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Implementing New Student Admission Regulations for SDG 4: Opportunities and Challenges in Elementary Schools in Gresik District, Indonesia

Nur Hamidaha*, Mustaji, Bambang Sigit Widodo

Univeristas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore opportunities and challenges in implementing the New Student Admission Policy (PPDB) at elementary schools in Gresik Regency, East Java, Indonesia. It examines how local education authorities manage national regulations in alignment with social, cultural, and geographical contexts. **Method:** A qualitative approach was used, with data collected through interviews with elementary school stakeholders under the Gresik Regency Education Office. The data were analyzed based on relevant policy concepts and regulations to understand local implementation practices. **Results:** Successful PPDB implementation depends on local actors' ability to understand, respond to, and manage complex social and administrative demands. Flexible and locally adapted policies promote equitable access, relevant educational outcomes, and quality services. Effective implementation requires cross-institutional coordination, strong social networks, and community participation. Zoning systems and affirmative policies are crucial to prevent exclusion and ensure schools in low-attractiveness areas receive adequate support. **Novelty:** This study provides a novel contribution by examining the implementation of new student admission regulations in Indonesian elementary schools from the perspective of equitable educational access and policy implementation. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on administrative procedures or regulatory compliance, this research explores how the policy creates both opportunities and challenges for schools, educators, and local stakeholders while contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly through promoting equitable, inclusive, and accessible basic education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main thing that requires attention from all groups. Educational progress is the leading barometer of a nation's progress (Zhang, 2020). Education development in Indonesia is still catching up compared to developed countries worldwide. Many things still need to be considered in organizing education in Indonesia, starting from the structure and content of the curriculum, learning concepts, and learning processes that lead to the development of learning methods and media as well as class management, facilities, and infrastructure, educational evaluation to educational financing which has continued to develop according to the needs and developments in the world of education (Parlina et al., 2023).

The implementation of new student admission policies is closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), which seeks to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. Effective admission policies play a crucial role in providing fair educational opportunities, reducing disparities in access to basic education, and promoting inclusive school systems. In particular, Target 4.1 emphasizes universal access to quality primary education, while Target 4.5 highlights the importance of eliminating inequalities in educational access. Therefore, evaluating the

implementation of student admission regulations is essential for understanding how education policies contribute to achieving these global educational objectives.

The role of government is the main thing that supports the success of education in Indonesia. Educational policies made by the central government are the milestones for implementing education in the lowest sector, namely educational units, as the primary implementers of the education process (Muzamil et al., 2024). For this reason, appropriate policies are needed that favor all groups without any basis of interests that are often confusing for their implementation at the lowest level. Policy education has the same meaning as policy government in field education (Li & Xue, 2022). If you look at it Again policy education results from selected people/units, products from several inputs, and all parties to improve quality education (Mtitu, 2025). Therefore, policy is a grand design or decision made by an authorized person, like planning programs that will be implemented to reach objectives. Education Policy leads to decisions being made as rule-related matters concerning education in various implementations (McNelis et al., 2010). It requires accuracy in formulating policy education so that its implementation meets the desired goal.

Quality education has become the center of attention at the national level by the terms and conditions stated in Regulation President Number 18 of 2020 concerning the Long Term Development Plan National Middle School 2020-2024. The planned development of Indonesia for the 2020-2024 period aims to create superior human resources (HR) that are quality and power competitive, including aspects of health and intelligence, adaptability, innovation, skills, and character. To achieve the target, focus policy development is placed in the setting growth population, improving governance population, fulfillment service base including education and social protection, improvement quality of children, women, and youth, reduction level poverty, and improvement productivity and power competition power work. The approach cycle is alive and inclusive and becomes a runway in policy development, with notice that good resident age is needed, as well as residents with disabilities and management Talented Human Resources.

Unit education for the public is placed to form a generation of qualified and empowered young people. Life is getting better and more competitive in the middle of the competition. Education is a strategic and decisive effort to form the character and morals of the generation of young people who support hope in the nation in the future. Existing institutions' education must align with the needs and commitments of nationality. To make smart life choices, the nation became ideals fundamental from system management education, starting from basic, intermediate, until college high (Bonkounou & Nesterov, 2021). Even though that's how it is, that's how it's the main problem in some institutions' education level base. Still, there are lots of classic problems that significantly inhibit progress in education.

Obstacles in management institution education are more easily identified at the elementary school level than with higher education (Cahapin et al., 2023). This is due to the assumption that Elementary school is still considered a low level of education, with more units than Secondary and higher education levels. Especially after the enforcement of autonomy region, management of Basic Education becomes not quite enough to answer government area local (Gallia, 2024).

Several problem-related management system education issues in Gresik Regency Elementary Schools have been noticed. As seen from the Human Development Index, the development of humans in Gresik continues to increase in a way consistent over 5 years. Growth pattern The Human Development Index for 2017-2021 shows continuous improvement, although gradually. 2020, the general national improvement was as much as

0.02, reaching 71.94 compared to 71.92 in 2019. In 2021, the national level increased by 0.35 to 72.29. In East Java Province, the Human Development Index in 5 years finally experienced a significant increase, up by 0.43 in 2021, reaching 72.14 from 71.74 in 2020. Regency's Human Development Index increased from 76.11 in 2020 to 76.50 in 2021, with an increase of 0.39. Increase This reflects improvement in quality development man from year to year, exceeding the level of East Java Province and national. The province's average schooling length reached 7.88 years, while in Gresik Regency, it reached 9.56 years. This figure indicates that the people of Gresik have accepted education for 9 years (equivalent to class 3 junior high school/ equivalent), shows achievement from the mandatory program study 9 years the government has implemented, and can extend become a study 12 years or graduated from high school/ equivalent.

Reach implementation must study 12 years in Gresik Regency, which is still considered a considerable challenge. The population of Gresik Regency, based on projected residents in 2021, reached 1,312,881 individuals, consisting of 650,973 men and 661,908 women. Thus, the information obtained from the Population and Registry Service Civil Gresik Regency shows that in 2021, the population of Gresik Regency reached 1,298,184 individuals, consisting of 652,982 men and 645,202 women. The Population density in Gresik Regency in the year reached 1,089 people /km², with members per house ladder ranging between 3-4 people. The density level population in 18 sub-districts shows significant variation, where the Gresik sub-district recorded the highest density of 14,882 people /km². In contrast, the subdistrict Pond recorded a density lowest of 413 people /km². In 2019, the number of families in Gresik Regency reached 389,072 families.

The acquisition amount participants educate will impact related management directly with the acquisition Operational Assistance budget School. The government of Gresik Regency is trying to shelter all education units within the Gresik Regency Education Office. Through the allocation budget, Gresik Regency Regional Government is a good education unit. Elementary Schools and Madrasah Intidaiyah get assistance from the government center through Cost Operational School (BOS). The government of the Gresik district has made an effort to equalize the acquisition budget of the institution in the Department of Education environment.

However, education units exist in matter management, and various problems arise. In some areas, case scramble participants educated at the beginning year teachings new. The imbalance between the number of students who enter elementary school and MI becomes quite a problem and often happens in elementary school education, with a few students compared to those in MI and vice versa. The student is the raw input that must be noticed. Some elementary schools even have students (Atmojo et al., 2025). Far from average, many student institutions still demand equal rights with institutions whose students are bigger. They still demand equal treatment if costs are operational until fulfillment facilities and infrastructure are available.

Management education is personal or a group of people who use planning, organizing, directing, controlling as well and supervision source Power in a way practical and ethical way to develop potential self, ability and shaping character to become a man who believes, is devout to God Almighty, have morals noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, become democratic and responsible citizens answer. In implementing education management in schools, participant education has become one of the necessary areas of attention. One element most important in system education and the learning process at school is participant learners. Student Components need to be managed with a strong

foundation so that effective and efficient management and participant education can reach optimal performance. Participant components education in schools/madrasahs has a critical position. Because participant education becomes the institution school's input, process, and output. Participants educate the subject at a time object in transforming visible knowledge and skills from results education passed in an institution that delivers to his future success.

Management participant education occupies a very important place because all activities at school are ultimately intended to help students develop themselves optimally. Thus, center service education in school is participant education. The education of the participants becomes a vital factor for the school. Because of their presence, participants educate and provide nuanced educational activities that can give birth to reliable future generations of a nation (Thi et al., 2025). Therefore, it is important to review the reformulation policy Reception Participant New Education (PPDB), which has an impact on management participant education in school education units. Research This explores system management participants' education in a way that institutional institutions level school basic, national, and private schools to reach standard quality schools that became a favorite school with accreditation from proud institutions. Studies will be done on the theory that can push innovation schools small to reach criteria superior with relatively more output Good from time to time. That is expected and can become a recommendation for Lots Elementary Education Unit in Gresik.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research approaches and types

Types of research This use studies case management participants educated in Elementary Schools (SD) under the auspices of the Gresik Regency Education Office and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) under the Ministry of Religion of Gresik Regency. Cases in two different educational units shade the leading to implementation policy Reception New Students (PPDB) in each beginning year teachings new. Research introduction is done by collecting quantity data on participants' education, observing phenomena occurring in each educational unit in frame management participant education received at the beginning year's new teachings. Next, the researcher will analyze problems that arise from various source informants. As material analysis implementation of the PPDB policy, researchers also carry out studies literature as a foothold in overcoming the issues that arise in implementing the PPDB policy.

Place and time of research

The research was conducted in the Gresik Regency, namely in several Elementary School Education Units under the guidance of the Gresik Regency Education Office and MI Education Units under the guidance of the Gresik Regency Ministry of Religion from January 2024 to July 2024. Several of these elementary school/MI education units are basic education units whose management refers to the policies of two ministries, namely the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the Ministry of Religion, in the implementation of which there are often differences in concepts, especially in the Gresik Regency regional government environment.

Research data

1. Data: This study's data will be the number of students in elementary school education units in the Gresik district, categorized from the most to the least number of students.

2. **Data Source:** The first data source in this study comes from the Gresik Regency Education Office's data center in the form of the PD-Seru application, which contains a recap of the total number of students in Elementary Schools (SD) in Gresik Regency, mainly student data in the early grades, as a description of student management resulting from the New Student Admissions (PPDB) process at the beginning of the school year.

Method of collecting data

To find data to support this research, various methods are used to collect data, including:

1. **Observation Participants:** The researcher accessed information from the Gresik Regency Education Office and the Gresik Regency Ministry of Religion to obtain initial data about participant education. The observation process starts with data collection quantity participant education until the Acceptance process of New Students (PPDB) in Elementary Schools and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Researchers observe implementation policies referencing the Reception of New Students (PPDB) in Elementary Schools and Elementary Madrasahs (MI) in Gresik Regency.
2. **In-depth Interview:** The interview is deep and done using an open approach to gather comprehensive data. The researcher conducted interviews with several party-maker policies and implementers policies in several SD or MI institutions that implement Reception of New Students (PPDB) in Elementary Schools (SD) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI).
3. **Documentation:** The researcher gathers documentation in the form of initial data, notes, photos, and anything else that can support the research results. The data will be taken from the data center at the Gresik Regency Education Office, the Ministry of Religion Office for the Gresik Regency area, and elementary/Islamic elementary schools in Gresik Regency.
4. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** The implementation of FGD (Focus Group Discussion) is also scheduled in the study. This is To reveal data and meaning from a group of people based on results discussions focusing on research issues. FGD involves several groups, including stakeholders' interest or taker policy like the Regent /Deputy Regent of Gresik, Gresik DPRD, Head of Gresik Regency Education Office, Head of Ministry of Religion for Gresik Regency, Head Field Management of Elementary Schools, Gresik Regency Education Office, Head Sexy Elementary School Institutions, Head Madrasah and Religious Education Section of the Ministry of Religion Gresik Regency, Forkopimda, Elementary School Principals, MI Principals in Gresik Regency, communities affected by the implementation PPDB policy in Gresik district.
5. **Survey:** The survey was conducted at the Gresik Regency Education Office to manage Elementary Schools (SD) and the Ministry of Religion Office of Gresik Regency to manage Elementary Madrasah (MI) in Gresik Regency. Research: The survey also included Elementary and Islamic elementary school institutions based on the proportion of the population that becomes the target.
6. **Triangulation:** Triangulation tests data credibility from various data collection techniques and sources. It also merges multiple data collection techniques and existing data sources obtained. Thus, it aims to test data credibility and inspect consistent results from various data collection techniques and sources.

Data analysis

Approach data analysis in the study qualitatively uses ethnography, as proposed by Judith L (Green et al., 2005), which involves several steps, including an analysis realm (area) that finds parts and elements that mean culture with a focus on small categories. Observation focus is used after completing a domain list to serve structural questions and acquire detailed information. Analysis taxonomy helps identify the areas that will be studied more deeply by understanding the connection between components. Analysis componential is an effort to look for related attributes with category culture with a method that looks for contrast, categorizes, and tests truth through observation of participants. Analysis theme aiming to reveal theme culture as rules recognized cognitive as truth by society.

In general, the qualitative approach of analysis ethnography emphasizes the invention parts culture, the relationship between parts said, and the relationship overall scene culture (Williamson et al., 2024). The cultural theme was identified through disclosure rules underlying cognitive patterns in culture, with strategic assistance such as drowning the researcher in scene culture, analysis componential, perspective area, and searching universal themes such as conflict social and management connection social.

Data validity check

Data validity is checked during the data collection process to maintain the validity and reliability of the research results. The purpose is to increase trust, reliability, dependability, and certainty. The data analysis process is carried out along with collection and after. Research This conducts data validity tests to evaluate credibility (internal validity), transferability (internal validity), external, dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity). Testing the credibility of data in a qualitative study involving several strategies, such as improvement perseverance in the study, can achieved through extension observation, application triangulation (sources, techniques, and time), analysis of case negative, discussion with colleague peers, utilization of material references, and member check. Validity external evaluates how far the study results can be applied to the population from which the sample is drawn and the study was taken. The research sample originates from element stakeholders' policy, representation figures, and the community that becomes implementers and targets management institutional Elementary Schools in Gresik Regency. Reliability study tested through an audit of the entire research process, ensuring that the process can be repeated or replicated by other parties.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of PPDB in Indonesia is not viewed as a generic and uniform policy but rather as a system that heavily influences the philosophy, regulation, and context institutions of each ministry organizer's education. The dynamics of differences between Ministry of Education and Culture state schools and Ministry of Religion madrasahs in matters of quota track zoning, selection participant education, and governance regulation precisely enrich treasury policy education and strengthen Indonesia's position in building a system of inclusive, equitable, and responsive education to the challenges of the times.

Geographic and demographic patterns in formation preference educational units in Gresik regency

Interview results with stakeholders' policies in the Gresik Regency Education Office environment show the existence of a configuration complex that reflects the close relationship between factors of geography and demographics in influencing the public's choice of type unit education. In this context, the choice of public Elementary School (SD) is not solely based on considerations related to curriculum and infrastructure. Still, it is also rooted in the system mark social, structure religious community, accessibility to service education, and the level of literacy and awareness education that varies in each region. This phenomenon indicates that the preference for public nature is contextual and dynamic and influenced by ecology and social nature, which is heterogeneous in the Gresik Regency.

From the interview findings, the preference of Gresik society toward unit education is not uniform. Still, it results in the interaction dynamic between determinant geographic and demographic. Preference patterns show the consistent division between areas based on religiosity, height, and proximity symbolic to religious institutions, which tend to select MI, and more areas open to modernization education with a strong preference towards SD. Not only that, but the election unit education also shows a close relationship with economic status, family, level of parental education, and availability, which means infrastructure-representative education.

Thus, development strategies and policies for education based on Gresik Regency must be designed holistically with notice of diverse existing spaces and demographics. Policy models that accommodate diversity value, expand access to education, and strengthen capacity institution education in both elementary and MI proportionality are essential. To create a fair, just education that is spatial and capable of answering the dynamics of society in an era of transformation that is increasingly socially complex. Local data-based, participatory, and contextual approaches must be made a foothold in designing more inclusive and adaptive governance in the Gresik Regency.

Main factors that influence community preferences in choosing education units

Interview results deep with stakeholders' interest strategic in the Gresik Regency Education Office environment revealed the complexity preference public in determining the choice to unit education Basic. Options This is not naturally spontaneous or just pragmatic but is a manifestation of dynamics of sociological layers, including ideological, religious, geographical, institutional, and aspiration socio-economic society. Four determinant central identified in a way consistent from various perspective resource persons, namely: (1) internalization of religious values in structure social; (2) perception of quality and credibility of academic institution education; (3) availability and completeness of infrastructure education; and (4) factors proximity geographical or accessibility physical that allows.

Therefore, formulating policy education on a relevant and adaptive basis must leave from understanding holistic to configuration value, context spatial, and dynamics institutions that form a decision society. The government area is not only sued for equalization administrative but also necessary for designing and reinforcing affirmative strategies' capacity locally, mitigating disparity quality between institutions, and ensuring the relevance of curriculum to needs, both cultural and global. Approaching local data-based, consultative, and equitable spatial will become the foundation essential for creating a responsive system, empowering education transformation, and navigating complex challenges in future education.

The problem in the implementation of the PPDB policy

Study This discloses that various problems arising in PPDB implementation are more based on socio-cultural problems than technical and administrative aspects. Inequality preference high society against MI in the region with domination mark religious show that system zoning applied in elementary schools has not accommodated diversity aspiration society. As a result, many elementary schools experience a decline in registrants, especially in areas that are culturally and near the institution.

Furthermore, the limitations of communication public and low literacy public the transformation of SD into a factor important causes inequality. The community does not know SD innovations such as integrating religious values in the curriculum, tahfidz program, and training character based on religion. On the other hand, legitimacy, social, and symbolic MI is stronger Because of his closeness with a network of Islamic boarding schools and local religious figures. In addition, the weakness of spatial and social data as a basis for planning policy can worsen the situation because decisions are not based on accurate and up-to-date mapping needs.

Role of local government

Government Gresik Regency is firmly committed to its role as a facilitator and driver of motor policy education. Various programs have been designed and implemented To strengthen the capacity of elementary school institutions, such as physical development infrastructure, provision of proper learning, training sustainable for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, and compilation curriculum based on mark local. Approach This shows that the government area becomes the executor of the technical policy center, and an actor's active policy creates a regional solution.

The coordination sector, especially between the Department of Education and the Ministry of Religion, also became important in harmonizing PPDB policy. In addition, communication through various digital and face media has been used systematically to reach the public and convey the message policy transparently. In some cases, competition between SD and MI in the field even creates positive dynamics that drive each institution to increase quality service education.

Reformulation PPDB policy

Study This emphasizes the urgency of reformulation of PPDB policy that is not only naturally technical and administrative but also pays attention to social values, culture, and aspirations of the public. System applicable zoning moment This needs to be designed and repeated considering the distribution institution's character building socio-geographical and capacity power to accommodate each school. Policy affirmative action in favor of SD in areas with low power pull must developed To avoid exclusion institutions and inequality in access to education.

A curriculum sensitive to religious and cultural values must be made into the runway to form a competitive SD identity in a way of value, not only in academics. Government areas are also encouraged to strengthen spatial data integration and longitudinal analysis in compiling planning terms that are longer, more accurate, and more sustainable. On the other hand, institutions needed to improve synergy between the Department of Education and the Ministry of Religion through regular forums, the preparation of technical guides, and a cross-teacher training agency.

In general, research confirms that successful PPDB policy is determined by the ability of

the government to understand, respond, and manage complex social policies that develop in society. Policies that are flexible, reflective, and based on local will be more capable of creating a system of education that guarantees equalization access, relevance value, and quality services. As taker policies at the micro level, government areas are key in bridging national regulations with the need for genuine public locals. Therefore, synergy across institutions, strengthening social networks, and public participation becomes essential in creating progressive, equitable, and sustainable education.

Reformulation PPDB policy

Based on the results of interviews with five officials of the Gresik Regency Education Office, it can be seen that policy Reception New Students (PPDB) is assessed as sufficiently responsive to the different public preferences between Elementary Schools (SD) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). However, several reformulations are still required in aspect implementation in the field. Each resource person conveys deep insight into various aspects of policies, including the distribution of information, the role of religious education, personal approach, and coordination of institutional and communication strategies public.

In general, the fifth source person agreed that the PPDB policy has its own framework and a good foundation. However, there is still room For improvement, especially in answer preference society that prioritizes aspect religion. An approach based on information, adaptive curriculum, continuous counseling, and intensive collaboration across sectors has become central to reforming PPDB policy. Government Gresik Regency must ensure that all policies implemented are still based on the principles of justice, inclusivity, and diversity preference society to realize equal access to education quality foundation.

Adaptation of PPDB policy to religious area needs

Based on the results of interviews with officials in the Gresik Regency Education Office environment, it is known that there is sufficient discourse. It plans significant adjustments and strengthening policy Reception of New Students (PPDB). The goal is for the policy to become more adaptive and accommodating to needs and dynamic communities, especially in areas with high religious fanaticism. The fifth source person agreed that the success of PPDB depends not only on the technical regulation but also to what extent the policy can answer the public's different preferences in choosing between the Elementary School (SD) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Therefore, the PPDB policy to the front must be designed in a way that is more contextual, participatory, and sensitive to local values. In general, interviews with stakeholders interested in education show that reformulation of adaptive PPDB policy in the context of social society, especially in matters of religion, becomes a demand that is not inevitable.

Through synergy cross-sector, approach curriculum based on local, innovative learning, and reinforcement communication public, expected PPDB policy can ensure equality access, improve quality education, and answer the aspiration public to choose between SD and MI in general more fair, transparent, and just.

Recommendations for responsive PPDB policy improvements to socio-cultural differences in gresik regency

Based on interviews with five officials in the Gresik Regency Education Office, various inputs and recommendations were obtained for the repair policy of Reception New Students (PPDB) to be more responsive to different socio-cultural aspects in each region. Social and

cultural considerations are important. Remember, diversity exists in various sub-districts, starting from other patterns, thinking public until preference education based on religion or academics.

Discussion

Implementation policy reception new students (PPDB) elementary schools (SD) under the auspices of the Gresik regency education office and management elementary education unit (MI) under the auspices of the ministry of religion of Gresik regency

Implementation policy Reception New Student Admissions (PPDB) in Gresik Regency reflects a structural and substantial distinction between two entities organizing education on a basis that has an institutional basis and orientation of different values, namely Elementary Schools (SD) are under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud), and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) are under the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag). The difference is seen in administrative and regulatory aspects and reflects orientation philosophical and the practical strategies each institution implements.

In the context of elementary schools, the implementation of PPDB refers to Permendikbud No. 1 of 2021, which explicitly set that at least 70% of quota participants' education must be allocated through track zoning. The policy's primary purpose is to equalize spatially, reinforce the function of the school as an institutional community, and reduce disparity in access between regions. Meanwhile, MI, which operates under the Ministry of Religion, refers to annual internal policies, such as the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 7021 of 2023, with portion zoning only by 30%. The rest, MI, has the freedom To use track affirmation, achievement, and track displacement, which makes it more flexible in netting students from various social and geographical backgrounds.

Quantitative data show inequality is significant in distribution unit education fundamentals. Gresik Regency has 389 public elementary schools and only two public MI. On the other hand, in the education sector, private MI totals 370 units, far more lots than private elementary schools, which only total 77 schools. This fact shows different patterns in state and society civil involvement in organizational education. State structures more support SD, while MI grows fertile as a form of participation society – especially institution religion and Islamic foundations – in providing service education based on mark.

Analysis distribution students disclose that total MI students consistently exceed elementary school students in sub-districts like Bungah, Manyar, and Ujungpangkah. In contrast, elementary schools remain choice-dominant in areas such as Driyorejo, Menganti, and Gresik City. Findings This shows a strong correlation between the distribution of institutional education and socio-religious characteristics. Thus, the implementation strategy of the PPDB policy must consider demographic and socio-cultural dynamics at the local level.

From the perspective of the theory of policy public condition, This is in line with the "multi-level governance" approach proposed by Hooghe and Marks (2018), which emphasizes that implementation policies at the local level must be capable of adapting framework normatively national with condition complex and diverse social. Government Gresik Regency has to respond to this matter by developing several policy-relevant derivatives in a way locally, such as strengthening religious education in elementary schools, implementing the Al-Quran memorization program, developing Islamic Religious Education, teachers, and involving religious figures in activity schools.

In perspective, justice education, the approach applied by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religion reflects different assumptions based on equality. If

zoning in SD is intended To prioritize "equality of access," then flexibility in MI reflects adapting the "equality of recognition" approach with diverse public preferences. Furthermore, the approach differentiation policy can also be understood through "institutional complementarity" (Hall & Soskice, 2003). In theory, SD and MI are not seen as competing entities in a way antagonistic but precisely as mutually supportive institutions. SD stands out in preparation ability literacy, numeracy, and competency in the 21st century, while MI strengthens dimensions of values, spirituality, and religious character. This combination gives more choices for society and, if managed by the government area, will create an ecosystem with a more basic, responsive, adaptive, and inclusive ecosystem education.

This is also reinforced by the "value-sensitive policy implementation approach," which emphasizes that the successful implementation of policy is measured by administrative efficiency and by the extent to which the policy can answer values and societal expectations (Honey & Carrasco, 2023). In the context of Gresik, which has a variety of religious and geographical preferences, the PPDB policy must be run holistically considering social reality. For example, affirmative action programs in elementary schools in areas that tend to be religious can integrated with activity, spiritual, and value-based locally. In contrast, MI in urban areas can reinforced with training in modern pedagogy and the digitalization of madrasas.

The implementation of PPDB in Gresik Regency also shows that policy-good education must be eclectic, combining legal-formal aspects with aspect values and culture. The government area becomes executor technical from policy center and becomes actor key in designing policy customized micro with map social local. Involvement in active society, strengthening dialogue between stakeholders' interests (stakeholders), and utilization of spatial and statistical data education are essential (Allen et al., 2012). To avoid exclusion groups and ensure that all child, without looking at origin or Affiliation, their parents' religion, has fair access to education quality foundation.

Thus, implementing the PPDB policy in Gresik Regency represents adapting dynamic and complex policies. The differences between SD and MI need not be standardized but managed as a rich national education system that reflects principles of plurality, subsidiarity, and local diversity.

Problems that arise in the implementation of PPDB policy in gresik regency

The problem in the implementation policy Reception of New Students (PPDB) in Gresik Regency results from the complex context of social, cultural, geographical, and religious society that significantly influences the pattern distribution of participant education between Elementary Schools (SD) and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Although PPDB policy has been designed with the principles of objectivity, transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination, their implementation in the field is often colored with inequality understanding, perception of society, and reality spatial and different values in each region (Long et al., 2010).

One of the issue the most prominent and crucial is the domination preference of the public against MI in the region with a level of fanaticism and high religion. Based on social and cultural capital theory (Nunes & Andrade, 2024), MI becomes the primary choice because it is considered an institution that conveys material lessons and maintains and reproduces the Islamic public. This institution has long had an intense social and closeness symbolic with community religion. Society often tends to entrust education children to capable institutions

that guarantee marks and character, not just academic ability. As a result, there is inequality distribution of participants' sufficient education significantly between SD and MI, especially in regions like Bungah, Manyar, and Ujungpangkah, where MI often has an average number of students above the elementary school level.

This condition is exacerbated by the lack of access to information, public quality, and innovation that SD has done. The lack of communication strategy from the government area caused the public to know that SD has now also experienced various updates, including integrating religious programs like tahfidz, activities in Islam, and character development. Lack of socialization effectively causes low literacy among the public to SD transformation. Approach campaign education that is not contextual and not based on community causes SD to fail to reach groups in society that are historically near to institutions and religion.

According to Lars Müller (Nunes & Andrade, 2024), in framework theory choice rationale, individuals and families tend to choose a unit the education they believe provides maximum "utility." This utility concerns academic aspects and values, identity, social status, and future security for children in their community. In religious areas, MI is considered to have greater utility because it is regarded as an institution that is in line with the moral aspirations of society. When SD is not capable of adapting to the need mark said, then shift increasing preferences widen.

From the results findings field, inequality This no is visible from aspect perception and structure policy. Policy zoning in elementary schools that sets a minimum quota of 70% For participant education based on distance place stay is often considered rigid and does not consider local values and ideology. On the other hand, MI only set 30% zoning, and the rest open opportunity affirmation, achievement, and track special to be more flexible and adaptive to character society. This makes MI more competitive and responsive than SD in netting students.

Resistance to public to-system zoning in elementary school is often not expressed explicitly but looks from rejection secretly. For example, parents, in a way on purpose, register their sons to the nearest elementary school and choose MI even though its location is far away. In perspective theory, trust institutions (Hall & Soskice, 2003), society is more of an institution with legitimacy, strong culture, and historical values compared to state institutions that are considered neutral but do not have enough emotional proximity and value to the public.

In addition, the influence of religious and community leaders in Islamic boarding schools becomes important in pattern preference. Recommendations from kiai, ustadz, or spiritual leaders often become based on parents' decisions when choosing an institution for children. In this context, SD has limitations because its network is not socially and culturally strong. This shows that MI's symbolic capital is stronger and more effective in forming a perception of positive public compared to elementary school (Sartain & Barrow, 2022).

Inequality preference This impacts the planning and distribution of education in elementary schools in Gresik Regency. Elementary schools in religious areas experience a lack of participant education, while MI experiences excess capacity. This challenges the government area in compiling fair and balanced policy. Although various innovations at the elementary school level, such as integrating mark religion in the curriculum and extracurricular activities that are spiritually based, are not yet capable of shifting the perception of the public comprehensively.

The problem is the lack of spatial and sociological data when planning PPDB policy. Without map values and perceptions accurate society, policy will always left behind

compared to dynamics more socially fast. Therefore, collaboration is needed between service education, the Ministry of Religion, the Figures Society, and academics to build a qualitative database that can become a reference in making decisions. Initiatives such as community dialogue, discussion forums between schools, and social mentoring based on family can become a solution strategy For building trust in the public towards SD.

Considering the theories above, the problem with implementing the PPDB policy in the Gresik Regency is not just a technical and administrative problem but more of a social, cultural, and ideological phenomenon that requires a multidimensional approach. The policy education base needs to bridge the disparity between state structure and structure mark public local. When the policy's capable nature is reflective and adaptive to social reality, inequality preference will slowly reduce, and system education will become more inclusive and equitable.

The role of local government in support implementation of PPDB policy

Government The Gresik Regency Regional Government has a decisive strategy to support the successful implementation of the policy of Reception of New Students (PPDB). This role has become more critical in context dualism institutional between Elementary Schools (SD), which are under the auspices of the Department of Education, and Elementary Madrasahs (MI), which are under the coordination of the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag). Each institution's regulatory characteristics, orientation, and different values demand policy adaptive and contextual areas.

In answer to the challenge, the Government of Gresik Regency shows strong initiative in developing approaches based on need local. One of the main strategies is strengthening SD institutions' capacity, including improving the quality and quantity of infrastructure physique like development room classes, fixed sanitation schools, and provision facility Supporter learning like laboratory and space libraries. In addition, strengthening the capacity source Power, humans is also done through training sustainable for teachers, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, to ensure the integration of religion into a comprehensive and contextual learning process.

Compiling curriculum contextual based on mark local is another effort that has not lost importance. Curriculum This notices standards nationally and includes elements of wisdom, local values, and religion that live in the middle Gresik community. Featured programs like Al-Quran memorization, Ramadan boarding school, and training morals in the elementary school environment have become part of the government strategy to balance the image of religiosity that has been more attached to MI. Thus, SD does not only come on stage as an academic institution but also as an institution that forms character and spiritual children.

Approach This approach reflects the principle of multi-level governance theory (Van den Bulck, 2024), which emphasizes that the government area must be capable of conducting a decentralization policy in an adaptive way to handle needs and diversity at the local level (Liu, 2018). In the context of Gresik, the decentralization approach has proven effective because it allows the government to design policy-relevant education based on society's needs, including preferences based on religion.

The coordination sector also becomes part of the government's Gresik Regency strategy to support PPDB implementation. The government is actively weaving communication and working with the Gresik Regency Ministry of Religion Office in various forms, such as educational dialogue forums, compilation guide PPDB technical matters, and implementation of a cross-teacher training agency. This coordination strengthens harmony

policy between SD and MI and encourages the creation of a healthy and productive synergy in-service education base.

Within the framework theory network policy (policy network theory), effectiveness implementation is greatly influenced by how strong and inclusive the network works, using the same inter-actor policy. Jörg Radtke (Radtke, 2025) emphasized that success policy depends on collaboration, not only coordination administrative. In the case of Gresik, the collaborative network covers government areas, schools, religious figures, organization communities, and local media. Networks This plays a significant role in conveying information. PPDB policy is effective in general and bridging the perception of the public towards SD, which, during This considered inferior to MI in the aspect of religiosity.

Interestingly, the study also found that the competition pattern between SD and MI in the District changed precisely, forming healthy dynamics. Competition This is in line with the principle theory of complementarity institutions (Hall & Soskice, 2003), which states that institutions with different characteristics can strengthen each other If directed in a collaborative framework. SD shows strength in aspect literacy, numeracy, and mastery of technology learning, while MI strengthens moral and spiritual dimensions. With direct both in their respective advantages, society chooses broad and equal education, by preference values and needs family.

Aspect communication with the public is also a concern for the Government of Gresik Regency. Through dissemination of information both online and offline, such as the utilization of social media, official website service education, local radio broadcasts, and counseling directly through citizen forums and assemblies taklim, information about PPDB can be delivered in a way that is broad and clear. This strategy avoids misunderstanding and builds the public's perception of SD and MI. Transparent and participatory public communication are essential indicators of creating trust in the public.

Within the framework theory system of responsive education (Schlaile & Urmetzer, 2021), a government capable of responding to change in the social aspirations of citizens and the dynamics of the policy center will succeed more in creating relevant and sustainable education. In the context of Gresik, the ability to adapt PPDB policy with values public reflects the capacity of adaptive and reflective institutions. The government focuses on administrative procedures and pays attention to aspects of the cultural, spiritual, and emotional public.

Furthermore, the government's role in the area is also visible in strengthening regulations locally, such as publishing a letter circular heading the area that encourages the improvement of SD quality-based mark religious and formation teams to monitor PPDB implementation. Monitoring and evaluation regarding the PPDB process are also carried out periodically, including statistical data collection, survey satisfaction society, and analysis of trend election schools by residents. These data become the basis for reformulation policies and the formulation of affirmative programs for elementary schools that are below interest to the public.

Thus, the role of Government Gresik Regency in supporting the implementation of PPDB policy is not only limited to aspects of technical implementation but also includes innovation policy, strengthening mark local, expansion of collaboration across institutions, and improvements capacity institutional. The approach reflects principles of good governance, participatory, and needs-based education in real society. Therefore, intervention model policies implemented by the Gresik Government can be made into best practices for other areas with similar complexity and social and institutional.

The authors critically evaluate their results in the discussion section, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, addressing any discrepancies or unexpected findings, and providing potential explanations or hypotheses. They may also discuss the limitations of the study, such as methodological constraints or potential sources of bias, and propose avenues for future research to elucidate the topic further. The discussion section often includes a synthesis of the key findings, relating them back to the research questions or objectives outlined in the Introduction.

The findings also demonstrate that effective implementation of new student admission regulations has important implications for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). The identified opportunities indicate that transparent and well-managed admission policies can improve equitable access to primary education, strengthen public trust, and support more inclusive educational systems. At the same time, the challenges identified in this study including administrative constraints, policy interpretation, and disparities in implementation highlight the need for continuous policy refinement and institutional capacity building. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that admission policies not only comply with national regulations but also contribute to the broader objectives of equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education envisioned by SDG 4.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: The implementation of the New Student Admission Policy (PPDB) in Gresik Regency highlights the complexity of managing education in a context of high social, cultural, and religious diversity. Differences between elementary schools (SD) under the Department of Education and madrasah elementary schools (MI) under the Ministry of Religion reveal variations in zoning, quota allocation, and policy focus. SD emphasizes literacy and numeracy through a 70% zoning system, while MI applies a flexible 30% zoning complemented by affirmative, achievement-based, and parental migration tracks.

Implication: The findings suggest that policymakers, education authorities, and school leaders should strengthen the implementation of new student admission regulations through clearer policy guidelines, improved stakeholder coordination, transparent admission procedures, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Such efforts can enhance equitable access to primary education while supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly by promoting inclusive, fair, and high-quality educational opportunities for all learners. Strengthening policy implementation may also reduce educational disparities and improve public confidence in the student admission system. **Limitation:** This study is conceptual and based on qualitative interviews and policy analysis. Practical implementation may vary due to institutional differences, local socio-cultural factors, staff capacity, and resource availability. **Future Research:** Future studies should empirically validate the PPDB implementation across different school types, evaluate the impact of zoning and affirmative policies quantitatively, and explore strategies for integrating national standards with local social, cultural, and religious contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Nur Hamidah contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, project supervision, validation of research findings, and critical review of the manuscript. **Mustajib** contributed to methodology development, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript revision. **Bambang Sigit Widodo** contributed to literature review, data processing, visualization, and administrative support.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or professional interests that could have affected the planning, execution, outcomes, or conclusions of this research.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI OR DIGITAL TOOLS IN WRITING

The authors state that no artificial intelligence, automated content generation software, or other digital writing tools were utilized during any phase of the study, data analysis, or manuscript preparation. All tasks, including data processing, interpretation, and writing, were performed exclusively by the authors, who are fully responsible for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the content presented.

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***Nur Hamidah (Corresponding Author)**

Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya
Jl. Lidah Wetan, Lakarsantri District, Surabaya City, East Java
Email: hamidahdisdik80@gmail.com

Mustaji

Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya
Jl. Lidah Wetan, Lakarsantri District, Surabaya City, East Java
Email: mustaji@unesa.ac.id

Bambang Sigit Widodo

Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya
Jl. Lidah Wetan, Lakarsantri District, Surabaya City, East Java
Email: bambangsigit@unesa.ac.id
