

THE EFFECT OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION ON PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF ZONING-BASED NEW STUDENT ADMISSION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Education and Culture's policy on the zoning-based New Student Admission system that began to be implemented in 2017 has caused pros and cons. People argue that the policy is indicated to not gain acceptance from some parents of students as the main stakeholders. Departing from the alleged weak public communication implemented by local government sub-organizations. This study aims to reveal how strong the influence of public communication competence applied to public acceptance. The location of the research is South Tangerang City, Banten Province, Indonesia. As a sample of 120 parents of students whose children attend elementary schools, junior high schools in 3 sample districts, namely; Ciputat, Pamulang and Serpong were drawn randomly. Data was collected by distributing a closed questionnaire and the results were processed using the Simple Linear Regression statistical technique. The results of the study showed that public communication (X) had a positive, strong and significant effect on public acceptance (Y) related to the implementation of the policy of accepting new students based on the zoning system. It is recommended that the South Tangerang City government improve its public communication strategy, especially in terms of message packaging and the use of social media.

Keywords: zoning system, public communication, public acceptance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Quoting from the book "Building Inspiration Without Discrimination" published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, journalists from Tempo, a leading national magazine in Indonesia, on July 14, 2023 published that the government policy of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the admission of new students based on zoning has been implemented since 2017. The initiator of this policy was Muhadjir Effendy who at that time served as the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. As summarized in the magazine, conceptually the main goal of implementing the zoning system is to accelerate the achievement of equitable distribution of services in the geospatial-based national education system.

To achieve this goal, technically, in the zoning system, admission priority is given to prospective students who are domiciled in the zone or region where a particular public school is located. Meanwhile, there is still a disparity in quality among public schools and the term

favorite public school is known, among others because the quality of educational services and the learning achievement of its students are above the average shown by schools in a region. This favorite public school is the dream of parents of students to register their children to study there. As a result, the caste system was indirectly built in the implementation of Indonesian national education. With the achievement of the zoning system's goals, it is hoped that the favorite public school label will be removed because all schools in all zones show equal quality.

In fact, one of the impacts that parents complain about is that with the zoning system they are no longer free to determine which public school their children will go to.

In addition, the implementation of the zoning system is indicated to be not free from subjective factors of school leaders and members of the new student acceptance team. Hendarman, a Senior Policy Analyst of the Ministry of Education and Culture in an article in the Sindo News Newspaper dated July 22, 2024, stated that the cause of problems in accepting new students from year to year is the low understanding of stakeholders, especially students' parents, about the Zoning-Based new student admission system policy. Hendarman also revealed frauds so that prospective new students can be accepted into their favorite public schools through zoning, including by buying and selling seats, manipulating Family Cards, and asking for help from regional officials. He even referred to the West Java Provincial Government's record that in the area in the 2024 new student admission system there were 277 students who were proven to be cheating and had their registration process annulled.

Actually, as stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) No: 1 of 2021, in addition to the zoning route, there are three other paths, namely the achievement path, the affirmation path, and the path of transferring parental duties. According to Hendarman, the various provisions that apply to each of the routes have been clearly formulated, including the quota by considering various obstacles that may arise. Unfortunately, as stated by Hendarman, many parents of students do not fully understand the new student admission system, including those based on zoning. This means that it is indicated that the public, especially the parents of prospective students, are not well-informed about the policies that are the focus of this research. This means that it should be suspected that the public communication built by the government, in this case the management of the national education system in South Tangerang City, is still not optimal.

1.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to reveal how high the acceptance of the new student admission stakeholder community is to public communication in implementing the Zoning-based new student admission system policy. For this reason, the research departs from the question: "How strong is the effect of public communication applied by the South Tangerang City government, in this case the Education Office, on the acceptance of the community in the context of Zoning-Based new student admission system?"

1.2 Research Benefits

D'Acunto et al., (2020) as quoted by Siahaan (2024) remind that the government must consider how the policy is effectively communicated to the public. The goal is for the public to understand and then support the implementation of the policy. In the context of the Zoning

policy, it is hoped that with the revelation of the influence of public communication on the policy, the education office, especially in South Tangerang City and generally in other districts in Indonesia, can make the most of public communication in implementing the same policy and other policies.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEWS

Zonation-Based New Student Admissions Referring to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia or (Mendikbud) Number 1 of 2021 Article 17 (1) new student admission system through the zoning route as intended in Article 12 paragraph (2) letter a is intended for prospective new students who are domiciled in the zoning area determined by the Regional Government. Summarized Raharjo (2020), parents of students must submit a photocopy of their ID card and Family Card in which their domicile is stated to the school manager. This residence information is a major consideration in determining whether or not a prospective student is accepted into a particular school. According to Article 13 of the regulation, this route is given the following quotas; Elementary School (Elementary School) at least 70% of the school's capacity; Junior High School at least 50% (fifty percent) of the school's capacity and Senior High School at least 50% (fifty percent) of the school's capacity.

In addition to zoning, there are still 3 (three) other lanes in the New Student Admission System, namely affirmation pathway, achievement pathway and mutation pathway for student parent assignments. In Article 21, it is stated that the affirmation pathway is given to prospective students whose socio-economic conditions are low. And people with disabilities. The affirmation pathway is open to prospective students both who are domiciled in and in the zone of the school location area. For those who take the affirmation path with a low socioeconomic background of their parents, a certificate from the social office where they live is required. This path is given a quota of 15% of all prospective students accepted.

The achievement path as described in Article 24 is provided for prospective students who have achievements in both academic and non-academic fields such as arts, sports, and so on. For the basic academic achievement path, the consideration is the report card score. For non-academic achievement paths, prospective new students must obtain a certificate or recommendation from the relevant organization or official institution. For example, a certificate or certificate from the management of the National Sports Committee in the region regarding sports achievements shown by the person concerned. In the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 1 of 2021, it is not explained how much the quota is for the achievement path. As a result, the achievement path is utilized by irresponsible people to gain financial gain.

Parent/Guardian Duty Transfer Pathway As explained in Article 23, that the transfer of parent/guardian duties must be proven by an assignment letter from: agencies; institution; office; or the company that employs the parents/guardians of the student in question. In Article 13, it is explained that this path obtains a quota of 15% of the school's capacity.

2.1 Public Communication

Harold D. Lasswell put forward his communication model in a statement: "Who conveys what to whom through what medium with what impact. Table 1 illustrates the application of communication models in public communication."

Table 1: Application of the Laswell Model in Public Communication

Laswel Communication Model	Application in Public Communication
Who?	The Education Office of the City of South Tangerang
What do you convey?	New Student Admission Zoning System Policy
To whom?	Parents of New Students
Through what media?	Public Communication
With what impact	Public Acceptance

As can be interpreted from the contents of Table 1, the communication model has a weakness in principle, which is that it only describes one-way communication without feedback.

Communication models involving feedback channels are among them proposed DeVito (2011) As a result, communication runs both ways. The feedback allows confirmation to be made to the communicator to clarify the message received by the recipient. In addition, through feedback, the recipient of the message can provide input to improve the message if it is felt that it is not beneficial. (Koontz et.al, 2011)

By combining the two models, a comprehensive Public Communication System will be built for two purposes. First, the public communication system can be used as a means to build public acceptance of new student admission system policies. Second, public acceptance is achieved because of the existence of a feedback system so that the public has the opportunity to provide input for improvements to the occurrence of irregularities in the practice of implementing the policy.

Ideally, a feedback mechanism as a form of public test has been prepared since a new policy is being drafted. The means of feedback include providing a suggestion box or other means so that the target public can provide input in the form of corrections, complaints and improvement proposals. However, the benefits of providing a suggestion box and the implementation of a public test are highly dependent on the attitude of the government that makes the policy. Not infrequently, policymakers feel that their ideas are correct and are reluctant to be corrected. The impact is that the provision of facilities for feedback is only to meet procedural requirements because input from the public is actually not utilized.

Referring to the brief description as stated earlier, in the context of the zoning-based new student admission system policy, there are two notes that must be submitted here. First, conceptually communication consists of three main dimensions, namely; message packaging, message delivery and media use. The quality of all these dimensions synergistically contributes to the effectiveness of delivering messages from the South Tangerang City Education Office to the parents of prospective new students as a public target public policy. Second, to ensure the acceptance of the public as beneficiaries, access to information must be opened for the

public to facilitate mutual communication between policymakers and their target groups. This has actually been regulated in Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning public information disclosure. (Santosa, 2012).

2.2 Public Acceptance

Public acceptance can be understood as how satisfied the public is with something they receive. In the context of the implementation of public policies initiated by the government, such acceptance is indicated by the attitude and behavior of the public in response to the policy. There are three stages in developing policies that contribute to public acceptance, namely the design, implementation, and results. Regarding policy drafts, it is not uncommon for public policies to be unilaterally designed by politicians and bureaucrats without paying attention to the public interest and not involving the public itself Warella (2004). Public Policy is whatever government choose to do or not to do. As a result, policies do not benefit and solve problems faced by the public. Ironically, policies that are not designed comprehensively involving public participation actually create new problems.

In the implementation stage, the aspects that are of public concern are the level of accountability which includes the conformity, consistency and compliance of design execution practices that include resources and procedures with the design. Often, policies that are comprehensively designed fail to achieve objectives, including gaining public acceptance due to low process accountability (Santosa.2012).

The third stage that affects the level of public acceptance is the result of the implementation of policies in accordance with the policy draft. These results will contribute to shaping public acceptance if it provides benefits in solving problems faced by the public itself.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies a quantitative approach with simple linear regression analysis that reveals the role of Communication Competency (X) as an independent variable that affects Public Acceptance (Y) as a dependent variable.

3.1 Hypothesis

The research hypothesis is formulated as follows; H: Public Communication (X) has a significant and positive effect on Public Acceptance (Y) to the zoning-based new student admission system.

3.2 Respondents

The respondents of this study are as many as 120 parents of students who will register their children as new students at schools in South Tangerang City in the 2025-2026 school year. Mareka is a research sample representing 2 levels of schools under the management of the City Government, namely Elementary Schools and Junior High Schools.

Sample withdrawal was carried out using a combination of representative sub-district samples. It starts by randomly assigning 3 out of 7 sub-districts. Followed by randomly determining 2

elementary and 2 junior high schools from each sub-district. Then 10 respondents from each school were randomly assigned as well.

From the sample extraction technique as described, 200 respondents were obtained with the distribution as seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents

Sub-districts		Number of Respondents / School Level				Total
		Elementary School		Junior High School		
		1	2	1	2	
1.	Pamulang	10	10	10	10	40
2.	Ciputat	10	10	10	10	40
3.	Serpong	10	10	10	10	40
Total		30	30	30	30	120

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data from respondents was collected by distributing a closed questionnaire to all respondents.

The closed questionnaire contains statements and answer options arranged according to the Likert Scale as follows:

3.4 Instruments

As an instrument of data collection, 2 (two) sets of closed questionnaires were created for each variable X and Y. Each questionnaire contained 15 questions consisting of 3 dimensions and each before use, the two data collection instruments were tested to answer whether the instruments met two criteria; validity and reliability of the instrument. A valid instrument is an instrument that is able to measure something that is measured (Ghozali, 2018). In this study the validity test of the instrument was carried out using Bivariate Pearson Product Moment correlation with the help of SPSS 23 computer software. A questionnaire item is declared valid if its significance value or sig < 0.05. An instrument is declared reliable if it provides consistent or always the same measurement results even though it is carried out to the same respondent by different researchers, in different places, and at different times (Dewi et.al, 2020). In this study, the reliability of the instrument was tested by applying Alpha Cronbach value analysis with the help of SPSS computer software. A questionnaire item is declared reliable if its Alpha Cronbach value is > 0.05 (Sugiyono, 2014).

3.5 Test Data Distribution

To ensure that the distribution of the data meets the requirements to be analyzed using a simple linear regression technique, it is necessary to test the residual normality of the data and the linearity of the data. The data collected after tabulation was analyzed using two statistical analysis techniques, namely descriptive analysis and simple linear regression analysis. Descriptive analysis techniques were used to obtain an overview of the condition of the variables of Public Communication (X) and Public Acceptance (Y) as shown by their average

or mean values. Furthermore, the data categories were interpreted using recommendations from Akhtar (2018).

Simple linear regression analysis technique was used to assess the direct effect of the Public Communication (X) variable on the Public Acceptance (Y) variable. Furthermore, the category of regression coefficients is interpreted using the recommendations of Sugiyono (2014)

4.0 RESULTS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of 15 questionnaire question items for Public Communication or variable X Instruments used SPSS 23 with sig Value $0,000 < 0,05$ showed valid results.

The results of the analysis of 15 questionnaire question items for Public Acceptance or variable X used SPSS 23 with Sig value $0,000 < 0,05$ showed valid results

4.1 Results of Variable X Instrument Reliability Test

Alpha Cronbach's analysis of 15 questionnaire question items for Public Communication or variable X using SPSS 23 obtained the results as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability Test Results of Variable X Instruments

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,782	15

Based on the data listed in Table 3, the results of the reliability test of variable X instruments produced a Cronbach's Alpha value for the 15 items which was 0.782. Because this value > 0.05 , it can be concluded that all 15 items are categorized as reliable.

4.2 Results of Variable Instrument Reliability Test Y

Alpha Cronbach's analysis of 15 questionnaire question items for Public Acceptance or variable Y using SPSS 23 obtained the results as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Reliability Test Results of Variable Y Instruments

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,864	15

Based on the data listed in Table 4, the results of the reliability test of variable X instrument yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value for 15 items that was 0.782. Because this value > 0.05 , it can be concluded that the 15 items are categorized as reliable. Because both instruments are reliable, they can be used in subsequent analysis. This means that from the point of view of its reliability, the data obtained is suitable for use in simple linear regression analysis.

4.3 Results of Residual Data Normality Test

The Kolmogorov and Smirnov analysis of residual normality of data on the answers to the Questionnaire on Public Communication or variable X and Public Acceptance or variable Y using SPSS 23 obtained the results as shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Results of the Residual Data Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
Unstandardized Residual		
N		120
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,97847300
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,080
	Positive	,080
	Negative	-,075
Test Statistic		,080
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.055 ^c

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Based on the data listed in Table 5, the value of the Asymp. Sig (2 tailed) = 0.055 > 0.5. This means that the residual data is spread normally. Therefore, the data obtained is suitable for analysis using a simple linear regression technique.

4.4 Results of the Linearity Test

The results of the linear test were carried out using SPSS 23 as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Anova of the Results of the Linearity Test

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Public Accept * Public Comm	Between Groups	(Combined)	1343.307	20	67.165	10.530	.000
		Linearity	1198.980	1	1198.980	187.968	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	144.327	19	7.596	1.191	.281
	Within Groups		631.484	99	6.379		
	Total		1974.792	119			

As shown in Table 6, the value of Sig. Deviation from Linearity = 0.281 > 0.05. This means that there is a linear relationship between the variable of Public Communication Competency

(X) and the variable of Public Acceptance (Y). Thus, the data obtained can be used to carry out a simple liner regression analysis.

4.5 Results of Descriptive Analysis of Variable X Data

The descriptive analysis carried out on Public Communication data or Variable X obtained the results as shown in Table 7

Table 7: Results of Descriptive Analysis of Variable X Data

Dimension	Mean	Category
X1: Message Packaging	3,1350	Low
X2: Message Delivery	3,1133	Medium
X3: Media Use	2,4367	Low
X: Public Communication	2,9550	Sedang

The data in Table 7 shows that the dimensions; X1, X2, and overall, the variable X are in the medium category. This means that the performance of Public Communication is still not optimal and needs to be improved. A search of the data distribution shows that among the weaknesses of public communication implemented by the South Tangerang City Education Office, the indicator is still low, namely the use of social media (2.4367).

4.6 Results of Descriptive Analysis of Variable Y Data

The descriptive analysis carried out on the Public Acceptance data or Variable Y obtained the results as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Results of Descriptive Analysis of Variable Y Data

Dimension	Mean	Category
Y1: Policy Design	3,1217	Medium
Y2: Implementation	1,4117	Very Low
Y3: Results	2,3867	Low
X: Public Acceptance	2,3067	Low

The data in Table 8 show less encouraging conditions. All dimensions Y1, Y3 and the overall condition of the Y variable are in the low category. Even the Y2 dimension is in the Very Low category. This means that public acceptance of the implementation of the Zoning-Based new student admission policy needs to be improved. A search of the data distribution shows that three indicators of public acceptance are in the Very Low category, namely; Openness (1.1833), Compliance (1.1417), and Equality (1.1583)

4.7 Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The results of simple linear regression analysis of Public Communication or variable X on Public Acceptance or variable Y using SPSS 23 software are as presented in Table 9 and Table10 below.

Tabel 9: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.884a	.781	.780	2,492
a. Predictors: (Constant), Public Comm				

Tabel 10: Coefficients

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	11,640	1,809		,000
	Public	,789	,038	,884	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Public Accept

Referring to Table 9 and Table 10 can be stated as follows. From Table 9 : Model Summary, the RF Square value = 0.781 was obtained. This means that Public Communication or variable X has an effect of 78.1% on Y, while the rest is 21.9% by the other variable which is not estimated in this study. From Table 13: Coefficients, the value of Sig = 0.000 < 0.05 is obtained which means that there is a positive and significant effect of Communication Competence or variable X on Public Acceptance or variable Y.

5.0 DISCUSSION

There are five discussions that can be put forward regarding the results of this research as presented below.

First, that the performance of public communication is still in the medium category, which means that it is not optimal. The suboptimal performance of the Public Communication Office of the Education Office in implementing Zoning-Based New Student Admission System is due to the low dimension of social media utilization. This means that two-way communication or dialogue between the Education Office and the parents of prospective new students has not been intensively developed. The results of this study are inversely proportional to the conclusions of the research conducted by Anjar et.al. Anjar and his colleagues concluded that effective communication by utilizing social media has helped the government respond quickly in facing obstacles when implementing policies to overcome exposure to the Covid 19 outbreak.

Second, public acceptance is only in the Low category. This means that the public, in this case the parents of prospective new students, have not felt the benefits of the implementation of the zoning-based New Student Admission System policy. The weakest dimension is the consistency of local governments in the policy implementation stages, which include two indicators that are precisely important in building public acceptance, namely compliance with

applicable provisions and openness to input and complaints as well as reports of irregularities that occur. Moreover, if acceptance can be seen as a public opinion on a policy, then this study is in line with research by Kim and Lee (2021) cited by Suhendra and Pratiwi (2024) who found that interaction by utilizing social media is very helpful in the formation of public opinion.

Third, the research hypothesis that reads "Public Communication (X) has a significant and positive effect on Public Acceptance (Y)" on the zoning-based new student admission system is acceptable. The basis for accepting this hypothesis is the result of a simple linear regression statistical analysis, namely that there is a strong, significant and positive effect of variable X on variable Y. This result confirms the idea of public service which affirms that public satisfaction or acceptance of policies imposed by the government is highly determined by how effective the policy is delivered by the government to the public or target groups as seen as a program accountability (Santosa, 2020).

Fourth, the results of this research confirm the results of research on the plan to build a Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Bengkayang conducted by Herawati, N. et.al. (2020). In the study, it was concluded that the use of social media in public service communication has been very helpful in building a positive image and public trust about the nuclear power plant development plan in their area. In fact, in reality around the world, the benefits and negative impacts of the use of nuclear power plants still invite pro and con opinions. However, as Ramadhan et.al (2024) reminds us, the implications of implementing a government policy should not only focus on technical aspects, but should also carefully consider public acceptance by intensifying dialogue with local communities.

Fifth, still related to the strategic role of public communication in policy implementation, Josy Adiwiastara (In Tachjan, 2006) stated that the success of policy implementation is influenced by the response of policy implementers to the evolving views and aspirations of the target public. This means that public acceptance of policies designed by the government that tend to be based on its own thinking is influenced by how much opportunity the public has to provide input as an adaptation of ideas to local situations and conditions as well as aspirations. In this regard, Thoha (Dalam Tahir, 2011) emphasizes the importance of environmental inputs that can influence public policy through feedback from target groups. This discussion strengthens the results of this research which reveals the great influence of public communication on public acceptance in the context of implementing the Zoning-Based New Student Admission System policy.

6.0 CLOSING

It is unfortunate that if policies are seen as a problem-solving tool, on the contrary, the implementation of Zoning-Based New Student Admission System is in fact a cause of problems that continue to occur from year to year since it was promulgated, which leads to low public acceptance. Based on the results of this study, the low performance of public communication is one of the causes of this paradoxical situation. The low performance of public communication has become a non-transparent service system and parents of students as the target group of policies who should be the beneficiaries are the opposite as the recipients of problems. Disappointment due to low transparency, compliance, and deviations due to lack of

community control has made the Zoning-Based New Student Admission System policy change its function 180 degrees, from a problem solution to a source of problems.

If this policy will be continued or changed and improved, departing from the results of this study, it is suggested that the Tangerang City Education Office improve the performance of its public communication system. Among the improvements that can be made are the intensification and extensification of the use of various media channels, including digital social media. Thus, wider access will be built so that there will be greater opportunities for the public to participate in the planning, implementation and supervision of New Student Admission System policies in any form. This is the characteristic of good governance which should be the spirit of implementing the national education system as a public service in the reform era.

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