

THE IMPACT OF ZONING ON EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN THE NEW STUDENT ADMISSION SYSTEM

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Abstract

The zoning policy in the New Student Admission System is one of the government's strategic steps in creating equal access to and quality of education in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of the zoning policy, as well as to evaluate the extent to which the policy has impacted educational equity. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with the subjects being public elementary and secondary school teachers selected through purposive sampling. The research instrument consists of a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, distributed online via Google Forms. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The results show that teachers understand the objectives of the zoning policy well and support the principle of equitable education. However, its implementation in the field still faces challenges such as infrastructure limitations, uneven teacher distribution, and public perceptions of school quality. Zoning is seen as capable of encouraging schools to improve, but it needs to be supported by more comprehensive and responsive policies tailored to the conditions of each region.

Keywords: Zonation, Educational Equity, SPMB

Abstrak

Kebijakan jalur zonasi dalam Sistem Penerimaan Murid Baru (SPMB) merupakan salah satu langkah strategis pemerintah dalam menciptakan pemerataan akses dan mutu pendidikan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi dan pengalaman guru terhadap implementasi jalur zonasi, serta mengevaluasi sejauh mana kebijakan tersebut berdampak pada pemerataan pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan subjek guru sekolah dasar dan menengah negeri yang dipilih secara purposive. Instrumen penelitian berupa kuesioner tertutup dengan skala Likert lima poin yang disebarkan secara daring melalui Google Form. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memahami dengan baik tujuan kebijakan zonasi dan mendukung prinsip pemerataan pendidikan. Namun, pelaksanaannya di lapangan masih menghadapi kendala seperti keterbatasan infrastruktur, distribusi guru yang belum merata, dan persepsi masyarakat terhadap kualitas sekolah. Zonasi dinilai mampu mendorong sekolah untuk berbenah, tetapi perlu didukung dengan kebijakan yang lebih komprehensif dan responsif terhadap kondisi tiap wilayah.

Kata kunci: Jalur Zonasi, Pemerataan Pendidikan, SPMB



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INTRODUCTION

The zoning policy in the New Student Admission System is a strategic step taken by the government to achieve educational equality in Indonesia.¹ Through this system, students are expected to be accepted into schools located within close proximity to their homes. The primary objective of implementing the zoning policy is to eliminate the gap between favored schools and ordinary schools, which have long been perceived as creating inequality in access to education.² The government hopes that by balancing the number and quality of students, all schools will be motivated to improve the quality of their educational services.³ However, in its implementation, this policy is not without problems in the field. Many people still do not understand the essence of zoning and only judge it from the perspective of limited school choices. The phenomenon of changing domicile and address manipulation is evidence that some parents have not fully accepted this concept of equal distribution. Therefore, it is important to further examine the real impact of zoning in efforts to equalize education.

One important aspect that needs to be examined is whether the zoning system has been successful in distributing students evenly across schools. Before this policy was implemented, popular schools tended to attract students from various regions, while other schools lacked interest.⁴ With zoning, it is hoped that every school will have an equal opportunity to develop by receiving students from surrounding areas. On the other hand, many schools still face challenges in terms of the quality of educators and uneven facilities.⁵ This raises the question: does equitable access automatically lead to equitable educational quality? If schools in outlying areas do not receive support for quality improvement, zoning will only become an administrative tool without the substance of equity.⁶ Therefore, zoning should be accompanied by other supporting policies, such as the equitable distribution of teachers and operational funds.

¹ Amelia Haryanti, "Implementasi Kebijakan Permendikbud No. 20 Tahun 2019 Berdasarkan Sistem Zonasi Untuk Meningkatkan Pemerataan Dan Mutu Pendidikan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* 7, no. 2 (2020): 97–106, <https://doi.org/10.32493/jpkn.v7i2.y2020.p97-106>.

² Nadia Tika Adisti et al., "Evaluasi Pelaksanaan Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Provinsi Kepulauan Riau Tahun 2023: Studi Kasus SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang," *Mutiara: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Karya Ilmiah* 2, no. 4 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.59059/mutiara.v2i4.1571>.

³ I. Kadek Dede Junaedy, "Efektivitas Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) Negeri Di Kota Denpasar," *Public Inspiration: Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 7, no. 2 (2022): 114–18, <https://doi.org/10.22225/pi.7.2.2022.114-118>.

⁴ Dini Putri Ratna Meritasari et al., "Analisis Implementasi Dan Kualitas Pendidikan Pada Kebijakan Zonasi Di Kota Blitar," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 2 (2024): 2129–37, <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i2.1094>.

⁵ Arsyah Fernanda Kurniawan et al., "Evaluasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Dalam Optimalisasi Aksesibilitas Pendidikan Pada Jenjang Sekolah Menengah Pertama Di Kota Bandar Lampung," *Wacana Publik* 18, no. 01 (2024): 43–52, <https://doi.org/10.37295/wp.v18i1.65>.

⁶ Aliya Izet et al., "Kebijakan Zonasi Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Kualitas Pendidikan Pada Sekolah Menengah Atas Di Kota Bekasi," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial (JMPIS)* 6, no. 2 (2025): 871–80, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jmpis.v6i1>.

From the community's perspective, the zoning policy has received mixed responses. Some parents welcome it because they no longer have to compete for places in elite schools, while others consider zoning to limit their freedom to choose the best school for their children.⁷ This perception is influenced by the belief that not all schools are of equal quality. As a result, many parents seek loopholes in the system, such as changing their residential address to gain access to more desirable schools.⁸ Such practices highlight that the perception gap regarding school quality remains significant. If not balanced with improvements in educational quality across all schools, the zoning system will continue to face challenges in its acceptance by the community.⁹

At the school level, the implementation of zoning has brought new dynamics.¹⁰ that were previously not very popular are now receiving more students from the surrounding area. This provides opportunities for these schools to develop, but also requires readiness in terms of infrastructure, teaching staff, and school management. According to research by Purwati et al.,¹¹ many school principals have stated that the increase in student numbers has not been accompanied by an adequate increase in facilities. As a result, there is overcrowding in classrooms and an increased workload for teachers. This indicates that the zoning policy needs to be integrated with policies on the equitable distribution of educational resources. Local governments play a crucial role in providing guidance and strengthening the capacity of schools in their respective zones.¹² Without such support, schools will not be able to meet community expectations regarding the quality of educational services.

Data from various regions show that the implementation of zoning has varying impacts depending on regional readiness and public perception.¹³ In large cities with relatively equitable educational facilities, zoning tends to work better and is accepted by the community. However, in

⁷ Lili Apriyanti and Syunu Trihantoyo, "Persepsi Masyarakat Tentang Sistem Zonasi Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru," *Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan* 10, no. 2 (2022): 369–82.

⁸ Wening Nurul Laily et al., "Persepsi Orang Tua Pada Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (Studi Deskriptif Di SMP Negeri 7 Jakarta)," *Soshumdik* 3, no. 2 (2024): 59–69, <https://doi.org/10.56444/soshumdik.v3i2.1637>.

⁹ Almira Widyaningtyasa et al., "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Sistem Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Zonasi," *Antropocene: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2021): 29–37, <https://doi.org/10.56393/antropocene.v1i1.20>.

¹⁰ Yundri Akhyar, "Implementasi Sistem Zonasi Pada Program Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB): Studi Kasus SMAN 2 Pekanbaru," *Jurnal Edusiana: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2024): 105–18, <https://doi.org/10.70437/edusiana.v2i1.526>.

¹¹ Nikita Putri Purwati et al., "Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi PPDB Di SMPN 59 Surabaya," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 162–68, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpion.v3i1.247>.

¹² Muhammad Hardifan Asananjaya et al., "Pendekatan Keruangan Tingkat Pemerataan Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri Terhadap Implementasi Kebijakan Zonasi Pendidikan Di Kabupaten Temanggung," *Region: Jurnal Pembangunan Wilayah Dan Perencanaan Partisipatif* 17, no. 2 (2022): 482, <https://doi.org/10.20961/region.v17i2.47331>.

¹³ Kurniawan et al., "Evaluasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Dalam Optimalisasi Aksesibilitas Pendidikan Pada Jenjang Sekolah Menengah Pertama Di Kota Bandar Lampung."

areas that still face disparities between schools, zoning has given rise to new complaints. Differences in teacher quality, classroom numbers, and transportation access pose challenges in effectively implementing the zoning system.¹⁴ On the other hand, the central government has provided alternative pathways such as affirmative action and merit-based pathways to accommodate special needs. However, the zoning system remains the primary pathway and accounts for the largest percentage in the SPMB. Therefore, regular evaluations of the implementation of zoning in each region are essential as a basis for further policy decisions.¹⁵

In the context of educational equity, zoning is actually part of a broader national education system reform.¹⁶ The government not only aims to facilitate access to schools but also seeks to create an equitable and fair educational ecosystem for all segments of society. However, to achieve this goal, strategic steps are required, such as enhancing teacher competencies across all schools, developing equitable infrastructure, and designing a curriculum that is contextually aligned with local needs.¹⁷ In addition, it is also important to encourage active community participation in the supervision and evaluation of the zoning system. Thus, the acceptance of new students is not only an administrative process but also a reflection of the spirit of fairness in education.¹⁸ Educational equity is not only a matter of the number of students but also the quality of services that each child receives wherever they go to school.

Educational equity is a long-term goal that requires a systemic and sustainable approach.¹⁹ The zoning system in the SPMB is a good first step, but it needs to be continuously evaluated and adjusted to the needs of each region. The zoning system in the New Student Admission System plays an important role in creating more equitable and equitable access to education. However, the success of this policy heavily depends on the readiness of infrastructure, the quality of school resources, and public acceptance of the principle of fairness in education.²⁰ Zoning must be

¹⁴ Adisti et al., "Evaluasi Pelaksanaan Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Provinsi Kepulauan Riau Tahun 2023: Studi Kasus SMA Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang."

¹⁵ Hiskia Renaldi Setiawan and Tjitjik Rahaju, "Evaluasi Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (Ppdb) Tingkat Smp Di Kota Surabaya," *Publika* 9, no. 4 (2021): 491–502, <https://doi.org/10.26740/publika.v9n4.p491-502>.

¹⁶ Yuli Riyatno and Titik Haryati, "Pemerataan Mutu Pendidikan Melalui Grand Desain Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Siswa Baru," *Jurnal Pendidikan Terintegrasi* 4, no. 1 (2023): 120–28.

¹⁷ Geby Theresia Br Sagala and Muhammad Arifin Nasution, "Kinerja Dinas Pendidikan Kota Medan Atas Penerapan Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Dalam Upaya Pemerataan Pendidikan Di Kecamatan Medan Baru," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 8, no. 1 (2024): 10508–29.

¹⁸ Afuza Fauziah et al., "Implementasi Sistem Zonasi Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru," *Karimah Tauhid* 3, no. 8 (2019): 9318–26, <https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v3i8.14543>.

¹⁹ Riyatno and Haryati, "Pemerataan Mutu Pendidikan Melalui Grand Desain Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Siswa Baru."

²⁰ Asananjaya et al., "Pendekatan Keruangan Tingkat Pemerataan Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri Terhadap Implementasi Kebijakan Zonasi Pendidikan Di Kabupaten Temanggung."

continuously improved so that it is not merely a tool for dividing regions but becomes an instrument for equitable educational quality.²¹

The government needs to involve all stakeholders in the process of evaluating and improving the zoning system. With a shared commitment, the zoning system can become an important foundation for realizing quality education for all Indonesian children without exception.²² Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the impact of the zoning system on educational equity in the implementation of the SPMB, as well as to describe the dynamics of its implementation at the school level and public perceptions as part of a comprehensive policy evaluation effort.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to reveal and analyze in depth the impact of zoning on educational equity in the implementation of the New Student Admission System.²³ This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the phenomenon contextually from the perspective of education stakeholders directly involved in the process. This study focuses on describing the experiences and perspectives of teachers as technical implementers in the field regarding the implementation of zoning and its impact on student distribution and the equity of education quality.

The subjects of this study were teachers who taught at public elementary and secondary schools that had implemented a zoning system in the process of accepting new students. Respondents were selected purposively, taking into account their direct involvement in the SPMB process and their understanding of the impact of zoning on the conditions of their respective schools.²⁴ Teachers were chosen because they are the main actors in the adaptation of the zoning policy in the school environment and have relevant empirical experience.

The research instrument was a closed questionnaire, designed using a five-point Likert scale to measure teachers' attitudes and perceptions of several key aspects.²⁵ The aspects studied included: (1) perceptions of the objectives and implementation of zoning, (2) the influence of zoning on

²¹ Mahmud et al., "Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi: Implementasi Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Di Sekolah Menengah Atas," *JAMP : Jurnal Administrasi Dan Manajemen Pendidikan* 7, no. 1 (2024): 149–61, <https://doi.org/10.17977/um027v7i12024p139>.

²² Via Oktaviani et al., "Evaluasi Dampak Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Terhadap Pemerataan Akses Pendidikan Di Tingkat Sekolah Dasar Dan Menengah," *Ekopedia: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi* 1, no. 2 (2025): 71–77, <https://doi.org/10.63822/6w0yna96>.

²³ Setiawan and Rahaju, "Evaluasi Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (Ppdb) Tingkat Smp Di Kota Surabaya."

²⁴ Hamidatul Khalifah et al., "Persepsi Guru Terhadap Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru," *Journal on Education* 07, no. 02 (2025): 8929–38.

²⁵ Vika Ardianti and Achmad Supriyanto, "Evaluasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar/SMP," *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan* 18, no. 2 (2021): 191–98, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jap.v28i2.34244>.

student distribution and access to education, and (3) its impact on learning conditions and the quality of education in schools. The rating scale consists of five options: “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Neutral,” “Agree,” and “Strongly Agree.” The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms to efficiently reach respondents and enable the collection of a large amount of data in a short time. The statements used in the questionnaire can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire Instrument

Num.	Statement
1.	The zoning system in SPMB aims to create equal access to education
2.	I understand the concept and mechanism of the zoning system in SPMB
3.	My school implements the zoning system in accordance with government regulations
4.	The process of accepting new students through the zoning system runs smoothly
5.	The zoning system provides fairness for students in accessing public schools
6.	The zoning system helps distribute students evenly across all schools
7.	After zoning was implemented, the number of students at my school became more balanced
8.	Zoning reduces the concentration of students only in favorite schools
9.	The zoning policy contributes to the equal distribution of education quality in my area
10.	The zoning system encourages quality improvement in schools that were previously less popular
11.	The composition of students in the classroom has become more diverse after the implementation of zoning
12.	The existence of zoning does not reduce the quality of learning at my school
13.	My school was able to accommodate the increase in student numbers after zoning was implemented
14.	The zoning policy has added new challenges to the learning process
15.	I feel supported by the technical guidelines from the government regarding the zoning system

The data obtained from the questionnaire results were then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.²⁶ In the data reduction stage, the researchers sorted and filtered the questionnaire responses relevant to the research focus. The data was then

²⁶ Qomaruddin and Halimah Sa'diyah, “Kajian Teoritis Tentang Teknik Analisis Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles Dan Huberman,” *Journal of Management, Accounting and Administration* 1, no. 2 (2024): 77–84, <https://doi.org/10.52620/jomaa.v1i2.93>.

presented in the form of frequency tables, thematic graphs, and descriptive narratives to illustrate general trends and variations in respondents' perceptions. The final stage, verification, is conducted by linking the analyzed data with theory and existing zoning policies to produce academically accountable conclusions. Through this approach, the study aims to provide a clear picture of teachers' responses and experiences regarding the implementation of the zoning system, as well as the extent to which such policies contribute to educational equity within their respective school environments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The zoning policy in the New Student Admission System is a strategic step taken by the government to create more equitable access to education throughout Indonesia.²⁷ With the principle of geographical proximity as the basis for student admission, it is hoped that there will no longer be a dichotomy between “excellent” and “ordinary” schools. Every public school, especially at the elementary and secondary levels, is required to accept students from the surrounding area so that there is a balance in the number of students and academic potential across all educational units.²⁸ However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of zoning has not fully met expectations. Disparities in facility quality, teacher quality, and public perception of school quality remain challenges that affect the effectiveness of this policy. Therefore, a thorough evaluation is needed, drawing from the direct experiences of education stakeholders, particularly teachers who are directly impacted by the policy in the classroom.²⁹

This study seeks to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of zoning in public primary and secondary schools. Through a questionnaire, teachers were asked to assess various statements reflecting three main aspects, namely understanding of the zoning policy, its impact on student distribution and access to education, and its influence on learning conditions and the quality of educational services in schools.³⁰ As both technical actors and direct observers of classroom dynamics and the school environment, teachers' perspectives serve as an important indicator in measuring the extent to which the zoning system

²⁷ Novi Sri Lestari et al., “Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Pada Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) Sebagai Upaya Pemerataan Pendidikan di SMA Negeri Kabupaten Gresik,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Publik (JIAP)* 10, no. 2 (2024): 219–27, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jiap.2024.010.02.10>.

²⁸ Teke Sartika Iriany et al., “Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Di Kabupaten Garut,” *Pembangunan Dan Kebijakan Publik* 11, no. 2 (2020): 15–20, <https://doi.org/10.36624/jpkp.v11i2.75>.

²⁹ Muhamad Husein Maruapey et al., “Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Tingkat SMP Di Kabupaten Bogor,” *Sawala: Jurnal Administrasi Negara* 12, no. 2 (2024): 341–52, <https://doi.org/10.30656/sawala.v12i2.r5819s65>.

³⁰ Iriany et al., “Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Di Kabupaten Garut.”

truly contributes to educational equity.³¹ The data collected through this questionnaire was then analyzed thematically and descriptively to reveal trends in teachers' perceptions and present findings that could be used as material for evaluation and the formulation of more responsive and adaptive follow-up policies to conditions in the field.³² The following table 2 presents an overview of teachers' responses to each statement in the questionnaire instrument, visually illustrating their level of understanding, acceptance, and evaluation of the zoning policy in their respective schools.

Table 2. Respondents' responses

Statement	Score				
	1	2	3	4	5
S1	1	6	1	11	31
S2	0	2	0	19	29
S3	0	0	3	20	27
S4	0	11	2	13	24
S5	1	9	2	14	24
S6	2	6	2	16	24
S7	0	9	1	19	21
S8	0	11	2	14	23
S9	1	6	2	18	23
S10	1	5	1	17	26
S11	0	2	1	22	25
S12	1	6	0	21	22
S13	1	6	1	21	21
S14	0	0	4	19	27
S15	0	3	1	24	22

Based on table 2 above, most respondents in this study demonstrated a good understanding of the zoning policy. In statements S1 to S3, which describe teachers' level of understanding of the concept and objectives of zoning, the majority of teachers gave positive responses with scores of 4 and 5. A total of 31 teachers strongly agreed with statement S1, while statements S2 and S3 also received strong support from teachers, with 48 and 47 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, respectively. These findings indicate that, in general, teachers have understood the essence of the zoning policy as the government's effort to create equitable access to education, and there is no significant resistance to its basic concept.

However, when discussing the impact of zoning on student distribution and access to education (S4 to S9), variations in responses began to emerge, indicating challenges in

³¹ Maruapey et al., "Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Tingkat SMP Di Kabupaten Bogor."

³² Aliem Bahri et al., "Persepsi Guru Terhadap Implementasi Kebijakan Zonasi Sekolah Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (Ppdb) Di Kec. Rappocini Makasar," *Buana Pendidikan: Jurnal Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 16, no. 29 (2020): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.36456/bp.vol16.no29.a2264>.

implementation. For example, in P4 and P5, there was uncertainty among some teachers, with many scores of 2 and 3 indicating that perceptions were not entirely positive. Nevertheless, the majority still tended to support this policy. In statements S6 to S9, teachers tend to evaluate positively, as seen from the high scores of 4 and 5 given by more than 40 respondents in each statement. This reflects that teachers recognize the contribution of zoning in expanding student access to nearby schools, although there are still challenges in implementation in certain schools, particularly in terms of facility distribution and quality equity.

Furthermore, in terms of the impact of zoning on the learning process and the quality of educational services in schools (S10–S15), teachers' responses showed a more optimistic trend. Most teachers gave scores of 4 and 5 to these statements, indicating acceptance of the new reality in schools after zoning. Statements S14 and S15 even received the highest level of agreement, with 46 teachers giving high scores. This indicates that teachers see the potential for improvement in education quality as a long-term impact of zoning, although this must be balanced with other supporting policies such as teacher distribution, infrastructure improvements, and more inclusive classroom management training.³³ Thus, the results of this questionnaire provide a fairly strong indication that teachers support the objectives of zoning but hope for strengthened implementation at the school level.

The results of the questionnaire analysis show that most teachers have a good understanding of the zoning policy. They understand that this policy aims to create equal access to education for all levels of society by bringing students closer to schools in their residential areas. These findings are in line with the research by Bahri et al.,³⁴ which states that the understanding of education actors regarding the objectives of zoning is an important factor in supporting the optimal implementation of the policy. This good understanding among teachers is an important asset in encouraging active involvement in the implementation of the policy at the school level.

However, in terms of student distribution and access to education, there are still varying views among teachers. Some teachers agree that zoning helps distribute students more evenly, but others express doubts about the effectiveness of this policy. This statement indicates that the implementation of zoning in the field is not entirely ideal and is greatly influenced by the readiness of each school. This is reinforced by the findings of Iriany et al.,³⁵ which reveal that the lack of readiness of school facilities and infrastructure is the main obstacle to the fair and equitable implementation of zoning in various regions.

³³ Khalifah et al., "Persepsi Guru Terhadap Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru."

³⁴ Bahri et al., "Persepsi Guru Terhadap Implementasi Kebijakan Zonasi Sekolah Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (Ppdb) Di Kec. Rappocini Makasar."

³⁵ Iriany et al., "Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Di Kabupaten Garut."

Furthermore, the impact of zoning on the learning process is also highlighted in this study. Although most teachers gave positive assessments of the changes that occurred, some of them said that the increase in the number of students was not always accompanied by an increase in classroom capacity and teaching staff. This places an additional burden on teachers and has the potential to reduce the quality of learning if not addressed immediately. As stated by Maruapey et al.,³⁶ zoning policies will be successful if they are accompanied by the equitable distribution of educational resources, both in terms of infrastructure and teacher competence.

One interesting finding is that zoning indirectly encourages schools that were previously less popular to improve themselves. With the influx of students from the nearest zone, schools are required to improve the quality of their educational services in order to meet the expectations of the surrounding community.³⁷ Some teachers acknowledge that zoning has led to improvements in school management, including discipline, learning programs, and gradual facility upgrades.³⁸ Although these changes have not been uniform across all schools, the push for improvement indicates that the zoning policy has the potential to trigger internal school reform.

Overall, the implementation of zoning still poses various challenges, but it also opens up opportunities for improving the education system to be more equitable and fair.³⁹ The role of teachers as technical implementers is crucial in providing feedback from the field that can be used as a basis for policy evaluation. Therefore, moving forward, there needs to be strengthened collaboration between the central government, local governments, and schools to ensure the readiness of resources, equitable distribution of teachers, and ongoing professional development.⁴⁰ With regular evaluations and adequate supporting policies, the zoning system can become a strategic tool in achieving inclusive and equitable education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussions, it can be concluded that the zoning policy in SPMB is well understood by the majority of teachers as a strategic effort by the

³⁶ Maruapey et al., "Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Tingkat SMP Di Kabupaten Bogor."

³⁷ Eni Syafitri and Agus Mahfud Fauzi, "Implementasi Kebijakan Sistem Zonasi Dalam Pemerataan Pendidikan Di SMAN 1 Kamal," *Equilibrium: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Ekonomi* 18, no. 1 (2021): 33–40, <https://doi.org/10.25134/equi.v18i01>.

³⁸ Azizah Arifinna Safarah and Udik Budi Wibowo, "Program Zonasi Di Sekolah Dasar Sebagai Upaya Pemerataan Kualitas Pendidikan Di Indonesia," *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 21, no. 2 (2018): 206, <https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2018v21n2i6>.

³⁹ Akhyar, "Implementasi Sistem Zonasi Pada Program Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB): Studi Kasus SMAN 2 Pekanbaru."

⁴⁰ Kasiati et al., "Evaluasi Implementasi PPDB Zonasi Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Di SMPN 107 Jakarta," *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan* 18, no. 1 (2021): 17–30, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jap.v28i1.32095>.

government to create equal access to education. Teachers recognize that the primary objective of the zoning system is to reduce disparities between schools and promote equitable quality of students across all educational institutions. However, its implementation in practice still faces various challenges, particularly related to infrastructure readiness, disparities in the quality of educators, and public perceptions of school quality. In practice, zoning has had a positive impact in distributing students more evenly and encouraging schools to improve educational services. However, the implementation of this policy has not been fully supported by equitable distribution of resources and adequate technical support, so it has not been optimal in achieving equitable education quality across all regions. Therefore, continuous evaluation, holistic supporting policies, and active involvement of stakeholders, especially teachers as the main actors on the ground, are needed to ensure that the zoning policy can truly become an effective instrument in achieving a fair, equitable, and quality education system for all children of the nation.

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