is a superior school in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City, which has made several achievements, so that it is the dream of students to study at the school. On the other hand, SMPN 7 and SMPN 15 are rayon schools of SMPN in Seberang Ulu Satu District in Palembang City. The implementation of the PPDB policy is carried out by considering a number of applicable regulations, both those regulated by the central government through the Ministry of Education and Culture and those regulated by the local government at SMP Negeri in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City.

PPDB at the SMP level involves several admission pathways, such as zoning pathways, affirmation pathways, parental transfer pathways, and achievement pathways (Muhartono, 2024). Each pathway has a quota and criteria that must be met by prospective students. The implementation of the PPDB policy is an interesting issue to study because this region has a variety of social and economic characteristics (Damayanti et al., 2021). State schools, which implement a zoning system as part of the PPDB regulation, are obliged to accept students based on the distance from their residence to the school. This system aims to facilitate geography that affects the implementation of access policies for students around the school and reduce social disparities in education (Chaniago et al., 2024).

Problems faced in implementing the PPDB policy, namely, in the implementation of PPDB, there are a number of challenges that are often faced, including: The zoning pathway is often a problem in itself, especially in areas that have limited public schools (Safitri et al., 2025). The limited capacity of public schools can lead to fierce competition and uneven distribution between public and private junior high schools (Ni'mah et al., 2025). Regarding zoning, this highlights problems related to the student admission system based on zones or areas of residence (Sari & Dewi, 2023). In this context, the zoning pathway is often a challenge, especially in areas with a limited number of public schools. Due to the limited capacity of public schools, competition among prospective students becomes fiercer, and this can lead to an uneven distribution of students between public and private schools. This issue illustrates the unequal access to education and the need for fairer and more inclusive policies to overcome capacity constraints in public schools (Chaniago et al., 2024).

Technological constraints, along with the increasing development of the online PPDB system, and technical constraints such as internet networks and the inability of the community to access technology, are also major challenges in implementing PPDB (Apriyani et al., 2025). Public perception can influence the choice of school for their children. Although private schools in Seberang Ulu District, Palembang City, have good-quality education, many people still prefer public schools. This can be caused by various factors, such as the assumption that public schools are more affordable or

have a better reputation in certain matters. As a result, there is an imbalance in the number of applicants, where public schools tend to have more applicants than private schools, which has the potential to affect the distribution of educational resources and the quality of students' learning experiences in each type of school.

In Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City, the implementation of the PPDB policy is an interesting issue to study because this area has a variety of social, economic, and geographical characteristics that affect the implementation of the policy. Public schools, which implement a zoning system as part of the PPDB regulation, are obliged to accept students based on the distance of their residence from the school (Ariswati, 2021). This system aims to facilitate access for students around the school and reduce social disparities in education (Darmawan et al., 2024). On the other hand, schools have more flexible admission policies, often taking into account the academic and non-academic abilities of prospective students, as well as cost factors that are different from public schools (Nurlita et al., 2024). However, in practice, the implementation of the PPDB policy in this area faces various challenges (Elly et al., 2024). The admission mechanism in public schools can create complex dynamics in the distribution of students, including in terms of admission quotas, selection systems, and information transparency (Hakimov & Kübler, 2021).

In addition, the lack of public understanding of the PPDB policy, especially among parents, is one of the obstacles that affects the effectiveness of this policy (Cahyani, 2024). This study aims to examine the implementation of the PPDB policy in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City, with a focus on the acceptance of new students at public schools in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City. This study will also analyze the challenges faced in implementing the policy and provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness and equality of access to education in the region. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title *Implementation of the New Student Admissions Process Policy at Public Junior High Schools in Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City*.

B. Methods

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 7 and SMP Negeri 15 Palembang City, Seberang Ulu Satu District, Palembang City. In addition to the school, the researcher conducted research at the Palembang City Education Office and the Seberang Ulu Satu District Office. The research was conducted during the new student registration period, which usually takes place between May and June. This study focuses on analyzing the implementation process of the New Student Admissions (PPDB) policy at SMPN 7 and 15 Palembang. The research informants are parties directly involved in the implementation of PPDB in schools. Key informants include the principal, teachers, parents, Palembang City Education Office officials, school supervisors, parents of prospective students, school committees, and students. This research is

qualitative research with data collection methods through observation, interviews, and documentation.

C. Results and Discussion

Implementation of the New Student Admissions Process (PPDB) Policy at Junior High Schools at SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang in Seberang Ulu Satu District in Palembang City

The implementation of the New Student Admissions Policy (PPDB) at SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang is part of the government's efforts to create a more inclusive, fair, and equitable education system. This policy refers to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture, which stipulates four admission pathways, namely zoning, affirmation, achievement, and transfer of parents/guardians. The implementation of the PPDB Policy at SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang includes the PPDB Implementation Stages, namely socialization, registration, selection, announcement, and re-registration. Socialization is carried out through social media, school websites, and parent-teacher meetings. There are still parents who do not understand the selection mechanism, especially in the affirmation and achievement pathways. Registration and selection are carried out online through the online PPDB system.

The committee also opens a help service for parents who are experiencing difficulties. The selection is based on the provisions applicable to each pathway. The selection results are announced via the school website and noticeboard. Accepted students are required to re-register by submitting physical documents for final verification. Proportion of acceptance based on pathway: Zoning (minimum 50%): Students are accepted based on the distance from home to school. Affirmation (minimum 15%): Students from underprivileged families with proof of KIP or a certificate from the social service. Achievement (maximum 30%): Students with high academic grades or achievements in sports, arts, and science. Parental Relocation (maximum 5%): Children of parents who have undergone work transfers to Palembang. This policy aims to ensure a more even distribution of students and provide opportunities for students from various social and economic backgrounds.

Challenges in PPDB Implementation

During the implementation of the online registration system, several obstacles were encountered in the field. The server experienced disruption due to the high number of applicants on the first day. Several parents had difficulty accessing the system or uploading required documents. The school implemented several solutions to overcome these obstacles, such as providing direct registration assistance services. Other problems faced were 1) problems in data validation and zoning documents. Several cases of document manipulation (forgery of family cards) were found to be closer to the school; 2) Verification of KIP or certificates of poverty took a long time;

3) several prospective students questioned the transparency in assessing academic and non-academic achievements; 4) Inequality of Quotas on Several Paths: The zoning path dominates the number of admissions, while the achievement path has more applicants than the available quota. 5) Parents of students on the affirmative and transfer paths feel that the quota given is still insufficient; 6) Lack of Parental Understanding of the Selection Process. Several parents do not understand how the ranking system is carried out, especially in the achievement and affirmative paths. The solution implemented is that verification is carried out more strictly by cross-checking data through related agencies. The recommended solution is to re-evaluate the quota of each path based on applicant data in previous years.

Impact of PPDB Policy at SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang

The zoning policy causes SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang to accept students with diverse academic backgrounds. The achievement pathway brings students with superior academic and non-academic abilities, but the number is still limited. Students from the affirmative pathway get the opportunity to attend quality public schools even though they come from underprivileged families. Teachers must adjust their learning methods to accommodate differences in students' academic levels. Schools also need to provide mentoring programs for students on the affirmative pathway so that they can adapt to a more competitive learning environment. Impact on public perception, such as most of the community supports this policy because it provides more equal access to all students. However, there is criticism regarding the zoning system, which limits the choice of schools for students who want to attend schools outside their residential zone.

Recommendations for Improvement in PPDB Implementation

In optimizing the online registration system, schools need to work with IT service providers to increase server capacity so that there are no technical problems during registration. Provide tutorials or training for parents on how to register online. Schools must provide a more detailed explanation of the selection mechanism and calculation of scores in the achievement pathway. Provide complaint or consultation services for students who want to clarify the selection results. More Intensive Socialization to Parents and Students Hold face-to-face or online meetings before registration begins to explain in detail the admission pathway and its requirements. Create a guidebook or video tutorial that can be accessed at any time by parents and prospective students. Conduct an Admission Quota Evaluation. Conduct an annual analysis to determine whether the quota distribution in each pathway is in accordance with the needs and number of applicants.

Consider increasing the achievement pathway quota for students who have high academic and non-academic achievements. Assistance for Affirmative Pathway Students, by means of schools being able to hold special guidance programs for

students from the affirmative pathway so that they can adapt to a more competitive learning environment. Counseling Guidance teachers need to be more proactive in providing assistance to students from less fortunate economic backgrounds. concluded the implementation of the PPDB policy at SMP Negeri 7 Palembang has generally been carried out in accordance with applicable regulations. However, there are still several challenges, such as technical constraints in the registration system, document validation issues, and inequality in the distribution of admission quotas. The impact of this policy is quite significant, especially in terms of more equitable distribution of students and more inclusive access to education for various groups. However, there are several aspects that need to be improved, especially in terms of transparency of achievement selection, increased socialization to parents, and assistance for affirmative students. If these improvements can be made, the PPDB policy at SMP Negeri 7 and 15 Palembang in the future can be more effective, transparent, and fair for all parties.

D. Conclusion

The PPDB policy in junior high schools has been implemented according to government guidelines, but faces various technical and social challenges. Supporting factors include adequate infrastructure and good coordination, while inhibiting factors include gaps in facilities between zones and community resistance. This policy has a positive impact on equalizing access to education, although improvements are still needed in terms of the quality of education.

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