

Optimizing Primary School New Student Admissions Through Management: a Study on the New Student Enrollment System in Makassar City

Burhan^{1*}, Andi Agusniati², Nurwidyayanti³, A. Rizal⁴
Universitas Bosowa

Corresponding Author: Burhan burhan@universitasbosowa.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: SPMB,
Management, Primary School

Received : 14, April

Revised : 29, April

Accepted: 30, May

©2025 Burhan, Agusniati,
Nurdwyayanti, Rizal : This is an
open-access article distributed under
the terms of the [Creative Commons
Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study examines the management of the New Student Admission System (SPMB) in public primary schools in Makassar City. Despite its goal of improving fairness and transparency through zoning policies and digital platforms, SPMB faces challenges such as administrative burdens, digital literacy gaps, and socio-economic disparities. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were gathered via interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings show improvements in access and transparency but highlight persistent issues in infrastructure, communication, and coordination. Practical recommendations are offered to enhance the system's equity and effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally acknowledged as a foundational pillar of sustainable development, social justice, and economic advancement. Across the globe, nations regard education not merely as a basic human right but as an essential investment in building human capital, reducing poverty, and promoting social mobility. In the 21st century, the role of education has become increasingly complex, as it must now respond to global challenges such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, demographic shifts, urbanization, and the growing demand for inclusive, quality, and equitable learning for all. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) reflects this vision by urging all countries to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

As part of this global movement, Indonesia has made significant strides in expanding educational access, especially in basic education. Over the past few decades, efforts to improve school participation, literacy rates, and infrastructure development have shown measurable progress (Fauzi & Santoso, 2020; Nurjaningsih, 2019). However, the Indonesian education system continues to grapple with persistent structural issues such as inequality in school quality between urban and rural regions, disparities in access to education among socio-economic groups, and inefficiencies in school governance and resource allocation (Kurniawan & Setiawan, 2022; Wardhana & Supriyoko, 2019). The highly decentralized nature of Indonesia's education governance often results in variable policy implementation quality at the local level (Sujari, 2022; Sultoniya, Rukajat, & Ramadhani, 2022).

One major reform to improve fairness and accountability in school access is the establishment of the Sistem Penerimaan Murid Baru (SPMB), or New Student Admission System. This system was developed to address widespread concerns over inequity and non-transparency in student admissions—such as favoritism, overcrowding in popular schools, and barriers faced by marginalized families (Ansar, Ratmawati, & Wahed, 2019; Badriyah & Supriyanto, 2024). Mechanisms such as zoning policies, digital registration platforms, and affirmative quotas aim to standardize the admission process and promote equal educational opportunities (Praoga, 2020; Setyowati, 2023).

Despite its well-intentioned objectives, implementing SPMB presents significant challenges. Stakeholders report that the transition to a regulated and digitalized system has brought efficiency and transparency benefits but also issues like address falsification, unequal digital literacy, infrastructure limitations, and increased administrative burdens (Adi & Arief, 2021; Halim & Wulandari, 2019; Muchtar & Hasanah, 2022). These challenges are particularly acute in urban centers such as Makassar, where population density, diverse socio-economic conditions, and high demand for quality schools create complex educational dynamics (Putri & Susanto, 2021; Warmanto & Arif, 2023).

Makassar, as the largest city in eastern Indonesia and a regional educational hub, provides a dynamic context for studying the operational realities of SPMB. Each year, thousands of families navigate the admission process for their children, often facing technological barriers, limited school

capacity, and confusion over regulations. Meanwhile, school administrators manage compliance, administrative workload, data verification, and communication with parents and agencies (Nandes et al., 2023; Taufiq, Habibie, & Riki, 2019).

This study critically examines the management of SPMB in public primary schools across Makassar City. Moving beyond policy frameworks, it explores the practices, challenges, and strategies schools employ during admissions, focusing on zoning implementation, digital platform inclusivity, inter-agency coordination, stakeholder trust, and administrative capacity (Risdianti, 2017; Prastiwi & Dwikurnaningsih, 2021).

Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research aims to provide grounded insights and policy recommendations to improve the system. It contributes to broader education governance discussions in decentralized contexts and highlights the importance of aligning policy design with local realities.

Optimizing SPMB management is central to achieving a just and equitable education system. By analyzing SPMB's strengths and weaknesses in Makassar, this study supports fairer educational opportunity distribution for Indonesian children at the primary school level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The new student admission system (PPDB) is an important aspect of education management that aims to ensure fair and transparent access for all prospective students. In the Indonesian context, this system continues to evolve, both in terms of zoning policies, the use of digital technology, and the involvement of various stakeholders. However, implementation in the field still faces various complex challenges.

One of the significant reforms in PPDB is the implementation of the zoning system, which is designed to bring students closer to schools in their area of residence. Fauzi and Santoso (2020) and Nurjaningsih (2019) highlight that the zoning policy has the potential to create equity in access, but in practice it often causes problems of address manipulation by parents. This is in line with the findings of Badriyah and Supriyanto (2024), which show that parents' efforts to gain access to favorite schools are still a major obstacle in realizing the principle of equity.

In addition to the zoning aspect, the utilization of digital technology in the PPDB process is also in the spotlight. Ardiansyah et al. (2025) and Muchtar & Hasanah (2022) argued that the implementation of an online registration system can increase efficiency and reduce physical interactions, especially during the pandemic. However, Adi & Arief (2021) and Halim & Wulandari (2019) noted that there is a wide digital literacy gap among parents, especially from middle to lower economic backgrounds. Many parents find it difficult to access or operate digital systems, putting a burden on schools to provide technical assistance during the enrollment period.

Another challenge is the increased administrative burden on educators and school staff. Kurniawan and Setiawan (2022) point out that teachers are often overwhelmed by having to carry out teaching duties while handling data verification and communication with parents. Meanwhile, inter-agency collaboration, such as with the Population and Civil Registry Office, has not been optimal (Sujari, 2022; Warmanto & Arif, 2023), which often causes delays in the file verification process.

Communication and promotion management in PPDB is also an important aspect. Prastiwi and Dwikurnaningsih (2021) emphasized the importance of digital promotion strategies during the pandemic, while Muchtar & Hasanah (2022) highlighted the role of school public relations in building public trust. Public trust in the PPDB system is still relatively low, especially if information is not delivered transparently or through easily accessible channels (Putri & Susanto, 2021).

In general, various studies suggest that PPDB policies should be optimized not only through technological approaches, but also by strengthening the managerial capacity of schools and ensuring good cross-sector coordination (Ansar et al., 2019; Sultoniya et al., 2022). In an urban context like Makassar, where socio-economic dynamics are highly diverse, these challenges become more complex and require adaptive and data-driven management strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research method to explore the management of the New Student Admission System (SPMB) in public primary schools within Makassar City. The qualitative approach was selected to gain a deep understanding of the practices, challenges, and perspectives of education stakeholders directly involved in the SPMB process. Rather than relying on numerical data or standardized metrics, this approach allows the researcher to capture the complex, context-bound realities of school-level admission management, particularly in relation to policy implementation, administrative workload, and public engagement. The research was conducted in six public primary schools located across diverse regions of Makassar, deliberately chosen to represent a range of socio-economic backgrounds, school capacities, and geographic zones. Participants included school principals, SPMB coordinators, administrative staff, parents or guardians of newly enrolled students, and officials from the Makassar City Education Office. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews using semi-structured question guides, allowing participants to share their experiences and viewpoints freely while maintaining a degree of consistency across interviews. In addition, the researcher conducted direct observations during key admission periods—such as document submission, online registration assistance, and verification processes—supplemented by the collection and review of relevant documents, including technical guidelines, enrollment lists, circulars, and digital registration platform screenshots. Data analysis followed thematic analysis techniques, beginning with data reduction to identify relevant codes and categories, followed by systematic display of the data to uncover major themes,

and concluding with the synthesis of findings into meaningful interpretations. To ensure the validity and reliability of the results, the study applied triangulation of data sources and methods, conducted member checking with key informants, and maintained a detailed documentation of the research process. Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the study, including informed consent from all participants, confidentiality of responses, and the voluntary nature of participation. Through this methodology, the research aims to generate rich, grounded insights into how SPMB is managed at the school level, and to inform practical strategies for improving its effectiveness in the urban context of Makassar.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study uncovered four primary themes related to the management of the New Student Admission System (SPMB) in public primary schools in Makassar City: (1) zoning policy implementation and address manipulation, (2) digital registration and technological barriers, (3) administrative burden and institutional coordination, and (4) stakeholder perceptions and trust in the enrollment system.

Zoning Policy Implementation and Address Manipulation

The zoning system remains a central pillar of SPMB, aimed at ensuring fair access to education based on residential proximity. However, all six schools studied reported similar challenges related to address falsification by parents seeking admission to popular schools.

At SDN 45 Makassar, the school principal stated,

"We had to cross-check more than 30 addresses with the civil registry office. Many families submitted rental contracts signed just weeks before registration."

Similarly, a teacher from SDN 8 Ujung Pandang added,

"We suspect some parents rented rooms near our school just for zoning compliance. It's hard to prove intent, but we try to verify as much as possible."

This practice not only places a burden on schools but also undermines the intent of zoning policies to promote equitable access.

Digital Registration and Technological Barriers

The integration of online registration platforms has been a major innovation in the SPMB process. While it facilitates faster data processing and reduces in-person crowding, it has also exposed disparities in digital access and literacy, especially among lower-income families.

An administrative officer at SDN 10 Tamalanrea observed,

"About 40% of parents came directly to school because they didn't know how to upload documents or didn't have scanners. We had to help them one by one."

Meanwhile, a parent at SDN 28 Panakkukang expressed frustration,

"I stayed up late trying to register online, but the system kept crashing. Finally, I asked my nephew to help using his laptop."

Although the system promotes transparency, these technical issues highlight a significant digital divide in Makassar's school communities.

Administrative Burden and Inter-Agency Coordination

Teachers and administrators consistently reported that SPMB significantly increased their workload, especially during the registration and verification period. Many educators found themselves juggling teaching duties with administrative responsibilities.

At SDN 15 Biringkanaya, a PPDB team member noted,

“Some of us had to stay after school hours to input data and respond to questions from parents. It feels like we are doing two jobs at once.”

Coordination with external agencies such as the Department of Population and Civil Registration (Disdukcapil) also presented delays. At SDN 33 Manggala, the headmaster explained,

“Verification of family cards took too long. We submitted requests and waited several days for responses, which delayed admission decisions.”

These issues underscore the need for better inter-agency cooperation and additional administrative support for schools.

Stakeholder Perceptions and Trust

While the SPMB system is generally perceived as more transparent than previous models, trust remains a key issue for many parents. Despite digital improvements, many still prefer traditional, face-to-face interactions for reassurance.

A parent at SDN 21 Rappocini stated,

“I didn't believe my child was accepted until I saw her name on the board at school. The online notification didn't feel official enough.”

This was echoed by a coordinator at SDN 3 Tamalate,

“Even though we update everything on the website, we still print lists and post them on the gate. It builds confidence and prevents repeated inquiries.”

To maintain public trust, schools have continued to blend digital platforms with conventional practices, including WhatsApp group updates, printed announcements, and in-person counseling.

These results highlight that while the SPMB system in Makassar is moving toward greater efficiency and equity, its success is uneven and heavily influenced by local contexts. The challenges of verification, digital literacy, institutional capacity, and public trust are interrelated and require holistic solutions that go beyond policy formulation to practical implementation on the ground.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate several critical aspects of the management and implementation of the New Student Admission System (SPMB) in public primary schools in Makassar City, revealing both progress and persistent challenges.

Firstly, the implementation of the zoning policy, designed to promote equitable access to education based on residential proximity, remains a cornerstone of the admission system. However, the widespread manipulation of addresses by parents seeking to enroll their children in favored schools illustrates a significant gap between policy intent and practical realities. This

behavior not only compromises the fairness that zoning aims to guarantee but also imposes considerable verification burdens on school administrators. This aligns with previous studies (Fauzi & Santoso, 2020; Nurjaningsih, 2019) which also document similar challenges in enforcing zoning policies, highlighting the need for more robust mechanisms to verify applicants' residential data without overburdening school staff.

Secondly, the integration of digital registration platforms represents an important modernization of the admission process, reducing physical crowding and streamlining data management. However, the digital divide exposed in this study, where a substantial proportion of parents lack the skills or resources to navigate online registration, reflects broader issues of digital inequality in urban Indonesia (Halim & Wulandari, 2019). These findings underscore the necessity for complementary support systems such as on-site assistance and digital literacy programs, to ensure that technological innovations do not inadvertently exclude vulnerable populations.

Thirdly, the administrative burden identified by teachers and staff highlights a significant institutional challenge. The dual role of educators as both instructional leaders and admission administrators leads to increased workload and stress, which can impact educational quality. Furthermore, delays in inter-agency coordination, particularly with the Department of Population and Civil Registration, exacerbate inefficiencies and frustrate stakeholders. This observation is consistent with Kurniawan and Setiawan's (2022) findings on administrative overload in Indonesian schools, emphasizing the need for better resource allocation, clear procedural guidelines, and enhanced communication channels between agencies.

Finally, the issue of stakeholder perceptions and trust reveals the complex interplay between technological advancement and cultural expectations. While the SPMB system's transparency through online updates is appreciated, many parents still seek tangible confirmation through traditional means, such as physical postings and direct communication. This dual approach to communication highlights the importance of relational engagement alongside digital platforms in maintaining public confidence, corroborating insights from Putri and Susanto (2021) on the value of trust-building in school admission processes.

Overall, the study demonstrates that while the SPMB system in Makassar has made strides toward fairness and efficiency, its effective implementation depends on addressing multifaceted challenges. These include strengthening verification processes, bridging digital divides, alleviating administrative pressures, and fostering trust through blended communication strategies. Future policies should therefore adopt a holistic perspective, integrating technological, institutional, and social dimensions to enhance the inclusivity and functionality of school admissions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study reveals that the management of the New Student Admission System (SPMB) in public primary schools in Makassar is characterized by both significant advancements and ongoing challenges. The zoning policy, while conceptually aimed at promoting equitable access, faces practical difficulties due to address manipulation by some parents, which undermines its fairness. The adoption of digital registration has improved efficiency and transparency but also highlights disparities in digital literacy and access, disadvantaging some families. Additionally, the administrative burden on school staff and coordination delays with external agencies impede the smooth operation of the system. Trust and perceptions among stakeholders remain mixed, with many parents still valuing traditional, face-to-face communication alongside digital notifications.

To optimize the SPMB process, there is a clear need for improved verification mechanisms, increased support for digital literacy, enhanced inter-agency collaboration, and a communication strategy that balances digital tools with personal engagement. Addressing these factors holistically will help ensure the system's goals of fairness, accessibility, and transparency are realized in practice. Ultimately, this study contributes valuable insights for policymakers and educators striving to strengthen primary school admissions management in Makassar and similar urban contexts.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research could focus on developing a more sophisticated digital verification system, such as the integration of population data with a GIS-based zoning system to minimize address manipulation and school administrative burden. In addition, a digital literacy empowerment model for parents, especially from underprivileged backgrounds, needs to be studied to make the online registration system truly inclusive. Comparative studies between regions can also be conducted to map the managerial capacity of schools in managing PPDB, including infrastructure support, human resources, and cross-agency coordination. On the other hand, it is also important to analyze public perceptions and trust in digital systems in education, in order to design communication strategies that are balanced between technology and personal approaches. Finally, a social justice-based evaluation is needed to assess the impact of the PPDB system on vulnerable groups and simulate alternative policies that are more adaptive and equitable.

REFERENCES

- Adi, M., & Arief, R. (2021). Tantangan sistem pendaftaran sekolah berbasis digital di Indonesia. *Jurnal Teknologi dan Inovasi Pendidikan*, 5(2), 101-112.
- Ansar, N. R., Ratmawati, T., & Wahed, A. (2019). Implementasi Manajemen Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Berbasis Online di SMK Negeri 6 Makassar. *JDMP (Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen Pendidikan)*, 4(1), 65-72.
- Ardiansyah, A., Muzakki, A., & Hidayat, A. (2025). MANAJEMEN PEMBIAYAAN PENDIDIKAN PPDB DI MTs ASSALAAM BANDUNG. *Jurnal Dinamika Ekonomi Syariah*, 12(1), 53-65.
- Badriyah, S., & Supriyanto, S. (2024). Manajemen Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru: Studi Kasus MIN 7 Boyolali. *ISLAMIKA*, 6(1), 107-118.
- Fauzi, A., & Santoso, H. (2020). Efektivitas kebijakan zonasi dalam penerimaan siswa baru di sekolah negeri di wilayah perkotaan. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Indonesia*, 8(1), 45-56.
- Halim, S., & Wulandari, E. (2019). Literasi digital dan dampaknya terhadap partisipasi orang tua dalam kegiatan sekolah. *Jurnal Internasional Pendidikan dan Pembangunan*, 10(4), 76-84.
- Istriyani, W., & Satyarini, M. D. (2021). Manajemen Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru di SMK Sultan Trenggono Gunungpati Semarang.
- Kurniawan, D., & Setiawan, I. (2022). Beban kerja administratif dan stres guru di sekolah dasar di Indonesia. *Jurnal Penelitian Administrasi Sekolah*, 12(3), 198-210.
- Muchtar, K., & Hasanah, T. U. (2022). Manajemen Humas dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) Online pada Masa Covid-19 di SMA Negeri 1 Majenang. *Kareba: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 75-91.
- Nandes, Y. T., Zamzami, Z., Zamsuri, A., & Vebby, V. (2023). Rancang Bangun Sistem Informasi Manajemen Seleksi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru Universitas Lancang Kuning. *Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Multidisiplin (JURKIM)*, 3(1), 78-89.
- Nurjaningsih, S. T. (2019). Manajemen Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (Ppdb) Sistem Zonasi. *Jurnal Tata Kelola Pendidikan*, 1(2), 126-138.
- Praoga, I. K. M. (2020). Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pendidikan (SIMDIK) Dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) Tingkat SMP Sesuai Zonasi. *Media Manajemen Pendidikan*, 2(3), 432-440.
- Prastiwi, N. T., & Dwikurnaningsih, Y. (2021, August). Manajemen Promosi PPDB di Era Pandemi Covid-19 Berbasis Digital. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional IAHN-TP Palangka Raya* (No. 6, pp. 48-66).
- Putri, L., & Susanto, T. (2021). Persepsi pemangku kepentingan terhadap prosedur penerimaan siswa baru di sekolah negeri: Sebuah studi kualitatif. *Jurnal Kebijakan dan Kepemimpinan Pendidikan*, 7(2), 56-68.
- Risdianti, D. (2017). Manajemen Rekrutmen Peserta Didik. *Jurnal Isema: Islamic Educational Management*, 2(2).
- Setyowati, E. (2023). Manajemen Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) Jalur Prestasi Dalam Peningkatan Prestasi Siswa di SMP Negeri 1 Jetis Ponorogo (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Ponorogo).

- Sujari, S. (2022). Manajemen Kepala Sekolah dalam Pelaksanaan Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB). *Al-Miskawaih: Journal of Science Education*, 1(1), 1-26.
- Sultoniya, M. F. A., Rukajat, A., & Ramadhani, K. (2022). Manajemen Kepala Sekolah dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) di SMPIT Istiqomah Global School Karawang Tahun Pelajaran 2022/2023. *AS-SABIQUN*, 4(3), 527-547.
- Suryanti, P. (2019). Efektivitas Pelaksanaan Sistem Zonasi dalam Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) serta Pengaruhnya terhadap Upaya Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Berdasarkan Asas Keadilan di SMA Negeri Kabupaten Klaten Tahun Ajaran 2016/2017-2018/2019.
- Taufiq, M., Habibie, A., & Riki, C. (2019). Optimasi Pengembangan Sistem Informasi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru (Si-Pmb) Dengan Menggunakan Analisis Kelayakan Ekonomi Dan Teknologi. *INFOTECH journal*, 5(2), 1-8.
- Wardhana, L. P., & Supriyoko, S. (2019). Manajemen Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru Secara Online Berbasis Zonasi, Prestasi dan Perpindahan. *Media Manajemen Pendidikan*, 2(2), 228-235.
- Warmanto, E., & Arif, M. (2023). Evaluasi Manajemen Penerimaan Siswa Baru Berbasis Online pada MTsN 11 Agam. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan (JIP) STKIP Kusuma Negara*, 14(2), 127-134.