



THE IMPACT OF THE ZONING SYSTEM POLICY ON STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT. *The zoning system policy in New Student Admissions aims to provide equal access and improve the quality of education by prioritizing the distance between students' homes and schools. This study investigates the effects of zoning policies on public secondary schools through a systematic literature review of 20 articles published between 2020 until 2024, using the PRISMA approach to ensure data accuracy. The findings show that zoning supports a more even distribution of students and better access to education. However, challenges persist, such as disparities in school quality, limited infrastructure, lack of public awareness, and fraudulent practices during the Admission of New Students. Furthermore, students who fail to enter their preferred schools often experience a decline in motivation. Collaboration between central and local governments is crucial to address these issues, especially by strengthening policies through adequate socialization, improving school quality, ensuring fair teacher distribution, and infrastructure development. When implemented effectively, the zoning system can serve as a strategic tool to promote justice and equity in education. Moreover, it fosters character building and environmental care, as students live closer to school and are more likely to maintain their learning environment, resulting in stronger community involvement and sustainable school development.*

Keywords: Policy, Zoning System, Public Schools, Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRAK. Kebijakan sistem zonasi dalam Penerimaan Siswa Baru bertujuan untuk memberikan akses yang setara dan meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan dengan memprioritaskan jarak antara rumah siswa dan sekolah. Studi ini menyelidiki dampak kebijakan zonasi pada sekolah menengah negeri melalui tinjauan literatur sistematis terhadap 20 artikel yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 sampai 2024, menggunakan pendekatan PRISMA untuk memastikan akurasi data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa zonasi mendukung distribusi siswa yang lebih merata dan akses yang lebih baik terhadap pendidikan. Namun, tantangan tetap ada, seperti disparitas kualitas sekolah, keterbatasan infrastruktur, kurangnya kesadaran publik, dan praktik penipuan selama Penerimaan Siswa Baru. Selain itu, siswa yang gagal masuk ke sekolah pilihan mereka sering mengalami penurunan motivasi. Kolaborasi antara pemerintah pusat dan daerah sangat penting untuk mengatasi masalah ini, terutama dengan memperkuat kebijakan melalui sosialisasi yang memadai, peningkatan kualitas sekolah, memastikan distribusi guru yang adil, dan pembangunan infrastruktur. Ketika diterapkan secara efektif, sistem zonasi dapat berfungsi sebagai alat strategis untuk mempromosikan keadilan dan kesetaraan dalam pendidikan. Selain itu, sistem ini mendorong pembentukan karakter dan kepedulian lingkungan, karena siswa tinggal lebih dekat dengan sekolah dan lebih mungkin menjaga lingkungan belajar mereka, sehingga menghasilkan keterlibatan masyarakat yang lebih kuat dan pengembangan sekolah yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Kebijakan, Sistem Zonasi, Sekolah Negeri, Systematis Literatur Review

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INTRODUCTION

The ideality of the education zoning system policy is creating equal access and quality of education throughout Indonesia in an objective, transparent, accountable, non-discriminatory, and fair manner (Kaffa et al., 2021). This policy is designed so that every



child has the right to quality educational services at the nearest school, regardless of economic or social background, so that it can eliminate the inequality of quality between favored and non-favored schools. Ideally, the zoning system also encourages each public school to improve the quality of services and education, ensure the availability of competent educators, and provide adequate infrastructure and facilities in each zone. In addition, this policy is expected to control the quality of graduates, facilitate the equal rotation of teachers, and eliminate the practice of buying and selling seats in the admission of new students.

The reality of Indonesia's education zoning system policy reveals a complex situation where the intended goals of equalizing educational quality and access are not always fully realized. Procedural problems arise mainly due to uneven school distribution; many students cannot enter their preferred schools because quotas fill quickly. In contrast, other schools in less populated areas have insufficient students. This is compounded by a lack of consideration for population demographics, leading to overcrowded schools in dense regions and emptier schools in sparse ones (Mahpudin, 2020). Additionally, prioritizing residence proximity often excludes high-achieving students from outside zones, limiting their access to favored schools despite strong academic performance. The policy's implementation does not necessarily boost education quality, as improvements in facilities, infrastructure, and teacher quality remain insufficient (Madjid, 2023). The policy also perpetuates the dualism between “favorite” and “non-favorite” schools because public perceptions and school labels have not significantly changed. Regional inconsistencies and overlapping local policies further confuse the public. On the positive side, proximity can foster a greater sense of school ownership among students and parents, encouraging cooperation, cleanliness, security, and a healthy educational environment (Masitah et al., 2024). However, challenges such as inadequate socialization of the policy and local governments' unpreparedness to determine school zones also hinder effective implementation (Sari & Dewi, 2023).

The zoning system policy regulates the admission of new students at the elementary and secondary school levels (Mahpudin, 2020). According to Kaffa (2021), this system bases student placement on geographical proximity between the student's residence and the school. According to Hattami (2022) emphasizes that the zoning mechanism is determined by local government regulations, ensuring that schools prioritize students within the designated area radius. From these perspectives, the zoning system can be understood as a policy for student admission based on residential location within a specific distance determined by local



authorities. However, the recent development of this policy shows that zoning is no longer limited to equalizing access but also serves as an instrument to promote educational equity, strengthen community-based schooling, and encourage regional governments to improve the quality of all schools within their zones. This transformation marks a shift from a purely administrative admission mechanism toward a broader strategy for realizing inclusive and quality education across regions.

The purpose of this theme is to provide a deep understanding of the importance of the zoning system in the admission of new students that is fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory, improve access and quality of education, and ensure equitable distribution of quality and availability of educators and adequate facilities in each zone according to the location where students live (Amelia, 2020). According to Yuliani (2021) The school zoning system has several primary objectives, including ensuring equal access to education for all students, bringing the distance between residence and school closer, eliminating the impression of exclusivity or discrimination between schools, helping to distribute the needs and placement of teachers equally, encouraging the creativity of educators, and making it easier for local governments to distribute aid in a targeted manner. The legal basis of the education zoning system policy is contained in Permendikbud Number 14 (2018) about the Admission of New Students in Kindergartens, Elementary Schools, Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, and Vocational High Schools, and the Admission of New Students policy of the zoning system in Permendikbud Number 44 (2019) The school is required to accept prospective new students who are domiciled in the nearest zone, with a percentage of at least 90% of the total admission quota. The remaining quota is allocated for the achievement path (5%) and special reasons, such as a change of domicile (5%).

This zoning system policy in the Admission of New Students has caused various positive and negative impacts on education and society. This policy aims to equalize education, eliminate school discrimination, and benefit prospective students whose homes are close to school (Widyastuti, 2020). However, on the other hand, implementing the zoning system also brings challenges, such as reduced opportunities for students to choose their favorite school, decreased motivation to learn, problems with teachers and school quality, and the potential for fraud and irregularities (Murni & Haritani, 2024).



This paper aims to analyze the application of the zoning system in secondary schools to ensure equal access and quality of education based on the students' domicile. This system is expected to eliminate disparities in education quality and encourage improving all public schools (Mahmud et al., 2024). The analysis shows that the zoning system distributes students more evenly and improves the quality of educational resources, including academic achievement. However, challenges remain, such as infrastructure readiness and teacher quality. The more heterogeneous student composition demands adapting teaching methods and active collaboration between schools, government, and communities (Harianti & Sukma, 2024). Additionally, this policy poses obstacles related to decreased motivation to learn and limited school choice, which require serious attention to ensure the goals of equity and education quality improvement can be sustainably achieved.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a systematic review method to analyze zoning system policies from 2020 to 2024, using PRISMA guidelines. Data were sourced from Google Scholar with the keywords "policy," "system," and "zoning," yielding 33,500 articles. After filtering by publication year, study type, and relevance, a quality and methodological assessment was conducted. Through screening titles, abstracts, and full content, 7 eligible articles were selected for final analysis.

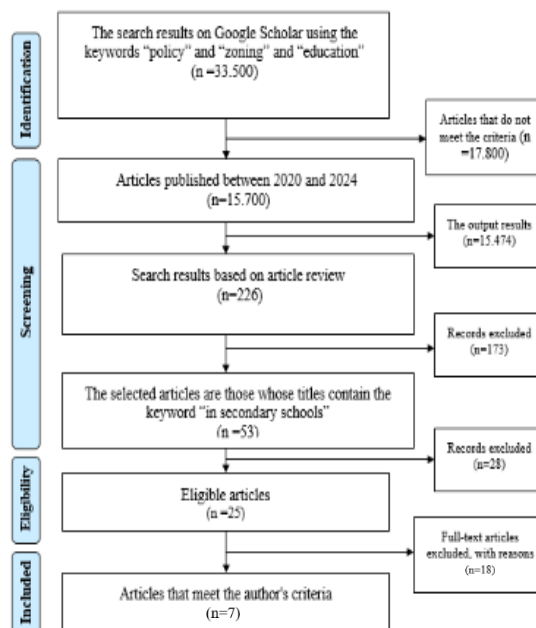


Figure 1. Prism Diagram



RESULTS

The PRISMA table summarizes the article selection process on zoning system policies, covering stages of initial search, screening, eligibility assessment, and final selection. It provides a transparent overview of the literature selection method to ensure the quality and relevance of the sources analyzed in this study.

Table 1. Google Scholar Search Results

No	Authors	Heading	Method	Result	Conclusion
1.	Nurdin, Hanyfa Shofia Azahra Zulfa, Faud Abdul Basits Setiawan, Nurkhaeratunnisa, Ryan Mukhtari Fadli (Nurdin et al., 2024)	School Zoning Policy in Indonesia: A Review of the Literature on Implementation and Impact on Education Quality	This study uses a literature study method by tracing and analyzing various academic references and policies related to the zoning system.	Zoning has the potential to be fair, but it is hampered by unequal school quality and community rejection.	Zoning opens access to education equally, although it is still constrained, but it has succeeded in increasing student participation in marginalized areas.
2.	Zelmi Kaffa, Sentot Setia Budi, Nurhizrah Gistituati (Kaffa et al., 2021)	Zoning System Implementation Policy	This study uses a literature review approach. Literature study is an effort made by researchers to gather various information relevant to the topic or	The results of this study show that: 1) the zoning system plays a role in the equitable distribution of access to education, and 2)	The zoning policy is a student admission system based on distance of residence, applicable to elementary, junior high, and high school. To be effective, it requires government readiness



- problem that is being or the zoning system and improving the quality of will be researched. impacts the condition education. or development of students.
3. Mahmud, Fadlilah, Zoning System Policy: This study uses a Zoning at SMA 1 Implementation of Zoning System Tuti Indriyani, Implementation in qualitative method with a Muaro Jambi is Policy in Admission of New Fransisko Chaniago, Student Admissions descriptive approach, running well according Students in Schools M Fadly Habibi, New to High School where data is obtained to the Ministry of The State High School 1 Muaro Des Winanda through interviews, Education and Culture Jambi has been running optimally. Rosalia (Mahmud et al., 2024) observations, and and provincial documentation directly in guidelines. the field.
4. Riski Tri Widyastuti The Impact of the This qualitative research Zoning helps equal Zoning aims to level educational (Widyastuti, 2020) Implementation of the uses data triangulation and access, but there are services according to the 1945 Zoning System on the literature studies with still irregularities, and Constitution, but technical and Quality of Schools and descriptive, theoretical, and the impact is felt on the human resources constrain it. The Students philosophical analysis. development of government continues to strive to overcome its negative impact.



5. Fajar Sidik (Sidik, 2024) Implementation of school zoning policy and its impact on school quality at the junior high school level: A case study in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta
This quantitative research evaluated the quality of student input before and after zoning based on academic scores. Non-favorite schools remain at the bottom before and after the zoning is implemented. This article comprehensively evaluates school zoning policies in Sleman, Yogyakarta, focusing on their impact on unfavored junior high schools.
6. Abd. Madjid (Madjid, 2023) Policy Dynamics of the Education Zoning System
This research uses a qualitative method by applying a literature study model. Zoning remains suboptimal due to school and facility disparities. Zoning seeks to equalize education, but it has not succeeded due to the inequality in the quality of public and private schools.
7. Almira Widyaningtyas, Nurhadji Nugraha, Siska Diana Sari (Widyaningtyas et al., 2021) Public Perception of the Zoning New Student Admission System
This study uses a descriptive type of research with a qualitative approach. Most of the people of Broto Village do not agree with the zoning system. Many residents of Broto Village reject zoning because the quality of education is uneven, even though there are benefits such as cost-saving and close distance.



DISCUSSIONS

Implementation of Education Zoning System Policy in Secondary Schools

The zoning system policy is a rule in the New Student Admissions (PPDB). It stipulates that schools must accept prospective students based on the distance or radius of their residence from the school, according to the zone that the government has determined. Some of the advantages of the zoning system include achieving equal access to education, time efficiency because the distance from home to school is shorter, saving transportation costs, and contributing to reducing traffic congestion. According to Kaffa (2021) In his journal, the implementation of the zoning system gave rise to various pros and cons that became polemics in themselves. Some of the counter-views include the lack of socialization of the policy to the public, the decline in the quality of education, and the assumption that this policy limits children's right to choose schools. In addition, the community also assesses that teachers must adapt learning methods to students' diverse abilities, and students' learning motivation can decrease because they are not accepted into the school they want. Hence, the spirit of learning becomes less optimal. On the other hand, the positive impact felt by the community from implementing the zoning system includes reducing congestion around the school environment, although it is not too significant. In addition, because students live close to the school, transportation costs are more economical. The requirements for registering children through the zoning route are also relatively easy. Even underprivileged families can send their children to excellent schools at no cost. Not only that, but parents also feel pride when they succeed in enrolling their children in their favorite school.

In addition, according to Widyastuti (2020) In his journal, one of the causes of problems in implementing the zoning system is the lack of socialization carried out with the sub-district head, village head, school principal, and community leaders. This makes information about the concept and purpose of the zoning system not fully reach parents or guardians, so they still have difficulty understanding the policy. Many schools still try to manipulate home distance data, trying to sell their favorite school seats. In addition, there are still obstacles in PPDB, especially at the online selection stage. The availability of human resources as online operators is inadequate; besides that, not all parents or guardians of students are technologically literate, so they cannot monitor the development of online selection. On the other hand, the disparity in quality between schools is still a homework for the Ministry of Education and Culture that must be immediately fixed so that all schools are worthy of



studying knowledge. At the junior high school level, only 28.73% of classrooms are suitable for use, which is 99,853 spaces, while the rest, namely 247,739 spaces, have suffered minor to severe damage or total damage. In addition, the quality of human resources, such as principals, teachers, and education personnel, has not fully met the standards, considering that only 49% of teachers have been certified. To support the success of the zoning system, concrete steps are needed, such as eliminating fraudulent practices in the form of buying and selling school benches, providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, equitable curriculum distribution, and improving the quality of educators. The government must also massively socialize the zoning system so that the community and local governments understand this policy. In addition, coordination between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Home Affairs is important before the zoning policy is implemented. The public's perception of excellent schools needs to be changed, which can only be realized through the equitable distribution of educational facilities, school quality, and curriculum throughout the region.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018), the zoning system is a development of the rayonization policy. If rayonization focuses more on students' academic achievements, then the zoning system focuses on the distance or radius between students' homes and schools. Thus, students who live closer to the school have priority in getting educational services from the school. Some of the objectives of the zoning system, according to the Minister of Education and Culture, include ensuring equal access to educational services for students, bringing the school environment closer to the family environment, eliminating exclusivity and discrimination in schools, and assisting in the analysis of teacher needs and distribution. The zoning system is also believed to encourage educators' creativity in learning with heterogeneous student conditions, and assist local governments in providing/affirmation to be more on target, both in the form of school infrastructure, as well as improving the quality of educators and education personnel.

Based on the study results, it can be concluded that the zoning system policy in New Student Admissions (PPDB) aims to ensure equal access to education by determining student admissions based on the distance of residence to school. This system has advantages such as equal distribution of education, saving time and transportation costs, and reducing congestion in the school environment. However, its implementation raises pros and cons, including a lack of socialization to the community, a decrease in the quality of education,



and a loss of motivation to learn because students cannot choose the school they want. In addition, there are problems such as manipulation of distance data, buying and selling favorite school seats, and obstacles in online selection due to limited human resources and parental technological literacy. Quality disparities between schools and a lack of infrastructure facilities and certified educators are also significant challenges. To overcome this, it is necessary to improve the quality of teachers, ensure equitable distribution of facilities, promote massive socialization, and coordinate between local governments so that the zoning system can run effectively and be accepted by the community. The zoning system is expected to eliminate exclusivity and discrimination in public schools and assist the government in distributing educational resources in a more targeted manner.

From the results of the table, Research Study Summary Above, some results of the zoning system are found. According to Wijaya (2020) In his journal, he states that the implementation of PPDB in Langkat Regency has been running according to the objectives and applicable technical guidelines. Based on the research results in the field, the impact of implementing the zoning system over the past two years shows an equal distribution of students' potential in various areas of Lalat Regency. On the other hand, according to Meritasari (2024) In his journal, he notes that implementing the zoning system in Blitar City is currently not running well. Several parents of elementary school students who will continue their education at the junior high school (SMP) level protested because this zoning system does not have a good impact on the learning process of students and the scope of learning of students becomes narrow, in addition to the enthusiasm of students is reduced because of whether they achieve or not, they feel that it will still be difficult to enter their favorite junior high school. Meanwhile, according to Sidik (2024) The school zoning policy in Sleman Regency shows that most 15 'non-favorite' schools did not experience significant quality improvements. In other words, the school zoning policy does not significantly improve the quality of education in non-favorite schools, when viewed from the difference in school input between before and after. This can be seen from the evidence that before and after the school zoning policy did not change their positions at the bottom. Thus, it can be concluded that the success of the zoning system depends heavily on the readiness of the education infrastructure in each region and the acceptance of the policy by the community.

Impact of Education Zoning System Policies in Secondary Schools: SWOT Analysis

The following diagram illustrates the impact of zoning system policies based on a SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*) analysis. This diagram summarizes various positive and negative aspects that arise from the implementation of zoning policies in education, ranging from strengths such as equitable distribution of education quality and ease of management, weaknesses such as declining enthusiasm for learning and limited school choices, opportunities that can increase parental supervision and enrollment quotas, to threats such as the potential for school dropout for underprivileged children and the risk of shortage of educators in suburban schools. Thus, this table provides a comprehensive overview of the impact of zoning policies that can be the basis for evaluating and improving policies in the future.

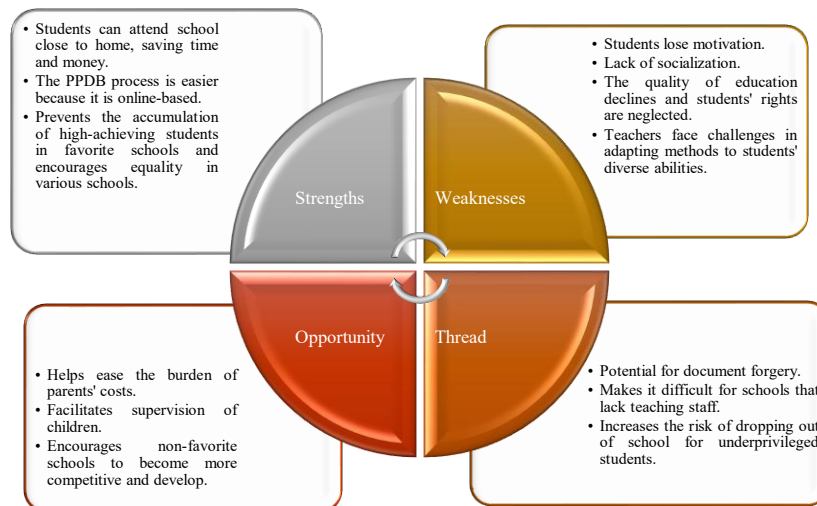


Figure 1. Impact Chart According to SWOT

The zoning system policy has several strengths supporting equal education access. First, students can attend school near their home, thus saving time and transportation costs. It also allows students to focus more on learning because long commutes do not daily burden them. Second, the admission process of new students (PPDB) has become easier and more efficient because it uses an online-based system, making it easier for parents and students to access information and register without coming directly to school. Third, this system prevents the accumulation of outstanding students only in the favorite schools. Thus, there is an equal distribution of the quality of students in various schools, which can ultimately improve the overall quality of education (Solikha & Mustofa, 2025).



On the other hand, the proximity of the student's residence to the school also creates opportunities for a growing sense of ownership of the school environment. Students and parents tend to be more concerned about the physical and social conditions of the school, thus encouraging the creation of a culture of cooperation, reforestation, cleanliness, and security. This environmental concern is important in forming a healthy and empowered educational ecosystem.

According to Putri (2023) the zoning system's application in education, among others, can be seen from the loss of students' motivation to learn who are not accepted at the desired school, so their enthusiasm for learning decreases. In addition, the lack of socialization about zoning policies to the public confuses and opens up opportunities for fraud in the admission process. This policy also risks lowering the quality of education because it limits the right of students to choose schools according to their interests and potential. On the other hand, teachers are also faced with challenges in adapting learning methods to the increasingly diverse abilities of students due to unequal distribution.

According to Setiawan and Yuniasti (2021) the application of the zoning system in education can be seen from the various benefits that are caused, such as reducing the burden of parental costs, especially in terms of transportation, because the distance between home and school is shorter. This proximity also allows parents to supervise and monitor children's learning activities more easily. In addition, the zoning system opens up opportunities for schools in suburban or non-favored areas to become more competitive and develop, as they get the same opportunity to accept students from different backgrounds.

Threats the implementation of the zoning system includes various risks that can interfere with the goal of equal distribution of education. One is the potential for parents to falsify domicile documents to enroll their children in the desired school, ultimately damaging the system's integrity. In addition, schools that lack educators must work harder to find additional teachers as needed, which can be a burden in itself. On the other hand, students from underprivileged families who are not accepted into schools in the nearest zone may be at risk of dropping out due to distance and cost constraints, thus creating new inequalities in access to education. (Yuliani, 2021).



Solutions to the Problem of Education Zoning System Policy in Secondary Schools

According to Haryanti (2020), the first solution that can be implemented is to ensure that the policies apply to all public schools. In addition, socialization in the community needs to be carried out long before the implementation of the Admission of New Students begins. For example, parents should be invited to school so that they understand the latest policies related to the zoning system. This is important because, through this system, it is hoped that the quality of education can be improved even further. Second, the local government and education office must divide this zone according to the availability of schools in each student's domicile, so that no school lacks students. However, another school has more students than it can accommodate. Because this problem may occur in specific locations, so the local government and related education offices must record the number of graduates with the number of public schools in their area by providing opportunities for students to register for the nearest school, one of the solutions that can be done is to expand the scope of zoning for students in certain areas that have more graduates than the availability of public schools so that the problem of acceptance can be solved a little. In addition, coordination needs to be made between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the SKTM institution that is issuing the letter. The mechanism can be done by surveying the applicant's condition in advance to prevent the misuse of SKTM in the Admission of New Students process. This aims to ensure that students who come from underprivileged families can gain access to public schools. Sanctions also need to be enforced for students who are proven to have misused SKTM as a "magic letter" in the admission process.

According to Widyastuti (2020), there are several solutions to the problems of the zoning system. First, fraudulent practices such as buying and selling school benches to enter your favorite school must be stopped immediately. The zoning system is designed to make it easier for the government to map the budget and distribute students and educators. To support this, it is necessary to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure, distribute the curriculum equally throughout schools, and improve the quality of educators. Second, the socialization of the zoning system must be carried out massively before its implementation so that the community and local governments understand this policy thoroughly. Third, coordination needs to be established between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Home Affairs before the new policy is enforced. Fourth, the public's perception



of superior schools needs to be changed. This can be done if there is equality regarding educational facilities, school quality, and curriculum throughout the region.

According to the two articles above, several strategic solutions can address the problems in the zoning system. First, zoning policies must be applied equally to all public schools and widely socialized before the admission process begins. Parents should be involved to ensure they understand the latest policies. Second, zone division must align with the distribution and number of schools in each area to prevent imbalances in student placement. If necessary, zoning coverage can be expanded in areas where the number of graduates exceeds the available public schools. Third, coordination between the Ministry of Education and the institution that issues the SKTM (Certificate of Inability) is crucial to prevent misuse and impose strict sanctions for violations. However, the discussion could have been strengthened by providing more specific examples of successful implementation in different contexts, which would help illustrate the practical effectiveness of these proposed solutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The zoning system policy in student admissions aims to ensure equitable access and improve the quality of education by prioritizing school proximity. While it promotes fairness, cost efficiency, and stronger school-community ties, its implementation faces challenges such as unequal school quality, weak infrastructure, manipulation of data, and limited public understanding. Despite its potential, the system's effectiveness remains limited. Proposed solutions include zone adjustments, stricter oversight, infrastructure and teacher quality improvements, and broader socialization efforts. Implementing the zoning policy can foster fair, inclusive, and community-oriented education.

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