

From Selection to Success: Assessing the Impact of Student Admissions Strategies on the Quality of Education

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Abstract:

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the new student admission program at one of the Madrasahs in Cirebon, focusing on the effectiveness of the selection system and its impact on the quality of students accepted. This study uses the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model, providing a comprehensive framework for assessing the new student admission program. Data were collected through structured and unstructured interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out through reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The study results indicate that although the new student admission has succeeded in increasing the number of student registrations, the selection is still more focused on quantity than quality. This program is based on the vision of the madrasah, which is to develop students who are religious, intelligent, independent, and have good morals. Still, the selection process has not included in-depth academic and psychological evaluations. Although the infrastructure and socialization of the program are adequate, the quality of students accepted varies, affecting academic standards. This study suggests improvements in the selection process by implementing a more comprehensive assessment of student academic competence and character to improve student quality per the goals of madrasah education.

Keywords: *Academic Competence, Academic Standards, Quality of Education, Student Selection*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi pelaksanaan program penerimaan siswa baru pada salah satu Madrasah di Cirebon, dengan fokus pada efektivitas sistem seleksi dan dampaknya terhadap kualitas siswa yang diterima. Penelitian ini menggunakan model evaluasi Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) yang menyediakan kerangka kerja komprehensif untuk menilai program penerimaan siswa baru. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terstruktur dan tidak terstruktur, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui proses reduksi, presentasi, dan penarikan Kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun penerimaan siswa baru berhasil meningkatkan jumlah pendaftaran siswa, seleksi masih lebih fokus pada kuantitas daripada kualitas. Program ini sesuai dengan visi madrasah untuk mengembangkan siswa yang religius, cerdas, mandiri, dan berakhlak mulia, namun proses seleksi belum mencakup evaluasi akademik dan psikologis yang mendalam. Meskipun infrastruktur

dan sosialisasi program efektif, kualitas siswa yang diterima bervariasi, mempengaruhi standar akademik. Penelitian ini menyarankan perbaikan dalam proses seleksi, dengan penerapan penilaian lebih komprehensif terhadap kompetensi akademik dan karakter siswa, agar dapat meningkatkan kualitas siswa sesuai dengan tujuan pendidikan madrasah.

Kata Kunci: *Kompetensi Akademik, Standar Akademik, Kualitas Pendidikan, Seleksi Siswa*

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INTRODUCTION

The New Student Admission Program (PPDB) is a crucial component of the education system that determines the quality of student intake at each school level (Reyes & Uddin, 2021; Ehlinger et al., 2023; Martínez-Jiménez et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic schools (madrasah), it serves not only as an administrative process but also reflects the management strategy rooted in Islamic values and institutional competitiveness (Idris et al., 2022; Mahsusi et al., 2024; Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022). The increasing number of madrasahs in Indonesia competing to attract students underscores the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of PPDB (Al-Kassem et al., 2022; Martins et al., 2024). According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the number of madrasahs in Indonesia continues to rise, reaching over 80,000 units in 2024/2005, indicating a high demand for Islamic-based education (Mok et al., 2021; Pletcher et al., 2022; Yaeger et al., 2021). However, the primary challenge in implementing PPDB is ensuring a selection process that increases student enrollment and maintains academic quality standards. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of PPDB implementation in Islamic Elementary Schools is the focus of this research, aiming to understand the extent of the program's effectiveness in recruiting qualified students.

Several studies have discussed the evaluation of educational programs using various analysis models, one of which is the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model developed by Stufflebeam (Dwaikat, 2020; Ghosh et al., 2023; Yuan, 2021). This model has been used in various studies to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs, including student admission selection (Fernandes & Singh, 2022; Martins et al., 2024). Previous research has found that online systems can increase transparency, but there are still obstacles to accessibility for people in remote areas (Loton et al., 2022; Numan & Islam, 2021; Yusoff et al., 2021). Another study by El Widdah (2022) highlights the importance of madrasah branding in attracting prospective students and how the institution's image can affect the number of applicants. Although various studies have explored the effectiveness of PPDB, there are still research gaps related to the optimization of academic and psychological-based selection in madrasah. Therefore, this study will contribute to filling the gap by evaluating PPDB using the CIPP approach.

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of PPDB in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Terpadu Tunas Cendekia, Cirebon, by using the CIPP model to assess the effectiveness of the selection system and its impact on the quality of students received. Specifically, this study will analyze how context, input, process,

and product factors in PPDB can affect program effectiveness. The academic urgency of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of PPDB evaluation in madrasah, which has focused more on administrative aspects than the quality of educational output. From a practical point of view, the results of this study are expected to provide recommendations for madrasah managers to improve the effectiveness of their PPDB system.

This study assumes that the effectiveness of PPDB is determined not only by the quantity of students received but also by the quality of the selection applied. In this context, the researcher assumes that using the CIPP evaluation model can identify weaknesses and strengths in the PPDB system, which can ultimately be used to improve the quality of accepted learners. This approach is based on the theory of educational evaluation, which emphasizes that the student admission system must be aligned with the vision of the institution and its academic needs. Previous studies have shown that CIPP-based assessment can provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of education policies, making it a suitable model for this study. Therefore, this research is expected to provide new insights into how madrasah can optimize their PPDB regarding selection policies, resource management, and branding strategies to attract more qualified students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) program evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam (2005). The CIPP model was selected due to its comprehensive framework, which allows for evaluating the PPDB program from four critical perspectives: context, input, process, and product. This approach enables a holistic assessment of the program's effectiveness and provides insights into areas for improvement to enhance the quality of education.

The study was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Terpadu Tunas Cendekia in Cirebon, Indonesia. The research participants included key stakeholders, such as the head of the educational institution, the person in charge of the PPDB committee, and members of the PPDB committee. A detailed breakdown of the participants is provided in the following table.

Data collection involved multiple methods. Initially, in-depth structured interviews were conducted, followed by unstructured interviews to allow for more flexibility and exploration of emerging themes based on the findings (Rahmawati, 2020). Observations were also employed to gain firsthand insights into the actions and behaviors of the subjects or objects being evaluated. In addition, document analysis was conducted to collect relevant written materials and records from the subjects' perspectives.

Table. 2 Research Instrument Tables

Instrument	Objective
Deep Interview	Explore in-depth information about the implementation of the PPDB program from the perspective of research subjects.
Observation	Directly observe the PPDB program implementation process and identify areas for improvement.
Documentation Study	Analyze documents related to the PPDB program, such as guidelines, reports, and registration data.

Data analysis was performed using data reduction techniques, presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). Data reduction entailed summarizing, selecting key points, and focusing on the most significant findings. The reduced data were presented in concise descriptions, charts, or relationships between categories to facilitate understanding. The final step involved drawing conclusions and formulating the research findings.

Validation procedures were undertaken to ensure data validity, beginning with credibility testing through triangulation. Additionally, transferability and dependability were assessed following the guidelines proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Context Evaluation in Integrating PPDB with Madrasah Vision and Mission

The study's findings show that the New Student Admission Program (PPDB) has been running effectively, as shown by the increase in the number of new students. However, this study found that the program's primary focus is still more on quantity than quality. PPDB at MI Terpadu Tunas Cendekia, Cirebon, is prepared based on Themadrasah's vision and mission, which is oriented towards developing religious, intelligent, independent, and autonomous students. The foundation's support in providing facilities and infrastructure, such as transportation, brochures, and registration forms, is invaluable in implementing this program. However, further efforts are still needed to improve the quality of student input through a more comprehensive selection system. The context is relevant based on the vision and mission, ideal internal and external conditions, and relevance and sustainability if the goals are as envisioned in Figure 1.

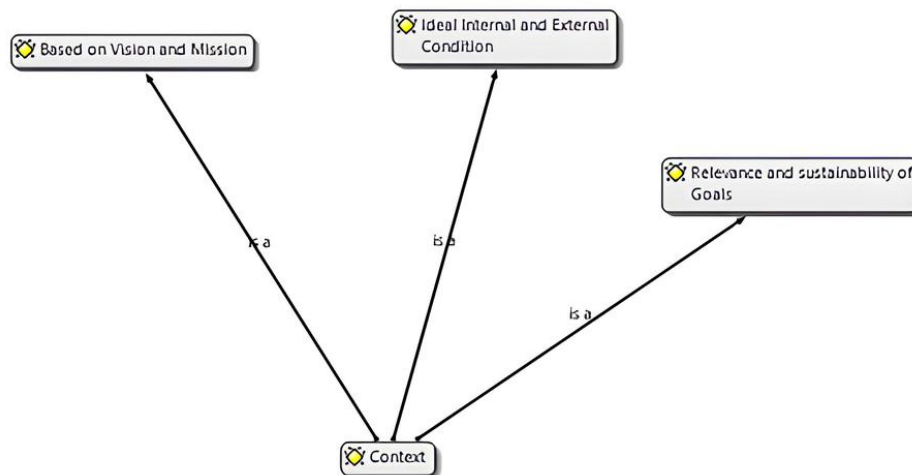


Figure 1. Context figure at Islamic Elementary using atlas.ti 7th

The figure illustrates the context evaluation structure in the New Student Admission Program (PPDB). This diagram shows that the context of PPDB is based on three main aspects: the vision and mission of the madrasah, ideal internal and external conditions, and the relevance and sustainability of the goals. The

relationship between these factors confirms that student admissions consider the quantity and expected quality of education.

The results show that the infrastructure provided by the foundation includes transportation, brochures, and registration forms that are prepared systematically. PPDB socialization is done through madrasah operational vehicles and social media, including YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. This approach allows madrasah to reach more prospective students and parents, expanding the scope of information regarding the educational programs. However, the current selection system is not strict enough in assessing prospective students' academic and non-academic aspects. Some students are accepted without going through a thorough selection process, which has the potential to reduce the overall quality of education. Therefore, improvements are needed in the selection system, such as implementing more comprehensive psychological and academic tests to ensure admitted students have competencies per the educational standards of the madrasah.

PPDB has significantly increased the number of students, showing a higher attraction for prospective students and parents. However, this growth has not been accompanied by a more systematic improvement in selection quality. The current selection focuses more on administrative than comprehensive academic and psychological evaluations. As a result, some students who were accepted were not entirely by the educational standards set by the madrasah. The review of this selection process shows a need to adjust the selection method to emphasize more aspects of student competence in academics and character. By implementing a stricter selection system based on clear academic standards, madrasah can guarantee that every accepted student is better equipped to follow the learning process optimally.

Input Evaluation: Effective Strategies and Resources in PPDB

The evaluation of inputs in the PPDB shows several aspects that must be optimized to increase effectiveness. The current committee structure still needs to be prepared more efficiently to reduce budget waste and ensure the program's success. In addition, PPDB funding sources should come directly from madrasah to increase independence in budget management without dependence on external parties. Regulatory clarity in fund management is also essential in improving transparency and accountability. Collaboration between madrasah and foundations in budget management is still an obstacle due to the lack of a system that is fully managed by the madrasah. Therefore, it is necessary to implement a more efficient strategy in selecting and using resources to support the program's sustainability and increase the effectiveness of accepting new students. Input is related to choosing the most efficient and appropriate strategy and funding and checking that the process runs according to the objectives, as shown in Figure 2.

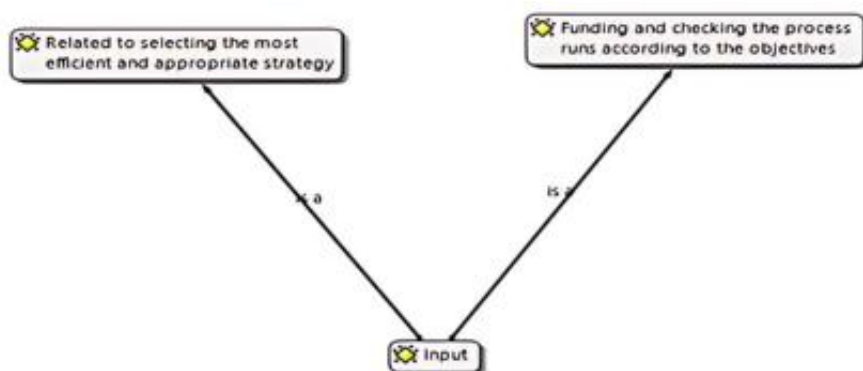


Figure 2. Input figure at Islamic Elementary using atlas.ti 7th

This figure shows the relationship between the context and the three main factors influencing its evaluation of PPDB. The context of this program is based on the vision and mission of the madrasah, ideal internal and external conditions, and the relevance and sustainability of educational goals. This diagram illustrates that the success of new student admissions must consider conformity with the institution's vision, internal conditions such as madrasah resources and capacity, and external conditions such as community needs and school competitiveness. In addition, the continuity of educational goals is essential in ensuring that the strategies implemented can last long. Thus, this evaluation model emphasizes the synergy between careful planning and executing the madrasah's educational needs and strategic goals.

In addition to the funding aspect, the student selection strategy in PPDB also needs to be improved to be more effective in determining prospective students with academic potential and character to the vision of the madrasah. The selection process still focuses on administrative registration without an in-depth competency evaluation mechanism. This causes a gap in the quality of students accepted. The results of interviews with the PPDB committee revealed that some of the prospective students accepted had various levels of academic readiness, making it difficult for teachers to adjust learning in the classroom. "We see the need for a more structured selection system, including academic tests and student motivational interviews," said one of the committee i_ap_2024 members. This research shows that most students admitted through the pathway without selection have had difficulty adjusting to the curriculum in recent years. Therefore, implementing a more targeted selection method can increase students' suitability with madrasah academic standards and facilitate their adaptation to the learning environment.

Evaluation: Implementation of PPDB and Optimization of Student Selection

The evaluation of the process in the PPDB shows several aspects that still need to be improved. The implementation of PPDB must be carried out according to a predetermined schedule so that the program resultsprogram's results can be maximized and goals can be achieved. In addition, the procurement of brochures must be carried out on time to increase the effectiveness of program socialization in the community. The branding of the madrasah conveyed in the socialization of PPDB also needs to include aspects of learning, extracurriculars, and the identity

of the madrasah as a modern and competitive Islamic institution.

The chairman of the foundation that oversees MI Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Terpadu Tunas Cendekia, Mr. Affandi Mochtar, is known as a charismatic leader who helps strengthen the image of the madrasah. Therefore, madrasah need to build a strong identity in the PPDB process. Madrasah also needs to implement psychological selection tests and health certificate requirements for prospective students to improve the quality of accepted students. Previous research found that implementing the CIPP evaluation model in the PPDB program has shown effectiveness in online student selection. Therefore, strengthening the CIPP evaluation-based selection mechanism can also be applied at madrasah. The evaluation process in PPDB must involve a competent evaluator, at least the principal, who is responsible for data collection, organization, analysis, reporting, and evaluation management per the predetermined schedule, as shown in Figure 3.

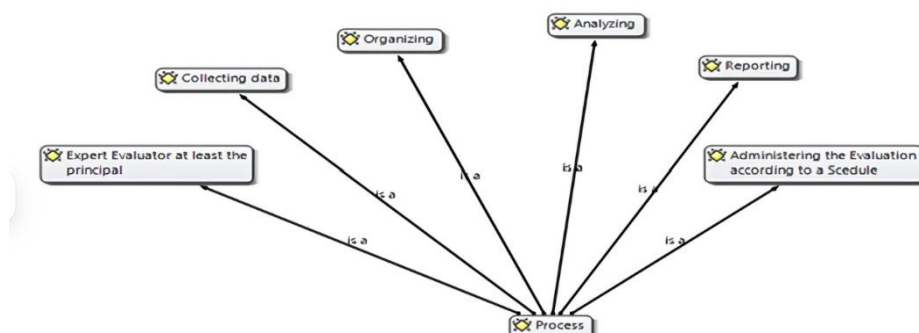


Figure 3. Process figure at Islamic Elementary using atlas.ti 7th

This figure illustrates the evaluation process in the New Student Admission Program (PPDB) at Madrasah based on the Atlas.ti analysis model. Process evaluation in PPDB involves several main aspects: data collection, organization, analysis, reporting, and evaluation management according to schedule. This evaluation also emphasizes the importance of having an expert evaluator, at least the principal, responsible for all process stages. The diagram shows that data collection is an essential first step before proceeding to the organizing and analysis stage to assess the effectiveness of PPDB. The evaluation results are then reported as the basis for further decision-making. Finally, the evaluation administration is carried out according to a predetermined schedule to ensure efficiency and accountability. This process shows a systematic approach to evaluating the effectiveness of PPDB to improve transparency, efficiency of student selection, and the quality of education management in madrasah.

Product Evaluation Impact and Implications of PPDB on Student Quality

Evaluation of PPDB program products shows that the program results have not been optimal in improving the quality of new students. Apart from increasing the number of new students and expanding the network with kindergarten, PPDB should also focus on improving the quality of prospective students it accepts. To achieve this, apart from the mapping test, it is also necessary to include a certificate of health and physical health from the five senses from a doctor as a PPDB

requirement. The advantages of MI Terpadu Tunas Cendekia, such as coaching in science Olympiads that have resulted in national-level achievements, should attract prospective quality students to enroll in this madrasa. However, the current PPDB policy is only effective in increasing the number of students but has not been able to improve the quality of new students. Regarding the product evaluation program, the impact of a program includes positive and negative results, achieved and not achieved, and implications, as displayed in Figure 4.

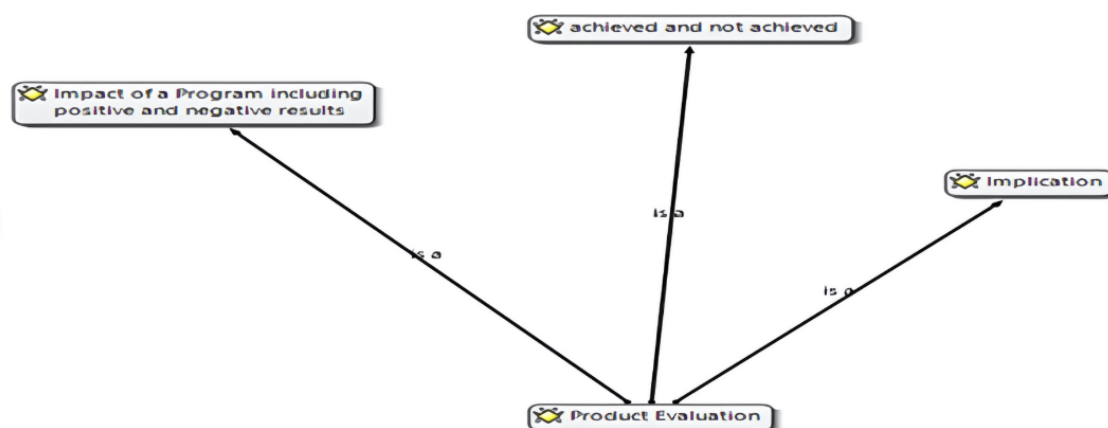


Figure 4. Product Evaluation figure at Islamic Elementary using atlas.ti 7th

This image illustrates the product evaluation of the New Student Admission Program (PPDB) at madrasah using Atlas.ti. The diagram shows that product evaluation in PPDB includes three main aspects: program impact (including positive and negative outcomes), achievement and failure to achieve goals, and implications of evaluation results. The evaluation of the program's impact highlights that the admission of new students has mixed results, both in increasing the number of students and the challenges of maintaining their academic quality. The achieved and not achieved section indicates that despite the growing number of students, their educational standards and learning readiness have not been uniform. The implication section highlights that this evaluation's results directly impact selection policies and strategies to improve the quality of madrasah education. Therefore, further adjustments are needed in the PPDB system so that it does not only focus on the quantity but also the quality of the students received.

Discussion

This study found that the New Student Admission Program (PPDB) still faces challenges in balancing the number of students accepted and the quality of academic and psychological selection. Evaluation of the CIPP model shows that although the number of students increases, this does not necessarily impact their educational quality. This indicates that a more rigorous and comprehensive selection system is urgently needed to ensure admitted students are academically prepared. The study of Tavares et al. (2021) shows that the success of student admissions depends not only on the quantity but also on the quality of the selection applied. Meanwhile, Mantai & Marrone (2022) emphasized that choice based on academic and psychological assessments contributes significantly to

students' success in achieving the set learning standards. Thus, evaluating the selection mechanism in PPDB is a crucial step in improving the quality of madrasah education.

The results of this study also confirm that an effective selection system directly impacts students' academic quality. Institutions that implement academic competency-based selection tend to have a higher learning success rate compared to schools that only prioritize increasing the number of students (Yuan, 2021). Bogren et al. (2022) also showed that schools with stricter selection produce graduates with superior academic competence and professional skills. In the context of PPDB Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, this finding emphasizes that students' academic success is determined by the number of students accepted and the effectiveness of the selection process implemented.

In addition to the selection system, this study found that transparency in managing PPDB funds is still challenging. Currently, funding is still the result of collaboration between foundations and madrasah, which has the potential to hinder the independence of financial management. Lin (2022) emphasized that financial transparency is a key factor in the effectiveness of academic programs, while Brook et al. (2024) showed that educational institutions that are independent in managing funds tend to be more efficient in their operations. Therefore, for PPDB to be more effective, madrasah need to consider more accountable and independent fund management to ensure transparency and efficiency in every stage of PPDB implementation.

These findings also confirm that PPDB fund management's effectiveness is closely related to the success of student selection. Yusoff et al. (2021) that schools with self-funding systems have greater flexibility in improving educational facilities. Meanwhile, Loton et al. (2022) emphasized that transparency in managing the education budget contributes to the quality of student academic services. Thus, a more structured and need-based financial system can help madrasah increase effectiveness and transparency in the student admission process.

In addition, this study also shows that the selection system in PPDB is still not optimal, especially in accommodating the talents and interests of prospective students. Although the number of students accepted has increased, there is still a gap between students' initial competencies and madrasah' academic needs. Studies by Martins (2024) revealed that selection based on talent and interest mapping can improve students' academic success in the long term. Psychological assessment in PPDB can help schools adjust learning methods to student characteristics (Idris et al., 2022). Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of PPDB, madrasah need to implement a more targeted selection system to ensure alignment between students' abilities and the curriculum implemented.

The relationship between the results of this study and previous studies shows that talent- and interest-based selection plays a vital role in improving students' academic success. Research by Al-Kassem (2022) found that schools that implemented competency-based selection had a higher academic success rate than those that only used administrative selection. Gift-based assessments not only improve students' academic achievement but also positively impact their

motivation to learn. Therefore, madrasah need to develop a more competency-based selection method to produce graduates ready to face academic and professional challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of the New Student Admission Program (PPDB) at MI Terpadu Tunas Cendekia using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model. The findings show that PPDB has succeeded in increasing the number of students, but it has not been balanced with improving their academic quality and learning readiness. The evaluation of inputs revealed that the committee and fund management still need to be improved to be more independent and transparent. Meanwhile, the PPDB process needs to be enhanced with a stricter selection system, including implementing psychological and academic tests. From a product perspective, this study identifies that the number of students has not entirely impacted the quality of education, indicating the need for a balance between quantity and quality in PPDB policies.

The main contribution of this research is to provide insight into the importance of holistic evaluation in education management, especially in new student admission programs. By applying the CIPP evaluation model, this study proposes a more structured approach to managing PPDB, which can be a reference for similar educational institutions. However, this study has limitations in geographical scope and has not accommodated external factors such as the role of parents in school selection. Further research needs to be conducted with a broader approach and more in-depth quantitative methods to measure the impact of PPDB policies on long-term academic achievement. In addition, further studies can explore how implementing competency-based selection can significantly improve the quality of students.

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