

## THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC SENIOR AND VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION QUOTA EXPANSION ON PRIVATE SCHOOLS A CASE STUDY OF SMK BUDI BAKTI UTAMA

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### ABSTRACT

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The expansion of public senior and vocational high school admission quotas in West Java has significantly affected the sustainability of private educational institutions. This study aims to analyse the impact of the West Java Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2025 and examine the adaptation strategies implemented by SMK Budi Bakti Utama. A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the school principal, vice principal for student affairs, and school treasurer, alongside participant observation and document analysis of institutional records spanning three academic years. The findings reveal that the optimization of classroom capacity to fifty students per class in nearby public schools has substantially reduced new student enrolments in the private school. The total student population declined from 267 students in the 2023/2024 academic year to 233 students in the 2025/2026 academic year a decrease of approximately 12.7%. This decline directly reduced School Operational Assistance (BOS) funding and compelled the institution to implement strict budget efficiency measures. A notable phenomenon was observed whereby prospective students withdrew their registrations from the private school after gaining admission to public institutions. In response, the school adopted several adaptation strategies, including the development of a Content Creator curriculum, expansion of partnerships with retail industries, and elimination of building fees. The study concludes that public-school quota expansion policies, while designed to broaden educational access, generate significant managerial challenges for private schools and require continuous institutional innovation to maintain competitiveness and sustainability. The findings underscore the need for policymakers to assess the systemic consequences of enrollment expansion policies on the broader educational ecosystem.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right guaranteed by the constitution and serves as a crucial instrument for social development and national progress. Within the framework of the national education system, the government acts as the primary facilitator responsible for ensuring equitable access to quality education for all citizens, regardless of whether educational institutions are publicly or privately managed (Pasolong, 2019). To reduce educational disparities and improve access, the Indonesian government introduced the zoning-based student admission system (Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru/PPDB). Philosophically, this policy was

designed to eliminate the distinction between "elite" and "non-elite" schools and to promote educational equity through a geographically based admission mechanism (Khafifah, 2024; Ningsih et al., 2026).

The implementation of admission quota policies in Indonesia reflects broader global trends in education governance. Research from comparative educational contexts demonstrates that policies designed to expand public-school capacity frequently generate unintended consequences for the private education sector. Studies from Chile, for example, have documented how government-subsidized school expansion led to declining enrolment and financial instability among private institutions

competing for the same student cohorts (Bellei, 2009). Similarly, research from the United Kingdom documented how the expansion of government-funded academies affected the viability of neighboring independent schools, highlighting structural tensions inherent in mixed public-private educational markets (Wiborg, 2015). In Southeast Asia, Vietnam's experience with secondary education expansion demonstrated that rapid increases in public-school capacity reduced household demand for private schooling, particularly among lower-income families who preferred the perceived cost advantages of public institutions (London, 2011). These international precedents underscore the systemic nature of the challenges facing private schools in West Java and situate the present study within a broader scholarly conversation on the market dynamics of educational policy.

Despite this body of comparative literature, there remains a significant research gap regarding how specific regional admission quota policies in Indonesia affect individual private schools at the operational level. Prior studies in the Indonesian context have largely focused on the implementation and equity outcomes of the zoning system itself (Lestari et al., 2024; Ardianto, 2025), while largely neglecting the downstream consequences for private educational institutions. The present study addresses this gap by conducting a detailed case study of SMK Budi Bakti Utama, providing empirical evidence of how quota expansion translates into enrollment decline, financial pressure, and institutional adaptation at the school level. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of policy impact analysis with institutional adaptation theory, offering insights applicable to the management of private schools operating in competitive, policy-driven educational environments.

However, the implementation of educational policies at the regional level often produces complex and unintended consequences. In West Java Province, efforts to expand educational accessibility were strengthened through West Java Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2025, which allows public senior and vocational high schools to optimize their learning groups by increasing classroom capacity to as many as fifty students per class (Governor of West Java, 2025). Furthermore, Governor Decree Number

463.1/Kep.323-Disdik/2025 was issued to facilitate access to secondary education for students at risk of dropping out (Governor of West Java, 2025).

Although these policies were intended to broaden educational opportunities, their implementation has generated significant challenges for private schools. The expansion of public-school enrollment capacity has substantially increased the ability of public institutions to absorb prospective students, thereby reducing the pool of applicants available to nearby private schools. This condition is reinforced by public perceptions that public schools offer higher prestige and lower educational costs. Consequently, private schools frequently become the last alternative for students who fail to secure admission to public institutions (Madjid et al., 2023; Punarsih & Ali, 2019).

The situation is particularly evident at SMK Budi Bakti Utama, a private vocational high school located in Padalarang, West Bandung Regency. The school has experienced a noticeable decline in student enrollment following the implementation of the public-school quota expansion policy in surrounding areas. Since a significant portion of the school's funding derives from BOS funds allocated based on student enrollment, declining numbers directly reduce financial resources and create managerial challenges (Usman, 2019; Syafaruddin, 2019).

Based on these circumstances, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How has the expansion of public senior and vocational high school admission quotas affected the operational sustainability of SMK Budi Bakti Utama? (2) What adaptation strategies has the institution implemented in response to these challenges? (3) What are the broader policy implications for the governance of private educational institutions in Indonesia?

The study is grounded in the public policy cycle framework, which emphasises the importance of evaluating policies from formulation through implementation and impact assessment to ensure they do not create unintended negative externalities for non-governmental institutions (Agustino, 2020; Nugroho, 2018). In addition, the study incorporates principles of educational quality management, which suggest that educational

institutions facing declining enrollment must adopt innovation and efficiency strategies to maintain organizational stability (Syafaruddin, 2019; Usman, 2019). Through this integrated framework, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the consequences of public-school quota expansion and their implications for private educational institutions.

## 2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to explore and understand social phenomena and organizational dynamics in depth within real-life contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study method was considered appropriate because the research focused on a specific educational institution experiencing direct consequences of a public policy intervention.

The study was conducted at SMK Budi Bakti Utama, a private vocational high school located in Padalarang, West Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The school was purposively selected because it has been directly affected by the implementation of the public-school admission quota expansion policy in the surrounding area.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, enabling the researchers to identify individuals with relevant knowledge, authority, and direct involvement in the school's decision-making processes. The primary informants comprised three key stakeholders: (1) the school principal, who provided strategic-level perspectives on policy impact and institutional governance; (2) the vice principal for student affairs and chairperson of the student admission committee, who offered operational insights into enrollment trends and promotional strategies; and (3) the school treasurer, who provided detailed information on the financial implications of declining student numbers on BOS allocations and budget management.

Interview procedures followed a semi-structured protocol developed prior to data collection. Each interview session lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was conducted at the school premises during non-instructional hours to minimize disruption to school activities. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent

and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were then returned to participants for member checking to confirm accuracy and completeness, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain detailed accounts of the effects of the quota expansion policy on student enrollment, school finances, and organizational management. Second, participant observation was employed across multiple site visits spanning the 2025/2026 academic year admission period to examine school operations, educational facilities, and admission-related activities. Third, document analysis was carried out to review admission records, student population statistics, school financial plans, and BOS funding reports from the previous three academic years.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2018). The analysis process involved three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, interview transcripts and documents were organized, coded, and categorized according to emerging themes related to policy impact, financial sustainability, and institutional adaptation. The findings were then presented through narrative descriptions supported by documentary evidence and direct participant quotations.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation cross-checking information from interviews, observation, and documentation and methodological triangulation, combining multiple data collection techniques to enhance credibility and minimize researcher bias (Sugiyono, 2020). The use of member checking and prolonged engagement at the research site further strengthened the dependability of the findings.

It is acknowledged that the study's focus on a single institution limits the generalizability of findings to other private schools. However, the analytical insights and theoretical contributions of the study are intended to inform broader scholarly and policy discussions on the management of private educational institutions in contexts of expanding public-school capacity.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Implementation of the Public-School Admission Quota Expansion Policy in Padalarang

Policy implementation represents a critical stage in the public policy cycle because it determines whether policy objectives can be achieved effectively in practice. According to Dunn (2018), public policies should be evaluated based on effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. In West Java, educational access policies underwent significant changes following the enactment of Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2025. The regulation allows public senior and vocational high schools to optimize classroom capacity by increasing the number of students per class to a maximum of fifty.

The policy was introduced as part of a broader effort to reduce school dropout rates and improve educational accessibility. However, evidence from Padalarang suggests that this policy has generated unintended consequences for private educational institutions. The school principal characterized the situation as follows:

*"This policy has had a very significant impact on private schools, including ours. We have experienced a sharp decline in the number of new students registering, and other private schools in the area are facing the same situation."*

The vice principal for student affairs further elaborated: *"Since public schools were allowed to have up to forty or fifty students per class, the number of new students registering with us dropped significantly compared to the previous three years, when we had gradually been increasing our intake. After this policy was implemented, what had been a positive trajectory reversed sharply."*

These findings align with previous studies indicating that admission policies designed to improve educational equity may create competitive imbalances between public and private educational institutions (Punarsih & Ali, 2019; Lestari et al., 2024). The international comparative literature further supports this

interpretation: research from Chile and the United Kingdom demonstrates that expanding public-school capacity systematically disadvantages private institutions by contracting the available pool of prospective students (Bellei, 2009; Wiborg, 2015).

#### The Impact of the Policy on the Sustainability of SMK Budi Bakti Utama

The most visible impact of the quota expansion policy was the decline in student enrollment at SMK Budi Bakti Utama. Documentation data revealed a consistent decrease in both new student admissions and total student population over the last three academic years.

**Table 1.**

**Student Enrollment Trends at SMK Budi Bakti Utama (2023–2026)**

Academic Year	New Students (Grade X)	Total Students	Trend
2023/2024	87	267	Baseline
2024/2025	76	259	Declining
2025/2026	77	233	Declining

Source: Primary data processed by the researchers (2026)

The data indicate that the school experienced a cumulative decrease of approximately 12.7% in total student population during the observed period, with the most substantial decline occurring in the 2025/2026 academic year when total enrollment fell to 233 students. Interview findings confirmed that school administrators attributed this decline directly to the quota expansion policy.

The reduction in enrollment produced significant financial consequences. Because BOS funding is calculated on a per-student basis, declining enrollment automatically reduced the school's operational budget. The treasurer explained:

*"The drop in BOS funding has really affected a number of activities we had planned. We have had to implement budget efficiency measures cutting certain activities entirely and reducing the budget allocated to others."*

Specifically, the school reduced expenditures on extracurricular competitions, limited student enrichment activities, and postponed certain internal programmes. These measures were necessary to maintain operational sustainability under conditions of declining revenue. From an educational governance perspective, such budget cuts risk undermining the quality of educational provision and the school's long-term competitiveness creating a downward spiral in which financial constraints further reduce the institution's attractiveness to prospective students (Syafaruddin, 2019).

A significant qualitative finding concerned the withdrawal behaviour of prospective students during the admission process. The vice principal for student affairs described this phenomenon:

*"Yes, it happened last year. Several students who had already registered with us decided to withdraw because they were subsequently accepted into public schools."*

This phenomenon reflects a well-documented dynamic in educational market theory, whereby private schools are positioned as residual providers institutions that students consider only after exhausting public-school options (Ardianto, 2025; Lestari et al., 2024). The expansion of public-school capacity exacerbates this positioning by increasing the probability that prospective students will secure places in the public sector, thereby further contracting the private school's applicant pool.

Comparing these findings with studies from other regions reveals important parallels. Research by Punarsih and Ali (2019) examining the zoning system's effects in Surakarta found similar patterns of private-school enrollment decline as public-school capacity expanded. Likewise, Lestari et al. (2024) documented comparable trends in Gresik Regency, where private schools consistently lost students to

newly expanded public institutions. The present case study thus corroborates and extends these findings to the West Bandung Regency context, suggesting that the consequences of quota expansion policies are systemic rather than idiosyncratic.

### **Adaptation Strategies and Institutional Innovation**

Facing declining enrollment and financial constraints, SMK Budi Bakti Utama implemented several strategic adaptation measures aimed at maintaining institutional competitiveness and sustainability. These strategies reflect core principles of educational quality management, which emphasize that organizational resilience in times of crisis depends on continuous innovation, responsiveness to stakeholder needs, and strategic resource management (Syafaruddin, 2019; Usman, 2019).

The first strategy focused on academic differentiation through curriculum innovation. The school introduced a vocational programme known as the Content Creator School Programme, through which students receive training in digital content production, social media management, and content monetization. The principal described this initiative:

*"Our strategy for maintaining our position in the face of nearby public schools is to create a new curriculum the Content Creator School where we teach students how to generate income through social media. This curriculum exists only at our school and has not yet been implemented elsewhere. We are also actively partnering with various businesses and retailers in the Bandung, West Bandung, and Cimahi areas, such as Yomart Junction."*

From a strategic management perspective, curriculum differentiation represents a significant competitive advantage because it allows educational institutions to offer unique value propositions distinguishing them from competitors. In vocational education, the concept of link and match aligning educational content with labour market demands is considered essential for institutional relevance

and student employability (Usman, 2019). The Content Creator programme directly addresses contemporary digital economy demands, positioning SMK Budi Bakti Utama as a provider of future-ready vocational skills.

The broader implications of this curriculum innovation extend beyond the immediate institutional context. As Indonesia's digital economy continues to expand, vocational schools that proactively align their programmes with emerging industry needs are better positioned to attract students and justify their existence alongside public institutions. This finding resonates with international evidence suggesting that private vocational schools that differentiate through specialized, market-responsive programmes can sustain competitive enrollment even in environments where public alternatives are widely available (London, 2011).

The second strategy involved strengthening partnerships with industry stakeholders. The school expanded collaborations with retail companies and local businesses to improve students' internship opportunities and employment prospects, exemplified by the partnership with Yomart Junction. Such collaborations reflect the link-and-match principle central to Indonesian vocational education policy and enhance the school's reputational capital among prospective students and their families.

The third strategy focused on marketing and financial accessibility. School administrators intensified promotional activities through direct community outreach, including door-to-door engagement with junior high school graduates and their families. Additionally, the school implemented financial assistance programmes. As the vice principal explained:

*"In our PPDB strategy, we are working to build trust by reducing the building fee and providing scholarships to some students both from outside and within our community by waiving building fees and registration costs entirely."*

By reducing financial barriers, the school sought to position itself as an accessible alternative to public education, particularly for

families who might otherwise be deterred by private-school fee structures. This approach aligns with educational equity principles that emphasize the importance of removing economic obstacles to educational participation (Tilaar & Nugroho, 2016).

Taken together, the adaptation strategies adopted by SMK Budi Bakti Utama illustrate how private educational institutions can transform external policy challenges into opportunities for institutional renewal. However, the sustainability of these strategies depends on continued stakeholder support, successful curriculum implementation, and the school's ability to communicate its unique value proposition to prospective students and their families. Future research should examine the long-term effectiveness of these strategies and explore whether similar approaches are being adopted by other private schools facing comparable challenges in Indonesia.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The expansion of public senior and vocational high school admission quotas in Padalarang has generated significant managerial and operational challenges for SMK Budi Bakti Utama. Implemented through West Java Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2025, the policy contributed to a 12.7% decline in total student enrollment between the 2023/2024 and 2025/2026 academic years. This reduction directly decreased BOS funding and compelled the institution to implement budget efficiency measures that curtailed extracurricular and enrichment activities. The phenomenon of prospective students withdrawing their registrations after gaining public-school admission further intensified the enrollment crisis and reinforced the subordinate market position of private institutions within Indonesia's educational landscape.

Despite these challenges, SMK Budi Bakti Utama demonstrated organisational resilience through a multi-pronged adaptation strategy. The development of an innovative Content Creator vocational curriculum, the expansion of industry partnerships, and the implementation of financial assistance programmes collectively enabled the school to

maintain its relevance and competitiveness within an increasingly challenging educational environment. These strategies are consistent with educational quality management principles that emphasise the necessity of continuous innovation and stakeholder responsiveness in times of institutional stress.

The findings carry significant implications for educational policy and governance at both the regional and national levels. Policymakers should conduct systematic impact assessments of public-school enrollment expansion initiatives to anticipate and mitigate their consequences for private educational providers. A balanced approach to educational policy would foster collaboration rather than intensified competition between public and private schools, recognising that both sectors play essential roles in achieving national educational equity objectives. Future policies should consider mechanisms for supporting private schools that serve socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, including targeted subsidies, collaborative curriculum development programmes, or regulatory frameworks that incentivise quality differentiation among private providers.

Future research should employ multi-case designs comparing private schools across different regions of Indonesia to assess the generalisability of the present findings. Studies incorporating the perspectives of additional stakeholders including students, parents, and education policymakers would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the systemic consequences of quota expansion policies and inform more equitable and sustainable approaches to educational governance in Indonesia.

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