Strategies for Islamic Education Teachers in Dealing with the Impact of the Zoning System on New Student Admissions

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The process of accepting new students using the zoning system has an impact on students' morals, religious practices, and learning processes. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the efforts of Islamic Education teachers in dealing with the impact of the zoning system for accepting new students. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The sources of data for this study were Islamic Education teachers, Guidance Counseling teachers, student representatives, and school principals, with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed, reduced, and presented in narrative form, after which conclusions were drawn. This study found that the efforts made by Islamic Education teachers in coping with the impact of the zoning system for new student admissions related to moral violations and enthusiasm in practicing worship were to reprimand students and encourage them to always do good deeds. In addition, Islamic Education teachers coordinated with each other, including homeroom teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, and parents. To mitigate the impact of the zoning system for new student admissions on the diversity of students' abilities and learning styles, teachers taught according to standard processes, including efforts to implement differentiated learning as recommended by the government.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts are one form of service in the field of education that has been regulated by the government for public schools. The policy for accepting new students under the zoning system is regulated in Permendikbud No. 14 of 2018, article 16, which states that schools run by local governments are required to accept prospective students who reside within the nearest radius. This activity must be carried out by schools at the beginning of the new school year (Amalia & Yani, 2021; Solikha & Mustofa, 2025; Umiati et al., 2024). The aim is to recruit new students who will study at these schools. The management of new student

Admissions must be carried out in such a way that teaching and learning activities can begin smoothly on the first day of each academic year (Khairil Aftar et al., 2021; Nurlailiyah, 2022; Ula & Lestari, 2020; Widyastuti, 2020). The introduction of the zoning system for new student admissions is the government's initial response to address various complaints from parents of economically disadvantaged students and issues related to the distance between their children's schools and their homes (Hendrawan & P, 2023; Nurviana et al., 2021). However, as a system, the zoning system for new student admissions will inevitably have an impact. These impacts can be positive or negative for schools, student character, academic ability, teaching methods, including the teaching of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics.

One of the most striking impacts is that the input from schools implementing this zoning system for new student admissions has become more diverse. This is most noticeable in schools that were previously labeled as favorite schools. In the past, these schools managed students with nearly uniform academic abilities and characters. However, after the implementation of the zoning system for new student admissions, the input has become more diverse in terms of both the academic abilities and characters of the students.In general, students' academic abilities are divided into three categories: highly capable, average, and less capable. Highly capable students, who have good academic grades and high motivation to learn, are usually more aware of why they come to school and are able to achieve the best grades during their studies. Students with average academic ability (intermediate) are also aware of why they come to school, but in terms of academic grades, they rank below their peers who have high academic ability. Meanwhile, students with low academic ability and motivation are at the bottom. They generally perceive school and learning as a place to pass the time and are happy when the bell rings for recess and dismissal.

Islamic Religious Education and Ethics is one of several subject clusters in public schools that play an important role in shaping the character and personality of the nation's children (Faradhiba & Inayati, 2023; Umami, 2018; Wahidin, 2018). In this subject, students are taught to believe in, understand, and practice the teachings of Islam, so that they can become honest, fair, ethical, respectful, disciplined, harmonious, and productive individuals, both personally and socially.

In principle, no child is born stupid, but rather there are children who have not received educational services in accordance with their intellectual potential. In the learning process, it is very important for teachers to pay attention to the individual differences of students. Therefore, when a teacher is going to make a policy or carry out the learning process, they must consider the characteristics, talents, abilities, capacities, learning styles, and even the intelligence levels of their students. Students in educational activities are the main objects to whom everything related to educational activities is directed. Teaching is not only the most important profession in terms of human welfare. However, teaching is the most technical and difficult profession (Arfandi & Samsudin, 2021; Hamid, 2017; H. Wulandari & Nurhaliza, 2023). Teachers do not just give assignments and check them. They must be able to build their students' future. This is so that students do not experience failure, disappointment, and suffering due to the wrong educational process. Teachers are also fully responsible for the quality of the educational process in their schools (Nihaya & Kemala, 2025).

The main task of teachers is not only to teach in the sense of conveying theories and concepts, but also to help students overcome learning difficulties

in the process of developing their qualities (Fitriyanti et al., 2019; Laia, 2024). Teachers are also learning facilitators who should not position themselves as classroom rulers who enjoy finding fault with students and imposing unilateral sanctions on them without first establishing a learning contract. A teacher must be able to improve their teaching methods from traditional to multistimulant learning so that it is more enjoyable and interesting for their students. Moreover, the national education system in the current era of the 4.0 industrial revolution is faced with challenges that are extremely complex but interesting One example is that the learning process in the classroom has evolved towards a digital learning pattern, which aims to create more creative, participatory, diverse, and comprehensive learning. Teachers who are unwilling to change will find it difficult to compete with machines that are far more intelligent, faster, and more effective in searching for information and knowledge.

Since the zoning system was implemented, schools that were once considered favorites have had to accept prospective students who live in the vicinity of the school, without being able to choose and select the backgrounds of these prospective students. This is considered a challenge by educators, because while teachers at these schools used to teach students with similar abilities, they now have to teach students with a wide range of abilities. If teachers do not address this phenomenon with appropriate teaching strategies and methods, it will be difficult to achieve the objectives of the subjects they teach.

Based on interviews with several teachers at a popular high school, it was said that the zoning system for new student admissions has made the school's intake more diverse. They are required to work extra hard in implementing learning. This is because the students they deal with have academic abilities that are far different from previous years. Furthermore, these teachers said that there are some students in each class who are less enthusiastic about learning. They are physically present in class, but their minds seem to be elsewhere. Observations of students revealed several phenomena, such as teachers' lack of emotional control in dealing with the diverse characters of students in the classroom. Teachers tend to praise high-achieving students too much and pay less attention to students who seek attention by acting out and misbehaving. This is certainly a concern. If this learning condition continues, it will have an impact on the failure of students with low academic abilities and motivation to learn in their education.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, as well as a field research concept, describing the collected data through words rather than numbers (Akmal et al., 2024; Engkizar et al., 2024; Guspita et al., 2025; Ikhlas et al., 2025; Istiqamah et al., 2024). This research was conducted in a high school with research sources consisting of primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of interviews with Islamic Education teachers and additional information from Guidance Counseling teachers, student representatives, and the principal (Engkizar et al., 2023; Faddhia et al., 2025; Febriani et al., 2022; Khairunisa et al., 2025). Meanwhile, secondary data is a source of data that can support primary data, namely the school's vision and mission from observation photos, records of student disciplinary actions related to Islamic rules by guidance counselors, and academic regulations focused on matters related to Islamic rules from the student affairs representative's archives. Based on interviews with several teachers at a popular high school, it was said that the zoning system for new student

admissions has made the student composition at the school more diverse. They are required to work extra hard in implementing the learning process. This is because the students they deal with have academic abilities that are far different from previous years. In addition, these teachers also mentioned that there are several students in each class who are less enthusiastic about learning. They are physically present in class, but their minds seem to be elsewhere. Observations of students reveal several phenomena, such as a lack of emotional control on the part of teachers in dealing with diverse student characters in the classroom. Teachers tend to praise high-achieving students too often and pay less attention to students who seek attention by misbehaving. This is certainly a concern. If these learning conditions continue, it will have an impact on the failure of students with low academic abilities and low motivation to learn in their education. Data collection techniques used pre-research interviews, in-research interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Data analysis techniques use qualitative descriptive techniques, which describe and interpret the meaning of the collected data by considering as many aspects of the situation being studied at that time as possible, so as to obtain a general and comprehensive picture of the actual situation (Engkizar, Muslim, et al., 2025; Fitriani et al., 2023; Jaafar et al., 2023; Okenova et al., 2025; Oktavia, Febriani, Asril, et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2025; W. Wulandari et al., 2024). This study was analyzed using content analysis, which was then analyzed through the following steps: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with data verification. Data validity was examined by extending observation, perseverance in observation, and triangulation, namely: i) source triangulation, ii) theory triangulation, iii) technique triangulation, and iv) time triangulation (Akem et al., 2025; Engkizar, Jaafar, et al., 2025; Htay et al., 2025; Indramahdi et al., n.d.; Oktavia, Febriani, Hasnah, et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teachers are required to be creative and innovative in their teaching (Mea, 2024). This is because they will be dealing with students who are forced to attend classes for 7-9 hours a day, 5 to 6 days a week. If teachers are able to create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom, students will have no difficulty following the lessons as they should. In relation to the impact of the zoning system for new student admissions, teachers must make various efforts to ensure that the learning process in the classroom runs smoothly and optimally. To mitigate the negative impact of the zoning system for new student admissions on the learning process, teachers must return to adhering to the Education Process Standards (Miranti, 2024; Ulum, 2020). This is stipulated in Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, Chapter IV on Process Standards. Article 19 paragraph (1) states that the learning process in educational units is carried out in an interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging, and motivating manner for students to participate actively and provide sufficient space for initiative, creativity, and independence in accordance with the talents, interests, and physical and psychological development of the students.

Fig. 1. Strategies used by Islamic Education teachers to address the impact of the zoning system on new student admissions
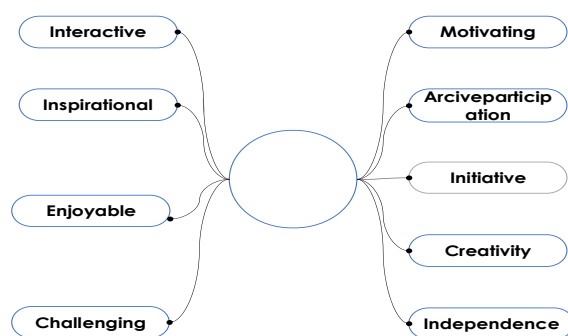
Interactive: In this learning process, teachers and students, as well as students with each other and the environment, must all be able to interact well so that their intellectual and mental abilities can develop to their full potential. Interactive learning can be carried out by discussing material through question and answer sessions, group work, and discussions (Marwah et al., 2024; Yuningsih & Haeruddin, 2024). *Inspirational:* Inspiration in learning needs to be brought out in students. Among the efforts that can be made by teachers are through observation, increasing knowledge in the library, or going out into the community to conduct simple observations, so that the experiences gained by teachers in the field are expected to encourage students to be more advanced and enthusiastic in learning (Lailatul Mubarokah, 2022). *Enjoyable*: Learning can be considered enjoyable if students feel safe and comfortable in actualizing their abilities. Teachers can create this by giving their students a little freedom to choose how they want to learn the subject matter they enjoy. In addition, teachers must also be able to present the subject matter by choosing methods, models, strategies, tactics, and learning media as well as evaluations that are interesting for their students to follow.

Challenging: This can be done by giving challenging questions or problems, even through problem-solving activities. It will be even more interesting for students if a teacher is able to guide them to connect one subject with other subjects (Huda et al., 2023). *Motivating:* Teachers must strive to encourage and praise their students, even in simple ways. Teachers can motivate students in learning by relating the teaching material to real-world needs. This includes providing meaningful learning that will have various benefits for students. Active *Participation*: In the learning process, a teacher must be able to encourage students to actively ask questions, express ideas, and question their own and others' ideas. In addition, teachers must also actively monitor student learning activities, provide feedback, ask challenging questions, and solve problems. *Initiative:* Teachers must be given the freedom to determine all ideas, considerations, and plans to be implemented in learning. This will have an impact on the teacher's freedom to give students the freedom to have effort and initiative in learning.

Creativity: In the learning process, teachers must give their students the opportunity to design, create, communicate ideas, opinions, or thoughts through specific written or non-written works. Teachers can develop various learning activities for students, not only guiding students in discussions, question and answer sessions, and assigning tasks. Teachers must also be able to create specific teaching techniques in accordance with the students' ability levels and learning objectives. *Independence*: At this stage, students are given

individual assignments related to the material they are learning. Students are also required to be active and take initiative. Through this, it is hoped that there will be a change in the way a person responds to and solves problems (Nuritha & Tsurayya, 2021).

In addition, there are other efforts that teachers can make, including: first, understanding differences in student development, talents, and intelligence. When dealing with students in the classroom, teachers will encounter various differences, including diversity in intelligence, personality, and other differences. Learning can achieve maximum results if teachers understand their students' characters. Second, implementing differentiated learning. Differentiated learning is a teaching and learning process where students can learn subject matter according to their abilities, preferences, and needs so that they do not become frustrated and fail in their learning experience. This learning idea is taken from Carol a. Tamlinson's book entitled How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms, which discusses learning that takes individual differences into account. Differentiated learning provides opportunities for teachers to view learning from various perspectives. Teachers must accept the diversity of their students long before they interact in the classroom. Teachers are also required to manage this diversity so that it is useful for their students' future. Therefore, it is essential to have teachers with the best abilities to meet all of their students' expectations (Setiawan, 2019).

Third, Good Classroom Management. The most common problem faced by both novice and senior teachers is classroom management. Classroom management is a teacher's skill in creating and maintaining optimal learning conditions and maintaining maximum conditions in the learning process. In general, the objectives of classroom management are essentially included in the objectives of education. Classroom management aims to facilitate various student learning activities in a social, emotional, and intellectual environment in the classroom, thereby creating an atmosphere that provides satisfaction, discipline, intellectual and emotional development, and appreciation for students. Fourth, becoming a multitasking teacher. Multitasking is the ability to perform two or more types of activities at the same time by relying on audio (speech) or visual (sight) cues. In addition to being able to teach, multitasking teachers can also complete other tasks that support their competence.

Fifth, Participate in Various Courses and Training Programs. A teacher should not feel satisfied with the knowledge they have, because knowledge continues to evolve over time. Courses and training programs are essential for teachers to improve their knowledge, insight, and competence. This is because students will definitely appreciate teachers who have greater abilities in teaching. Sixth, Activate Various Extracurricular Activities Extracurricular activities are activities organized by educational units as a forum for character development in order to optimally expand the potential, talents, interests, abilities, personality, cooperation, and independence of students. Specifically for Islamic studies, there are several religion-based extracurricular activities, including: i) Islamic Spirituality, ii) Quran Memorization, iii) Quran Recitation (Mufarochah et al., 2023; Salaeh & Misbah, 2025).

Every teacher must be optimistic in dealing with the students they receive through this zoning system for new student admissions. Students' morals and religious practices must be nurtured, and learning must be carried out in a safe, smooth, and controlled manner. Moreover, the zoning quota is limited to only 50% of total admissions. The rest are filled by students accepted through academic and non-academic achievement pathways, affirmation

pathways, and parent transfer pathways. Jasni Dewita said, "I advise these problematic students to understand their parents' busy schedules and motivate them to be independent, to be good at maintaining boundaries with the opposite sex, and to respect their fellow school members. Even if their parents' attention has decreased, they are already grown up and know what is good and what is bad (Mollah, 2024; Solechan & Fatmawati, 2021). In addition, we, the Islamic Religious Education teachers, also activate various Islamic religious extracurricular activities such as rohis, tahfiz, and tahsin. Although the number of participants is not too many, they can be relied upon as the driving force behind religious activities in this school. This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

> *I advise these troubled students to change their mindset to a positive one. They must have good character (morals) in order to be accepted in the school environment and society. I also monitor their worship by checking their attendance and whether they pray five times a day during my lessons. I have also shared this approach with other subject teachers, and I am pleased to see that several of them have followed my example. We, the Islamic Education teachers, also organize various Islamic extracurricular activities such as Rohis, Tahfiz, and Tahsin, but the number of participants is still low (informant).*

Based on the interview results, it was found that Islamic Education teachers have made various efforts to improve their students' morals and worship, even though the facilities and religious awareness of some students at this school are still lacking. When the efforts made by Islamic Education teachers were confirmed with the Guidance Counselor, the vice principal, and the principal, they all agreed that this was true. However, when the behavioral violations committed by these students are quite serious, or they do not heed the advice of Islamic Education teachers, the teachers agree to hand over the problem to be handled further by the school outside of Islamic Education teachers. The diversity faced by teachers in the classroom should not be used as an excuse for not giving their best to the students in the classroom. Teachers must make every effort to ensure that all students in their classroom can follow the lessons properly. This was conveyed by the informant as follows

> *I strive to implement differentiated learning by providing a variety of learning models so that students do not get bored while studying. If students ignore my advice and instructions, I coordinate with the homeroom teacher and other relevant parties to make the students realize their mistakes (informant).*
>
> *I do this by using various teaching strategies, such as taking an individual approach to students who need special attention in class so that they feel comfortable learning with me. If this strategy is not successful, I communicate with fellow teachers of other subjects, homeroom teachers, and even parents through the homeroom teacher and school officials. Meanwhile, for students with high learning abilities, I give praise and other small rewards as a form of appreciation for their efforts (informant).*

The principal and everyone else agreed with the efforts made by the Islamic Education teachers. This was conveyed by the informant as follows

> *I thought that the only teachers who understood the differences between students and who were responsible for their behavior and worship at this school were the Islamic Education teachers and the Guidance Counseling teachers. As for teachers of other subjects, only a few were concerned (informant).*

A teacher must not lose heart in facing the challenges they encounter in the field. Therefore, there are various efforts they can make to overcome various problems, including:

Implementing differentiated learning

The implementation of differentiated learning is strongly encouraged by the government. Every student is unique, with different characters, abilities, and backgrounds. By implementing appropriate differentiated learning, a teacher can guide students in a way that suits their individual uniqueness. There are many simple and easy things that a teacher can do to implement differentiated learning, including understanding the interests, talents, and abilities of their students; creating varied learning content; developing representative learning modules; taking an individualized approach; and so on (Barlian et al., 2023; Fauzia & Hadikusuma Ramadan, 2023).

Based on the interviews conducted, it appears that all Islamic Education teachers at this school have made efforts to implement differentiated learning. One informant uses a varied learning model so that students do not get bored with learning. Jasnidewita uses a special approach for groups of students according to their talents and potential, while another informant also pays special attention to students with different abilities.

This differentiated learning is indeed very suitable to be implemented to overcome the impact of the zoning system for new student admissions. Moreover, to do this, the government has also instructed guidance counselors to compile and distribute the results of student learning style analyses in the classroom to each subject teacher, including Islamic Education teachers, to be followed up by each teacher in the learning process. However, in practice, Islamic Education teachers at this school admit that they have not been able to implement differentiated learning in their classrooms to the fullest extent possible, citing reasons such as large class sizes, limited time, and a lack of learning support facilities.

Conducting learning in accordance with process standards

Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards chapter IV Process Standards, Article 19 paragraph (1) states that the learning process in educational units is carried out in an interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging manner, and motivating for students to actively participate and provide sufficient space for initiative, creativity, and independence in accordance with the talents, interests, and physical and psychological development of students. Meanwhile, efforts that can be made to overcome the impact of zoning in terms of character can begin with advising them not to repeat their actions; taking a spiritual approach by involving them in religious extracurricular activities such as Islamic Spirituality, tahfiz, tahsin, and so on (Purnawanto, 2023). Islamic Religious Education teachers coordinate with other subject teachers, guidance counselors, student representatives, and other relevant parties at the school.

Based on field research, the author found that Islamic Education teachers at this school have made religious approaches to mitigate the impact of the zoning system for new student admissions on their students' morals and religious practices. These approaches have been implemented by Islamic Education teachers to mitigate the impact of the zoning system for new student admissions.

Managing extracurricular activities related to religious activities

Extracurricular activities are activities carried out by students outside of compulsory learning hours, under the guidance and supervision of the educational unit, with the aim of developing students' potential, talents, interests, abilities, personality, cooperation, and independence (Himyari et al., 2023; Rachmat Subarkah et al., 2023). In line with this, the Regulation of the Director General of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Number Dj.I /12A of 2009 concerning the Implementation of Islamic

Religious Education Extracurricular Activities in schools emphasizes that Islamic Religious Education extracurricular activities are efforts to strengthen, enrich, and improve values, norms, and the development of talents, interests, and personality of students in the aspects of practicing and mastering the holy book, faith, piety, noble character, worship, history, arts, and culture, which are carried out outside of intraschool hours under the guidance of Islamic Education teachers, other subject teachers, educational staff, and other competent individuals, either at school or outside of school. An extracurricular high school program that is implemented includes Islamic Spirituality, Tahfiz, and Tahsin. These activities are managed directly by Islamic Education teachers who work at this school. The school has made every effort to implement these activities to the fullest extent possible, even though there are still various obstacles in the field.

CONCLUSION

Islamic Education and Morality teachers have made every effort to guide students in dealing with the impact of the New Student Admission zoning system, especially in terms of morals and worship. The efforts made include differentiated learning to adjust teaching methods to students' abilities and interests, a religious approach through advice and monitoring of worship, and management of extracurricular activities such as Rohis, Tahfiz, and Tahsin to strengthen religious values. In addition, Islamic Religious Education teachers also coordinate with homeroom teachers, guidance counselors, and school officials in dealing with students who have behavioral problems. Despite still facing obstacles such as large class sizes and limited resources, teachers remain committed to providing effective learning and supporting the development of students' character at school.

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