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POAC STRATEGY FOR VOCATIONAL ZONING MANAGEMENT: OVERCOMING CONTROVERSY AND FAIRNESS IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the management of new student admissions based on zoning in Vocational High Schools (SMK), especially at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang. The focus of this research includes four aspects of management, namely planning, organizing, implementing, as well as monitoring and evaluating new student admissions based on predetermined standards. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study show that SMK Negeri 2 Semarang has implemented zoning-based management of new student admissions by paying attention to capacity, criteria for prospective students, and the implementation of an objective, transparent, and accountable system. The planning function runs according to the standard, where the school conducts an analysis of internal conditions to determine the acceptable student quota. The organizing function can be seen in the school's efforts to manage resources effectively for the smooth admission process. At the implementation stage, the zoning system is implemented with clear procedures and the announcement of selection results

is carried out transparently. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out to assess the effectiveness of the acceptance process and provide feedback for future improvements. The conclusion of this study is that the management of new zoning-based student admissions at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang has been running according to applicable standards, although there is still room for improvement, especially in terms of continuous monitoring.
Keywords: *Zoning Controversy, Educational Planning, Educational Access Justice, in Vocational Schools*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis manajemen penerimaan peserta didik baru berbasis zonasi di Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK), khususnya di SMK Negeri 2 Semarang. Fokus penelitian ini mencakup empat aspek manajemen, yaitu perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, serta pemantauan dan evaluasi penerimaan peserta didik baru berdasarkan standar yang telah ditetapkan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SMK Negeri 2 Semarang telah melaksanakan manajemen penerimaan peserta didik baru berbasis zonasi dengan memperhatikan daya tampung, kriteria calon peserta didik, serta penerapan sistem yang objektif, transparan, dan akuntabel. Fungsi perencanaan berjalan sesuai standar, di mana sekolah melakukan analisis kondisi internal untuk menentukan kuota peserta didik yang dapat diterima. Fungsi pengorganisasian terlihat dari upaya sekolah dalam mengelola sumber daya secara efektif demi kelancaran proses penerimaan. Pada tahap pelaksanaan, sistem zonasi diterapkan dengan prosedur yang jelas dan pengumuman hasil seleksi dilakukan secara transparan. Pemantauan dan evaluasi dilakukan untuk menilai efektivitas proses penerimaan serta memberikan masukan bagi perbaikan di masa mendatang. Kesimpulan penelitian ini adalah bahwa manajemen penerimaan peserta didik baru berbasis zonasi di SMK Negeri 2 Semarang telah berjalan sesuai standar yang berlaku, meskipun masih terdapat ruang untuk perbaikan, khususnya dalam hal pemantauan yang berkelanjutan.
Kata kunci*: Kontroversi Zonasi, Perencanaan Pendidikan, Keadilan Akses Pendidikan, Sekolah Kejuruan*

INTRODUCTION

Domicile migration is one of the impacts of the implementation of the zoning system in New Student Admissions (PPDB) in Indonesia. According to Satriawan, this system has caused a number of parents to migrate their domicile by entering or depositing the names of prospective students to the Family Cards (KK) of residents around the school who are considered favorites (Ahmad Naufal Dzulfaroh, 2023).

Although Permendikbudristek Number 1 of 2021 article 17 paragraph 2 legally allows the transfer of KK address a maximum of one year before PPDB registration, this practice reveals the uneven quality of schools in Indonesia (Nur Rohmi Aida, 2023). Satriawan said that the initial goal of the PPDB system was to equalize the quality of education, but until now, the quality gap between schools is still occurring, even higher. In addition, the zoning system also causes schools in urban areas to have an excess of prospective students due to limited capacity, while in some areas there are schools that lack students. The practice of pungli and buying and selling chairs also emerged as a problem, where local officials or figures entrust students to certain schools. In fact, children from underprivileged families are sometimes unable to be accommodated in public schools, indicating the failure of the system in prioritizing poor children (Karina, 2023,). All these problems show that the distribution and quality of education in Indonesia still needs significant improvement.

The implementation of objective, transparent, and accountable New Student Admissions (PPDB) is a collaborative effort between the central government, local governments (Pemda), and education stakeholders. This effort aims to ensure equal access to quality education for all students. In a Hearing Meeting (RDP) on July 12, 2023, the Directorate General of Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary Education (Dirjen PDM), Iwan Syahril, explained that the PPDB policy has five main objectives, including providing fair opportunities, reducing discrimination, and optimizing community participation. PPDB for the 2023/2024 school year uses four registration paths: zoning, affirmation, parent transfer, and achievement, with a set quota percentage for each path. To ensure the effectiveness of implementation, local governments have the flexibility to determine policies according to local conditions and must report the results regularly (Denty, 2023). Various good practices from the regions, such as data synchronization and the formation of new school units, as well as regulations that address administrative fraud, show a commitment to improving the quality of PPDB and education as a whole.

Research on zoning-based management of new student admissions in high schools has covered various important aspects of this policy. (Khatimah, N. H., Naro, W., & Yuspiani, 2024) examines the management of the implementation of new student admissions with a zoning system, providing insight into strategies and challenges in its implementation. (Raharjo, S. B., Yufridawati, Y., Purnama, J., & Irmawati, 2020) discusses the admission of students based on education zoning in general. (Setiawan, I. B., & Usman, 2022) identifies the pattern of implementation of zoning policies in student admissions, while Werdiningsih, while (Pangestuti, 2021) the influence of zoning policies on student learning achievement and efforts to equalize access and quality of education. However, although these studies provide a solid foundation regarding various aspects of zoning-based student admission in high schools, research specifically addressing the management of zoning-based new student admissions in vocational high schools (SMK) is still very limited. Moreover, in-

depth studies on specific challenges and effective solutions in the context of vocational schools have not been carried out much. More focused research on this aspect is needed to understand the unique dynamics and challenges faced by vocational schools in the implementation of zoning policies, as well as to identify solutions that can improve the effectiveness of policies and the equitable distribution of education at the vocational secondary level.

Although previous studies have examined zoning-based new student admissions from the perspectives of policy implementation, access equity, and school management, an important gap remains in understanding how the zoning system is managed through an integrated managerial process in vocational high schools. Most existing studies tend to focus on the policy outcomes, implementation patterns, or general challenges of zoning, rather than examining the interconnected functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling within the admission process. This limitation is particularly important in vocational education because SMK has distinctive characteristics related to competency-based learning, limited study programs, school capacity, industry partnerships, and differences in the attractiveness of vocational programs. Research on school admission policies also suggests that the implementation of education policies is strongly influenced by institutional capacity, coordination among actors, and the ability of schools and local governments to translate national regulations into context-sensitive practices (Viennet & Pont, 2017). Therefore, examining zoning-based admission solely as a regulatory issue is insufficient to explain how the policy actually operates at the school level. A qualitative approach is needed to explore how admission committees interpret regulations, distribute responsibilities, coordinate resources, manage applicants, and respond to problems emerging during the PPDB process. In this context, the application of George R. Terry's POAC framework provides an opportunity to examine the admission process as an integrated managerial cycle rather than as a series of isolated administrative activities. Thus, the present study addresses a specific gap by investigating the qualitative management of zoning-based PPDB through the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling in a vocational high school context.

This study aims to examine the management of new student admissions based on zoning at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang with a focus on four main aspects. First, this study will discuss the planning of new student admissions whether it is in accordance with the set standards, including needs analysis and preparation of admission strategies. Second, the research will evaluate the organization of the new student admission process, such as the division of duties and responsibilities among the committee and coordination between related parties. Third, the implementation of new student admissions will be analyzed to see if the procedures carried out have met the applicable operational standards, both in terms of transparency and fairness in the implementation of the zoning system. Fourth, this study will examine how monitoring and evaluation are carried out on the entire process of new student admissions, as

well as whether there are any improvement efforts based on the results of the evaluation (Suhardi, 2020). Through this study, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of zoning-based new student admission management at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang Seluma can be produced, as well as provide relevant recommendations to improve the quality of student admissions in the future.

Based on this research gap, the present study formulates four research questions: (1) how is the planning of zoning-based new student admissions carried out at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang?; (2) how is the organization of the PPDB process structured, particularly regarding the distribution of duties, responsibilities, and coordination among admission stakeholders?; (3) how is the zoning-based admission process implemented to ensure transparency, fairness, and compliance with applicable regulations?; and (4) how are monitoring and evaluation conducted to identify problems and formulate improvements for subsequent admission processes? Correspondingly, this study aims to analyze the management of zoning-based new student admissions at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang through four managerial functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The first objective is to examine how the school plans admission quotas, procedures, information systems, and strategies in accordance with regulatory requirements and institutional conditions. The second objective is to analyze how responsibilities and resources are organized among the admission committee and other relevant stakeholders. The third objective is to investigate how the admission process is implemented in practice, particularly in relation to transparency, fairness, accessibility, and compliance with zoning regulations. The fourth objective is to examine the mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation used to identify implementation problems and support continuous improvement. Formulating these questions and objectives explicitly enables the study to move beyond describing the existence of zoning policy and instead investigate how the policy is translated into concrete managerial practices at the vocational school level. This focus is consistent with the view that effective policy implementation depends not only on formal regulations but also on institutional actors and organizational processes (Hill & Hupe, 2022).

The study of zoning-based management of new student admissions in vocational high schools (SMK) is very relevant to be analyzed using the theory of Functional Management from George R. Terry because this theory offers a comprehensive approach in analyzing the effectiveness of managerial processes. Terry's theory which emphasizes the importance of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating provides a relevant framework to evaluate whether the admission of new students at vocational schools is carried out in accordance with the set standards. A good planning process ensures that student quotas, zoning rules, and information are presented appropriately. Effective organization ensures that human and material resources are well managed so that the acceptance process runs smoothly. In addition, the implementation of appropriate procedures ensures the fair

and transparent implementation of zoning rules, while the evaluation function allows for the identification of problems that arise during the process as well as the application of feedback for future improvements. With a systematic approach from Terry's theory (Syahputra, R. D., & Aslami, 2025), this study can provide an accurate and comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of zoning-based student admission in vocational schools, as well as ensure that all students receive fair and equal treatment, as well as achieve the expected goal of educational equity.

The contribution of this study lies in positioning zoning-based PPDB as a managerial process that must be understood within the organizational context of vocational education, rather than merely as an administrative requirement imposed by government regulation. By applying a qualitative POAC framework, this study seeks to reveal how policy is translated into managerial decisions and daily practices, including how schools anticipate student demand, allocate responsibilities, coordinate admission actors, implement procedures, and evaluate emerging problems. This perspective is particularly relevant because policy implementation may produce different outcomes depending on organizational capacity, local conditions, stakeholder coordination, and institutional responses (Fullan, 2016). The study therefore contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it provides an empirically grounded account of zoning-based PPDB management in a vocational high school, a context that has received less attention than general discussions of zoning policy in primary and general secondary education. Second, it integrates the four managerial functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling into a single analytical framework for examining the implementation of PPDB. Rather than simply determining whether zoning regulations have been followed, the study investigates how schools manage the policy under real institutional conditions and how managerial practices influence the effectiveness of the admission process. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of school admission management literature and provide practical implications for vocational schools and local education authorities in designing PPDB mechanisms that are transparent, accountable, context-sensitive, and responsive to the characteristics of vocational education. In this way, the study addresses not only the policy question of who can access schools but also the managerial question of how equitable access can be effectively organized.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine the management of zoning-based new student admissions (Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru/PPDB) at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang. A qualitative case study was selected because the study sought to understand the admission process within its real institutional context, particularly how planning, organizing, implementation, and

controlling functions were carried out by the school. Rather than measuring the effectiveness of the zoning policy statistically, this study explored the experiences, practices, decision-making processes, and challenges encountered by the actors directly involved in PPDB. A case study design is appropriate for investigating contemporary phenomena within their actual contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly separated (Sidiq et al., 2019). The study was guided by George R. Terry's functional management perspective, which consists of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC). These four functions were used as analytical dimensions to examine the management of zoning-based PPDB at the research site.

The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang from July 29 to August 9, 2024. The research site was purposively selected because the school implements PPDB policies within the vocational secondary education context and therefore provides a relevant setting for examining the managerial implementation of zoning-based admission. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, meaning that informants were deliberately selected based on their direct involvement in or experience with the PPDB process. Six participants were involved in the study, consisting of two members of the PPDB committee, two teachers, and two students who participated in the PPDB process. The PPDB committee members were selected because they were directly responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing the admission process. Teachers were included because they were involved in supporting the admission process and had knowledge of the school's implementation of PPDB policies. Students were selected as users of the admission service to provide perspectives on their experiences of the admission procedures and information provided by the school. Participants were included when they had direct experience with the 2024 PPDB process, were able to provide relevant information, and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The number of participants was determined based on the relevance and depth of information obtained rather than statistical representativeness, consistent with the characteristics of qualitative inquiry.

Data were collected through three techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The three techniques were designed to complement one another and to obtain information concerning the four POAC dimensions of PPDB management. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six participants using an interview guide developed from the research questions and POAC framework. The interview questions addressed four major areas: (1) planning, including the preparation of PPDB schedules, student quotas, admission requirements, zoning arrangements, and dissemination of information; (2) organizing, including the formation of the PPDB committee, division of tasks, authority, and coordination; (3) actuating, including the implementation of registration, verification, selection, information services, and handling of applicant-related problems; and (4) controlling, including monitoring, evaluation, complaint handling, reporting, and

follow-up actions. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask additional probing questions when participants provided information requiring clarification or deeper exploration.

Observation was conducted directly at the research site to examine the actual implementation of PPDB activities and compare observed practices with information obtained through interviews. An observation guide was prepared before fieldwork and focused on the admission process, interactions between committee members and applicants, information services, registration and verification procedures, administrative activities, and the implementation of admission rules. Field notes were used to systematically record relevant events, interactions, and contextual conditions observed during the research period. Documentation was used to complement interview and observation data. The documents examined included PPDB guidelines and regulations, admission schedules, student quota information, registration procedures, committee organizational structures or assignments, announcements and information materials, administrative records, and relevant reports or evaluation documents that were accessible to the researcher. Document analysis was conducted to verify whether statements obtained from participants were consistent with formally documented admission procedures.

Data credibility was strengthened through source, method, and time triangulation (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from PPDB committee members, teachers, and students. For example, information provided by committee members concerning the implementation of registration and verification procedures was compared with teachers' observations and students' experiences. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from interviews with direct observations and relevant documents. Information regarding PPDB procedures obtained during interviews was checked against observed practices and written admission guidelines or administrative records. Time triangulation was implemented by collecting and comparing information and observations at different points during the research period from July 29 to August 9, 2024. This allowed the researcher to examine whether the implementation and experiences reported by participants remained consistent throughout the admission process. Triangulation was therefore not treated merely as the use of several data collection techniques but as an active process of comparing, confirming, and interpreting information across different sources, methods, and times. When inconsistencies were identified, the researcher conducted further clarification through follow-up questions and examination of supporting documents. This process helped reduce potential informant bias and strengthened the credibility of the findings.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. First, data condensation was conducted by selecting,

simplifying, coding, and categorizing information obtained from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. The data were organized according to the four analytical dimensions of the POAC framework: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Information that was irrelevant to the research questions was excluded, while statements and observations relevant to PPDB management were retained for further analysis. Second, the condensed data were displayed in an organized form, including thematic matrices and descriptive summaries, to identify relationships, similarities, differences, and recurring patterns among participants and data sources. For example, information concerning the division of PPDB committee responsibilities was compared across interview statements, observations, and organizational documents. Third, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the emerging patterns and relating them to the research questions and POAC framework. The conclusions were continuously verified by returning to the interview data, observation notes, and documentary evidence to ensure that interpretations were supported by sufficient evidence. This interactive process was conducted throughout data collection and analysis rather than only at the end of the study. The iterative nature of the analysis enabled the researcher to refine categories, identify discrepancies, and develop a comprehensive interpretation of how zoning-based PPDB was managed at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang.

The credibility of the research findings was maintained through triangulation, prolonged engagement with the research setting during the data collection period, careful documentation of field observations, and comparison between participants' statements and documentary evidence. The researcher also conducted clarification or follow-up interviews when information provided by participants was incomplete or inconsistent. Dependability was supported by maintaining systematic records of the research process, including interview notes, observation records, documentary evidence, data categorization, and analytical decisions. These procedures were intended to ensure that the findings represented the empirical conditions of zoning-based PPDB management at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang rather than merely reflecting the researcher's personal interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Planning of Zoning-Based New Student Admissions

The findings show that planning was the initial managerial function in the implementation of zoning-based new student admissions (PPDB) at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang. The planning process focused primarily on identifying school capacity, determining the number of students who could be admitted, establishing admission criteria, preparing procedures, and ensuring that the admission process was transparent and accountable. The school also considered its actual institutional

conditions when determining the admission quota. This finding indicates that PPDB planning was not limited to preparing an administrative schedule but also involved adjusting the admission program to the school's capacity and applicable zoning provisions. This is consistent with the managerial perspective that planning involves determining objectives, actions, resources, and procedures before an organizational program is implemented (Robbins & Coulter, 2021).

Interview data indicate that the school conducted an analysis of its conditions to determine the number of students that could be accommodated. Mr. HR, a member of the PPDB committee, stated, *"We analyzed the condition of the school to determine the capacity of students who can be accepted according to the zoning rules, which is 10%."* This statement demonstrates that school capacity and the applicable admission quota became important considerations in the preparation of PPDB. In addition, planning included the preparation of admission requirements, selection criteria, standard procedures, and information for prospective students. The planning process was therefore directed toward ensuring that prospective students understood the requirements before entering the subsequent stages of registration and selection. The findings also show that planning was linked to the school's vision, mission, goals, and strategies, indicating that PPDB was treated as an institutional program rather than an isolated administrative activity.

Overall, the planning findings indicate that SMK Negeri 2 Semarang had established the basic components required for zoning-based PPDB, particularly regarding capacity, admission criteria, procedures, and information. However, the empirical data also indicate that the planning function was strongly oriented toward compliance with admission regulations and immediate operational requirements. The findings do not yet demonstrate a detailed mechanism for anticipating potential discrepancies between applicant demand and available capacity or a systematic strategy for using previous PPDB evaluation results to redesign the subsequent admission plan. This point is important because previous studies have shown that zoning policies may create different outcomes depending on school capacity and local conditions (Sulistyosari et al., 2023; Musadad & Purwanta, 2023). Therefore, the planning process at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang can be characterized as procedurally established but still requiring stronger evidence-based forecasting and systematic use of previous admission data.

The organizing function was reflected in the formation of the PPDB committee and the distribution of responsibilities among individuals involved in the admission process. The findings show that the school organized the PPDB process through a committee structure responsible for managing different stages of admission. Organizing involved assigning responsibilities, coordinating activities, and ensuring that administrative and technical tasks could be performed during PPDB. This finding corresponds with the organizing function in management, which emphasizes the

arrangement of human resources, division of work, and coordination to achieve organizational objectives (Robbins & Coulter, 2021).

The data also show that organizational responsibilities extended beyond the registration stage to include selection, announcement of admission results, and re-registration. The PPDB committee played an important role in providing information to prospective students, checking registration requirements, conducting the selection process, and communicating admission results. After the announcement, students who were accepted were required to complete the re-registration process. Re-registration was used to confirm the students' admission status and complete administrative requirements, including other school-related necessities such as uniforms. Thus, the organization of PPDB involved a sequence of interrelated tasks in which the committee was responsible for ensuring that each stage could proceed to the next stage.

The findings also reveal the existence of a broader committee structure in the school environment through the organization of the 2024/2025 Student Orientation Period (MOS), which included a person in charge, coordinator, chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, equipment, event, documentation, ceremony, consumption, and security sections. However, this structure should not be interpreted as a direct PPDB structure unless the same personnel and responsibilities were formally involved in PPDB. Therefore, the MOS data are relevant only insofar as they demonstrate the school's organizational capacity to distribute responsibilities for student-related programs. The main PPDB finding remains the existence of a committee-based structure that supports the registration, selection, announcement, and re-registration stages.

The organizing function consequently demonstrates that the school had established an institutional mechanism for implementing PPDB. Nevertheless, the available data provide stronger evidence concerning the existence of task distribution than concerning the effectiveness of coordination between each organizational unit. This constitutes an important empirical issue for further discussion: a formal committee structure does not automatically demonstrate that communication and coordination are equally effective. Research on education policy implementation similarly emphasizes that implementation outcomes are influenced by the capacity of organizational actors and the coordination of responsibilities across implementation levels (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

Actuating the Zoning-Based PPDB Process

The actuating function was reflected in the implementation of the admission procedures after the planning and organizational arrangements had been established. The findings show that the PPDB process at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang proceeded through several stages, beginning with registration, followed by verification and selection, announcement of results, and re-registration. During registration, prospective students were provided with information concerning the requirements

they needed to fulfill. After the registration stage, the committee proceeded with the selection process and announced the students who were accepted. Students who obtained admission then completed re-registration to confirm their status as members of the school community.

The findings further indicate that the admission process involved three pathways, namely the achievement pathway, affirmation pathway, and domicile pathway. The achievement pathway considered students' academic and non-academic achievements, while the affirmation pathway was intended to provide access for students from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds. The domicile pathway was directed toward students based on their residential location. These pathways demonstrate that PPDB implementation was not conducted through a single selection mechanism but through differentiated admission routes. The use of multiple pathways is consistent with the broader objective of admission policies to combine considerations of residence, social conditions, and student achievement in providing access to public education. Previous qualitative research has similarly found that zoning-based admission can increase the diversity of students entering schools, including differences in academic ability and socioeconomic background (Hendrik et al., 2024).

The implementation findings also indicate that the registration and selection process was connected to the provision of information to prospective students. The committee communicated admission requirements and subsequently announced the results of the selection. Re-registration functioned as the final administrative confirmation for accepted students and also created an opportunity to identify remaining places that could potentially be allocated to other applicants when necessary. These sequential activities demonstrate that the implementation of PPDB at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang followed an established procedural flow rather than occurring as a single admission event.

Controlling and Evaluating the PPDB Process

The controlling function was reflected in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting activities after and during the implementation of PPDB. The findings show that monitoring and evaluation involved the Semarang education authority, supervisors, and the PPDB committee. These actors were involved in ensuring that the implementation, objectives, procedures, and follow-up of monitoring and evaluation remained aligned with the requirements of the PPDB process. Monitoring therefore functioned as a mechanism for identifying whether implementation remained consistent with the established plan and whether corrective action was required when problems occurred.

The findings also indicate that the PPDB implementation report served as an important control instrument. The report contained information concerning the implementation of admission activities and was used to communicate the results to relevant parties. Through reporting, information about PPDB implementation could be

collected, processed, organized, and communicated to decision-makers. The report consequently provided a basis for assessing the implementation process and supporting subsequent decisions. From the perspective of management, controlling is not limited to identifying errors but also involves comparing implementation with established plans and providing information for corrective action and future improvement (Robbins & Coulter, 2021).

The empirical findings demonstrate that controlling at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang was carried out through monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. However, the available field data provide more detailed evidence regarding the existence of these mechanisms than regarding the specific corrective actions taken after evaluation. This creates an important distinction between having an evaluation mechanism and demonstrating that evaluation results are systematically converted into changes in the subsequent PPDB plan. The latter aspect is particularly important because effective policy implementation requires feedback between implementation and subsequent policy or organizational adjustment (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

Overall, the controlling function demonstrates that PPDB management did not end after the admission of students. Monitoring and evaluation were incorporated into the process to identify implementation problems and provide information for subsequent decision-making. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that future PPDB management could be strengthened by documenting evaluation findings more systematically, identifying recurring problems, assigning responsible actors for follow-up actions, and explicitly incorporating evaluation results into the next PPDB planning cycle.

DISCUSSION

Planning

The findings indicate that the planning of zoning-based new student admissions at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang has been conducted through the determination of school capacity, class size, admission criteria, quota, and admission procedures. The school also analyzed its institutional conditions before determining the number of students who could be admitted. This finding addresses the first research question concerning how PPDB planning is conducted at the school. From the perspective of functional management, planning requires the organization to determine objectives and the actions and resources needed to achieve them. Therefore, the school's analysis of capacity and admission requirements represents an important planning function rather than merely an administrative activity (Robbins & Coulter, 2021). The finding is also consistent with the broader principle that education policy implementation requires institutional actors to translate formal regulations into operational arrangements that correspond with local conditions (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

However, the findings suggest that planning at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang remains more strongly oriented toward regulatory compliance and operational

preparation than toward systematic forecasting of local demand. The determination of the 10% zoning quota shows that the school considered applicable requirements, but the available evidence does not demonstrate a detailed mechanism for predicting the relationship between the number of applicants, residential distribution, school capacity, and available places. This issue is important because zoning does not automatically produce equal access when school capacity and the distribution of applicants differ across locations. Previous research has similarly found that school zoning policies may encounter difficulties in achieving educational equity when differences in school capacity and local conditions remain. Sulistyosari et al. (2023) found that zoning can support equal access but does not independently eliminate disparities between schools. Musadad and Purwanta (2023) likewise showed that the implementation of zoning needs to be evaluated in relation to actual conditions in schools and communities.

Thus, the planning challenge at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang is not primarily the absence of planning, but the need to make planning more evidence-based and responsive to local conditions. The school could strengthen this function by comparing previous PPDB data, applicant numbers, school capacity, and the distribution of prospective students before establishing the following admission plan. Such an approach would allow planning to function not only as a mechanism for fulfilling regulations but also as a tool for anticipating potential admission problems. This interpretation is consistent with Honig's (2006) view that policy implementation is shaped by organizational and contextual factors rather than by formal policy design alone. In this respect, the findings offer insight into how zoning policy is translated into school-level planning in a vocational education context.

Organizing

The findings concerning the second research question show that PPDB at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang is organized through a committee structure with responsibilities related to registration, selection, announcement, and re-registration. The existence of a committee and the distribution of responsibilities indicate that the school has established an organizational mechanism for implementing PPDB. In functional management, organizing involves arranging tasks, assigning responsibilities, and coordinating resources so that organizational objectives can be achieved effectively (Robbins & Coulter, 2021). The findings therefore indicate that the organizing function is visible primarily through the formal distribution of PPDB responsibilities.

Nevertheless, the data provide stronger evidence concerning the existence of task distribution than concerning the effectiveness of coordination between committee members. This distinction is important because a formal organizational structure does not necessarily guarantee effective implementation. Viennet and Pont (2017) emphasize that policy implementation is influenced by the capacity of actors and the relationships among the institutions responsible for implementation. Consequently, the effectiveness of PPDB organization depends not only on who is

assigned to the committee but also on whether information, authority, and responsibilities are coordinated throughout the admission process.

The school's experience in organizing student-related activities, including the committee structure used for the 2024/2025 Student Orientation Period, indicates that the institution has experience in distributing responsibilities across different positions. However, the MOS structure should not be treated as direct evidence of PPDB organization unless the same structure and personnel were formally used for PPDB. The relevant implication is that the school possesses an organizational capacity that can support student-related programs, while PPDB itself requires a clearly documented division of tasks and coordination mechanism. Therefore, the organizing function could be strengthened through detailed job descriptions, a clear activity schedule, designated persons responsible for each admission stage, and a mechanism for resolving problems that arise during registration and verification.

Actuating

The findings related to the third research question show that the implementation of PPDB proceeded through registration, selection, announcement, and re-registration. The school provided information concerning admission requirements and implemented three admission pathways identified in the field data: achievement, affirmation, and domicile. These procedures indicate that the planning and organizational arrangements were translated into concrete admission activities. In the context of functional management, actuating concerns directing and mobilizing organizational members so that previously established plans can be implemented in practice. The implementation of PPDB at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang therefore demonstrates the translation of administrative arrangements into a sequence of services for prospective students.

The domicile pathway is particularly relevant to the equity objective underlying zoning-based admission. The policy is intended to regulate access based partly on students' residential location and to reduce excessive concentration of applicants in particular schools. However, the field findings also show potential barriers, including differences between applicants' domicile and designated zones, limited school capacity, and administrative problems such as incomplete documents or errors in data verification. These findings indicate that the implementation of zoning is not simply a technical process of determining residential eligibility. It requires accurate information, reliable verification, and communication between the school and prospective students. Musadad and Purwanta (2023) similarly found that zoning implementation should be examined against the actual conditions of educational institutions and the communities they serve.

The findings also suggest that communication is an important component of implementation. Information concerning requirements and admission procedures was disseminated through school announcements and communication with relevant junior high schools or MTs. However, the potential for misunderstanding regarding zoning

criteria indicates that information dissemination needs to be sufficiently clear and timely. Research by Fatima and Khang (2024) demonstrates that perceptions surrounding school admission reforms can remain influenced by established views about school attractiveness and school choice. Therefore, transparent communication is important not only for informing applicants but also for building public understanding of the rationale and limitations of zoning-based admission. At the school level, this can be supported by providing standardized information on zoning criteria, admission pathways, schedules, required documents, and procedures for submitting questions or complaints.

Controlling

The findings concerning the fourth research question indicate that controlling was carried out through monitoring, evaluation, and reporting involving the education authority, supervisors, and the PPDB committee. These mechanisms were intended to ensure that the implementation remained consistent with established procedures and objectives. From the perspective of management, controlling involves monitoring implementation, comparing actual performance with predetermined standards, identifying deviations, and taking corrective action when necessary (Robbins & Coulter, 2021). Thus, the monitoring activities identified in this study represent the controlling function within the management of PPDB.

The PPDB implementation report also functioned as an important source of information for decision-making. Through reporting, information about the admission process could be communicated to relevant parties and used to assess implementation. However, the findings indicate that the existence of monitoring and reporting does not automatically demonstrate that evaluation results have been systematically transformed into corrective actions. This distinction is important because evaluation should not end with the production of a report. It should generate feedback that can influence subsequent planning and implementation. Viennet and Pont (2017) emphasize the importance of implementation capacity and feedback mechanisms in translating policy objectives into practice, while Honig (2006) highlights the role of organizational context in shaping how policies are implemented and adjusted.

Accordingly, the controlling function at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang could be strengthened by developing a more explicit feedback cycle. The school could document identified problems, their causes, the person or unit responsible for follow-up, the corrective action taken, and the status of implementation. These findings can then be incorporated into the following year's PPDB planning. Such a mechanism would connect controlling directly with planning and transform POAC from four separate administrative functions into a continuous managerial cycle. This is particularly relevant because research on zoning policies indicates that equitable access depends not only on the existence of admission regulations but also on how

those regulations are managed under different institutional and local conditions (Sulistyosari et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2025).

Taken together, the findings show that the four POAC functions were present in the management of zoning-based PPDB at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang, although their implementation varied in depth. Planning was reflected in capacity analysis, quota determination, admission criteria, and procedural preparation. Organizing was reflected in the formation and distribution of responsibilities within the PPDB committee. Actuating was reflected in the implementation of registration, selection, announcement, and re-registration through achievement, affirmation, and domicile pathways. Controlling was reflected in monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The main managerial issue identified across these functions is not the absence of procedures but the need to strengthen the connection between them. In particular, previous evaluation results should be used more systematically as inputs for subsequent planning, while information and coordination mechanisms should be strengthened during implementation. This finding offers insight into the management of zoning-based PPDB in a vocational school and illustrates how national admission policy is translated into institution-level managerial practices.

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted at only one vocational high school, SMK Negeri 2 Semarang, so the findings reflect the institutional and local context of a single school and should not be generalized to all vocational schools. Second, the study involved six participants consisting of PPDB committee members, teachers, and students. Although the participants provided relevant perspectives, the relatively small number of informants limits the breadth of perspectives that could be explored. Third, the fieldwork was conducted within a limited research period, which may have constrained the depth of observation of the PPDB process and its longer-term consequences. Future studies could address these limitations by involving several vocational schools with different geographical and institutional characteristics. Comparative qualitative studies could provide a broader understanding of how local context influences zoning-based PPDB management. Future research could also employ mixed methods by combining qualitative exploration with quantitative analysis of applicant numbers, school capacity, admission pathways, socioeconomic characteristics, and acceptance patterns. Such research would provide a more comprehensive assessment of both the managerial processes and the measurable outcomes of zoning-based admission policies.

Table 1. Analysis and Recommendations for Zoning-Based New Student Admission Management at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang

Aspects	Findings	Gap	Recommendations
Planning	- Capacity and class size are in accordance with standards.- The criteria for prospective students are fair and clear.- The admission system is objective and transparent.	- Lack of in-depth analysis of real capacity and local needs.	- Conduct a more in-depth and periodic capacity analysis of needs. Evaluate the plan regularly to adjust the plan to the actual conditions in the field.
Implementation	- The zoning procedure is well implemented.- The selection results are announced transparently.	- Delay in announcing results.- Uncertainty in the application of zoning criteria.	- Improve the information and communication system.- Socialize the zoning criteria clearly to all parties.
Organizing	- Efficient resource management.- Team coordination goes well.	- Shortcomings in scheduling and task division.	- Develop a detailed schedule.- Provide additional training to the admissions committee to increase effectiveness.

Evaluation	- Evaluation is carried out to assess the effectiveness of implementation.- Feedback is used for improvement.	- Evaluation does not cover all aspects. Thorough - Feedback is sometimes not implemented properly.	- Implement a more comprehensive evaluation system.- Follow up feedback with concrete actions.

The findings show that although many aspects of planning, implementation, organization, and evaluation have been carried out according to standards, there are several gaps that need to be corrected. The main gaps include the lack of local capacity analysis in planning, the delay in announcing the selection results and the uncertainty of zoning criteria in implementation, the lack of scheduling and task division in organizing, as well as evaluations that do not cover all aspects and the lack of follow-up feedback. Recommendations to improve the findings include an in-depth analysis of local capacity, improvement of information and communication systems, the preparation of detailed schedules and additional training, and the implementation of a more comprehensive evaluation system with better follow-up.

CONCLUSION

The planning of new student admissions at SMK Negeri 2 Semarang has been carried out in accordance with applicable standards, with several important indicators. The determination of capacity and class size has been adjusted to the applicable regulations, ensuring adequate capacity without compromising the quality of education. In addition, the criteria for prospective students have been set fairly for all applicants, ensuring an objective and transparent selection. The new student admission system is carried out based on the principles of objectivity, transparency, and accountability, so that the selection process can be accounted for. The process of implementing admissions includes the implementation of zoning-based selection according to the established procedures and schedules, as well as the announcement of selection results is carried out openly. Evaluation is also an important part of assessing effectiveness and looking for areas for improvement. These evaluations ensure implementation is compliant with standards and provide feedback for future improvements. The announcement of the selection results on the school bulletin board is a form of evaluation that is submitted transparently to the public.

Research on zoning-based new student admission management in Vocational High Schools (SMK) has made a significant contribution to improving understanding of how zoning policies are effectively implemented at the secondary education level. This research not only explores the aspects of planning, organizing, implementing, as well as monitoring and evaluating student admissions, but also identifies relevant challenges and solutions to optimize the process. With a focus on the application of

applicable standards, this study helps in developing more structured guidelines for schools in implementing zoning policies, especially related to school capacity, fair selection criteria, and an objective and transparent system. The results of this study are also expected to be a reference for policy makers in making decisions related to increasing access to equitable and quality education. In addition, this study has the potential to provide recommendations for improvement for schools in running zoning programs, so that the student admission process can be carried out more efficiently, fairly, and accountably, and in accordance with the goal of equitable distribution of education.

This research on zoning-based management of new student admissions in Vocational High Schools (SMK) has several limitations. First, this study was only conducted in one school, namely SMK Negeri 2 Semarang, so the findings may not fully represent the conditions in other schools that implement the zoning system. Second, this study only involved six respondents, consisting of teachers, PPDB committees, and students, so the data obtained may not be varied enough to provide a comprehensive picture of the various perspectives that exist. The limited number of respondents can also limit the depth of analysis and generalization of research results. For future research, researchers are advised to expand the scope of the study by involving more schools and respondents from different regions, so that richer and more diverse data can be obtained. In addition, researchers can also consider more comprehensive research methods, such as conducting comparative studies between schools or using mixed-methods to obtain more valid and in-depth results. This will enrich the findings and make a stronger contribution to the development of zoning policies.

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