



## The Role of Student Affairs Vice Principals in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Student Admission Processes

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### ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the implementation of student affairs management in the student admission process and to evaluate its effectiveness in selecting students aligned with the school's educational vision. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, utilizing observations, in-depth interviews with the vice principal for student affairs, guidance and counseling teachers, duty teachers, and analysis of supporting documents. The findings reveal that the admission process is conducted through structured stages, including registration, academic assessment, Qur'an reading tests, interviews, and re-registration. The integration of disciplinary regulations, religious mentoring, counseling services, and extracurricular activities strengthens the effectiveness of student affairs management in the admission system. These mechanisms contribute to the selection of students who demonstrate discipline, strong character, and readiness to engage in vocational education within a boarding school context. The study implies that a well-managed and integrated student admission system plays a crucial role in enhancing student quality and supporting character education. Effective collaboration between school management and boarding-based educational programs is essential for ensuring sustainable student development and institutional effectiveness.

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## INTRODUCTION

Student management has become a critical issue in contemporary education systems due to increasing public demands for schools that not only provide academic instruction but also shape students' character, discipline, and moral values (Martinez & Partin, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2024). This issue is particularly important for societies seeking sustainable human development, where education is expected to prepare learners intellectually, socially, and ethically. Student admission processes play a decisive role because they

determine the initial quality of students entering the educational system. When admissions are managed effectively, schools are more likely to foster orderly learning environments and long-term student development. Conversely, weak admission management often leads to disciplinary problems, learning difficulties, and misalignment between students' characteristics and institutional goals. These conditions demonstrate that student admission is not merely a technical procedure but a strategic educational mechanism (Hakimov & Raghavan, 2025; Kim, 2024). Therefore, examining student management practices at the admission stage is essential for improving educational quality, strengthening character education, and responding to societal expectations for schools that produce competent and well-rounded graduates.

Despite its strategic importance, student admission is frequently treated as a routine administrative activity rather than a foundational component of student management (Berrone et al., 2023; Kallmuenzer et al., 2025). Many educational institutions prioritize enrollment targets and academic test scores while neglecting non-academic dimensions such as discipline, motivation, character readiness, and cultural compatibility (Marfán, 2025; Raju, 2024). This situation has become a widespread problem, especially in schools with integrated educational systems that combine formal schooling with value-based education. When admission processes fail to assess students holistically, schools often face persistent challenges, including behavioral issues, low learning engagement, and difficulties in student supervision. These problems ultimately affect instructional effectiveness and institutional stability. The lack of integrated management at the admission stage reflects a broader issue in educational governance, where student management is fragmented and reactive rather than preventive and strategic (Rane et al., 2024; Ude, 2025). As a result, schools struggle to align student characteristics with institutional visions, highlighting the urgent need for research that repositions student admission as a core element of comprehensive student management.

In practice, schools that integrate vocational education with boarding or religious systems face more complex challenges during student admission (Hidayat et al., 2024; Iman et al., 2025). These institutions are required to admit students who are not only academically capable but also mentally prepared, disciplined, and willing to follow intensive educational routines. Field observations indicate that mismatches between students' readiness and institutional demands often emerge when admission focuses solely on academic indicators (Gelbgiser & Alon, 2024; Morgan III, 2025). Students who lack discipline or commitment may struggle to adapt to structured environments, leading to adjustment problems and increased supervisory burdens. Conversely, schools that apply multi-dimensional admission criteria tend to experience

smoother student adaptation and stronger institutional culture. This phenomenon illustrates that student admission directly influences subsequent student behavior, discipline, and engagement. It also underscores the importance of student affairs leadership in coordinating admission mechanisms that align academic selection with character and readiness assessment. These realities demonstrate the need to analyze admission practices from a student management perspective rather than viewing them as isolated administrative tasks.

Previous educational studies have largely examined student admission from administrative, policy, or access-oriented perspectives (Case & Monday, 2025; Ortagus et al., 2023). Many researchers focus on procedural fairness, enrollment capacity, digital registration systems, or academic selection criteria. While these studies contribute valuable insights, they often overlook the managerial role of student affairs leadership in shaping admission effectiveness. In particular, limited attention has been given to how student admission functions as an early stage of student development and character formation (Ayeh et al., 2023; Ling et al., 2023). Existing research rarely positions admission as part of a continuous student management cycle that extends from entry to graduation. As a result, the strategic contribution of student affairs leaders in integrating admission processes with student development goals remains underexplored. This gap is especially evident in institutions that combine formal education with value-based or residential systems, where student readiness extends beyond academic competence. Addressing this gap is essential to advance understanding of admission management as a proactive educational strategy rather than a passive selection mechanism.

The lack of research focusing on student affairs leadership in admission management has practical and theoretical implications. Practically, schools lack evidence-based guidance on how to design admission systems that support long-term student discipline and character development (Najiburohman et al., 2025; Syafiih, 2025). Theoretically, student management literature remains fragmented, with admission often separated from broader discussions of student supervision and development. This separation limits the ability of educators and policymakers to understand how early management decisions influence later student outcomes. Moreover, the absence of studies addressing integrated admission systems reduces opportunities for institutional learning and best-practice dissemination (Purwanto & Wafa, 2023; Sanjani, 2024). In contexts where schools are expected to produce graduates with both technical competence and strong moral foundations, this research gap becomes increasingly

significant. Therefore, investigating student admission through the lens of student management and leadership is crucial for strengthening educational governance and ensuring that admission processes contribute meaningfully to institutional effectiveness and student success.

This study offers a novel perspective by conceptualizing student admission as an integral component of student management and early character formation. Rather than viewing admission as a standalone administrative procedure, the study emphasizes its function as a strategic entry point for shaping student discipline, values, and learning readiness. The research highlights the central role of the vice principal for student affairs as a key managerial actor who coordinates planning, implementation, and early student development during the admission process. This approach represents a shift from conventional admission studies by integrating academic selection, character assessment, and readiness evaluation within a unified management framework. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on leadership-driven admission management and its contribution to understanding how early interventions influence long-term student outcomes. Addressing this issue is important to respond to contemporary educational demands for holistic student development and institutional sustainability.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the research problem of how student affairs leadership contributes to the effectiveness of student admission management and its role in shaping disciplined and well-prepared students. The central argument of this study is that effective admission management requires strong coordination, strategic planning, and early student guidance led by the vice principal for student affairs. By integrating academic evaluation with assessments of discipline, motivation, and readiness, admission processes can function as a preventive management tool rather than a corrective one. This study contributes to educational research by providing empirical insights into the managerial role of student affairs leadership in admission practices. It also offers practical implications for schools seeking to improve student quality through integrated management approaches. Ultimately, the study argues that repositioning student admission as a foundational stage of student management is essential for achieving sustainable educational outcomes.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative case study design with a descriptive orientation. The qualitative approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of student affairs management in the student admission process rather than to measure phenomena numerically. A case study design was considered appropriate because it allows for a

comprehensive exploration of complex managerial processes, interactions, and contextual dynamics within a real-life educational setting. This design enabled the researcher to examine how student admission management operates as an integrated system involving academic selection, character assessment, and student development. By focusing on a single institutional case, the study provides a detailed and contextualized understanding of student affairs leadership practices that cannot be captured through quantitative methods.

The research was conducted at a vocational school implementing a boarding-based educational system, selected due to its integrated management of formal education and religious boarding programs. This setting was chosen because the student admission process requires multidimensional assessment, including academic competence, religious readiness, and disciplinary commitment. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. Observations focused on admission activities such as registration, administrative screening, academic tests, Qur'an reading assessments, and interviews, as well as post-admission student management activities. In-depth interviews were conducted with the vice principal for student affairs, guidance and counseling teachers, duty teachers, admission committee members, students, and parents to obtain comprehensive perspectives. Documentation included admission records, student discipline guidelines, counseling notes, and related institutional archives.

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and focusing relevant information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents to identify meaningful patterns related to student admission management. The condensed data were then organized and presented in narrative and matrix forms to facilitate interpretation. Finally, data verification was conducted through continuous comparison of findings across data sources to ensure credibility and consistency. This analytical process enabled the study to generate valid conclusions regarding the role of student affairs management in enhancing the effectiveness of the student admission process.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Role of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs in Enhancing PPDB Effectiveness**

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of the student admission process is strongly influenced by the managerial role of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs. Based on observations, interviews, and document analysis, the admission process was organized through four interrelated stages: planning,

implementation, supervision, and evaluation. At each stage, the Vice Principal for Student Affairs acted as the main coordinator responsible for aligning policies, operational activities, and institutional objectives. This role extended beyond administrative supervision to include strategic decision-making and problem-solving during the admission process.

During the planning stage, the Vice Principal for Student Affairs formulated admission strategies, designed the registration flow, and distributed tasks among committee members. This planning ensured that admission activities were conducted systematically and transparently. At the implementation stage, the Vice Principal supervised daily operations, coordinated committee performance, and responded to technical and administrative challenges. Supervision was conducted through continuous monitoring and data validation, while evaluation focused on analyzing enrollment outcomes, assessing promotional strategies, and formulating recommendations for future improvement. These findings support Mulyasa's (2017) view that the Vice Principal for Student Affairs plays a strategic role in student management, particularly in planning and organizing student-related programs.

### **Implementation of the Student Admission Process (PPDB)**

The student admission system was implemented through an integrated mechanism involving both the school and the boarding institution. This integration reflects the institutional requirement that all students participate in vocational education while simultaneously undergoing intensive boarding-based character and religious development. As a result, the admission process emphasized not only academic competence but also spiritual readiness and discipline. This approach positions admission as an early stage of student development rather than merely an administrative procedure.

The integrated admission system ensured that students selected were capable of adapting to the demands of vocational learning and boarding life. By applying multiple selection criteria, the school minimized potential mismatches between student characteristics and institutional expectations. This finding demonstrates that effective admission management contributes to long-term student discipline and learning readiness. The role of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs was crucial in maintaining coordination between academic and boarding requirements, ensuring that selection criteria remained aligned with the school's vision and mission.

## **Registration Stage**

The registration stage was conducted through both offline and online systems to increase accessibility and efficiency. At this stage, prospective students completed detailed biodata forms, selected their preferred vocational programs, and submitted supporting documents such as academic records and identification. The Vice Principal for Student Affairs ensured that registration procedures were orderly and data collection was accurate, providing a reliable foundation for subsequent selection stages.

Accurate initial data played a critical role in assessing students' readiness for educational services. As emphasized by (Munna, 2023), orderly administration during student admission enables schools to obtain valid baseline data for informed decision-making. The findings show that systematic registration reduced administrative errors and facilitated smoother coordination during academic and non-academic assessments. This indicates that administrative rigor at the registration stage directly supports the effectiveness of the entire admission process.

## **Academic Testing Stage**

The academic test assessed prospective students' competencies in basic subjects such as Mathematics, Indonesian Language, and general knowledge. This assessment aimed to evaluate students' initial academic abilities and their suitability for vocational education programs. The Vice Principal for Student Affairs supervised the administration of the tests to ensure fairness, consistency, and alignment with institutional standards.

The results of academic testing functioned as a diagnostic tool for mapping students' learning readiness. (Serafini et al., 2022) emphasizes that academic selection is essential for identifying students' capabilities to ensure effective learning processes. In this study, academic assessment helped the school anticipate potential learning challenges and plan appropriate academic support. Thus, academic testing contributed not only to selection decisions but also to future instructional planning.

## **Qur'an Reading Test**

The Qur'an reading test was a compulsory component of the admission process due to the school's collaboration with a boarding institution. This test evaluated prospective students' basic religious literacy and readiness to participate in daily religious activities. The Vice Principal for Student Affairs coordinated this assessment in collaboration with boarding supervisors to ensure objective evaluation.

This selection criterion reflects the school's commitment to balancing intellectual and spiritual development. (Afandi et al., 2025) argues that Islamic education must integrate intellectual and spiritual dimensions to foster holistic student growth. The findings indicate that the Qur'an reading test effectively filtered students who were prepared for intensive religious guidance, thereby supporting the boarding system's sustainability and reinforcing character education objectives.

### **Interview Stage**

Interviews were conducted with both prospective students and their parents or guardians to explore motivation, commitment, readiness for boarding life, and family support. This stage allowed the admission committee to assess non-academic attributes such as discipline, responsibility, and interest in the chosen vocational field. The Vice Principal for Student Affairs played an active role in guiding interview criteria and interpreting interview outcomes.

According to (Fernandez & Uy, 2023), interviews are a crucial technique for understanding students' personalities, interests, and learning readiness. The findings demonstrate that interviews provided insights that could not be captured through written tests alone. This qualitative assessment strengthened the school's ability to select students who were not only academically capable but also psychologically and socially prepared for the school's educational environment.

### **Re-registration Stage**

The re-registration stage served as the final confirmation of students' acceptance into both the school and the boarding institution. Accepted students completed administrative requirements, financial obligations, document submission, and formal agreements to reside in the boarding facility. The Vice Principal for Student Affairs ensured that this process was conducted systematically to prevent administrative discrepancies.

This stage reinforced students' and parents' commitment to institutional rules and expectations. By formalizing agreements at re-registration, the school strengthened accountability and clarified responsibilities from the outset. The findings indicate that a structured re-registration process contributes to smoother student adjustment and reduces potential conflicts during the initial phase of schooling.

### **School Promotion Strategies in Enhancing PPDB Effectiveness**

School promotion plays a strategic role in strengthening the effectiveness of the student admission process by increasing public awareness and aligning

community expectations with institutional values. The findings indicate that promotional activities were implemented through an integrated approach combining printed media, digital platforms, and direct school visits. These strategies were designed to communicate not only academic programs but also the distinctive integration of vocational education and boarding-based religious development. Promotion in this context functioned as an extension of public relations management aimed at building trust, institutional visibility, and community engagement.

The Vice Principal for Student Affairs played a coordinating role in aligning promotional strategies with admission objectives. Rather than functioning as a purely technical activity, promotion was treated as part of strategic planning to ensure that prospective students and parents clearly understood the academic, disciplinary, and religious commitments required. This finding supports the view that effective promotion contributes to admission quality by attracting candidates whose expectations align with institutional demands, thereby reducing future adjustment problems during the schooling process.

### **Promotion through Printed Media**

Printed media, including brochures, banners, and school profile booklets, were used to disseminate comprehensive information about vocational programs, facilities, and boarding activities. These materials were designed to present a clear and structured overview of the school's identity, making them accessible to prospective students and parents who preferred tangible sources of information. The use of printed media allowed families to review admission requirements and program offerings at their own pace.

The findings suggest that printed promotional materials remain effective, particularly for parents who value detailed and formal information. Although digital media has expanded rapidly, printed materials provided credibility and permanence that strengthened institutional trust. This aligns with public relations principles emphasizing clarity and consistency in institutional messaging. As part of an integrated promotion strategy, printed media supported other promotional channels by reinforcing key messages and institutional branding.

### **Digital Promotion: Social Media and Website**

Digital promotion through social media platforms and the school website played a significant role in reaching a wider and younger audience. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and the official website were used to showcase student activities, achievements, facilities, and admission information.

These platforms allowed the school to present a dynamic and interactive image that resonated with prospective students who are more responsive to visual and online content.

(Wingate et al., 2025) emphasizes that social media functions as a cost-effective and wide-reaching public communication tool, making it highly relevant for educational institutions. The findings support this view, as digital promotion increased engagement and facilitated real-time communication with prospective students and parents. Moreover, the Vice Principal for Student Affairs ensured that online content reflected institutional values, discipline, and religious orientation, preventing misalignment between promotional messages and actual school practices.

### **School Visits to Junior Secondary Schools**

School visits to junior secondary institutions (SMP/MTs) constituted a key face-to-face promotional strategy. Teachers and public relations teams conducted presentations, distributed brochures, and engaged in direct discussions with prospective students. These visits enabled interactive communication, allowing students to ask questions and gain firsthand information about vocational programs and boarding life.

According to (Miftahuddin et al., 2024), face-to-face communication represents one of the most effective public relations strategies due to its ability to build trust and credibility. The findings confirm that direct interaction strengthened relationships between the school and prospective students, fostering confidence and interest. This approach also allowed the school to observe students' initial responses and attitudes, providing informal insights that supported admission decision-making.

### **Personal and Religious Approach in Promotion**

A personal and religious communication approach served as a distinctive feature of the school's promotion strategy. By emphasizing the integration of vocational education with boarding-based religious guidance, promotional messages resonated with families seeking both academic competence and moral development. Communication was delivered in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner, enhancing acceptance among the community.

This approach strengthened emotional connections between the institution and prospective students' families. By framing admission as a shared commitment rather than a transactional process, the school fostered mutual understanding and trust. The findings indicate that value-based communication contributes to attracting students who are more likely to adapt to institutional discipline and religious routines.

### **School Branding: Modern, Religious, and Character-Oriented**

School branding emerged as a central element of promotion by presenting a coherent institutional identity defined by modern facilities, religious values, and character development. This branding strategy differentiated the school from other vocational institutions and clarified its unique educational model. Consistent branding across promotional channels enhanced public recognition and institutional credibility.

Effective branding helped prospective students and parents form accurate expectations about school life and educational demands. By emphasizing character and discipline alongside vocational skills, the school positioned itself as an institution committed to holistic student development. This aligns with contemporary educational marketing principles that highlight institutional uniqueness and value propositions.

### **Contribution of the Vice Principal for Student Affairs to PPDB Success**

The findings demonstrate that the Vice Principal for Student Affairs played a significant role in ensuring the success of the admission process. In line with (Munna, 2023), the Vice Principal held strategic responsibility for student management, including enrollment planning. The role extended beyond supervision to include control, coordination, and decision-making during critical stages of PPDB.

In the planning stage, the Vice Principal effectively mapped institutional needs and designed realistic admission strategies. This approach aligns with (Tamimi et al., 2023) view that effective planning determines the success of school programs. During implementation, operational leadership was demonstrated through close supervision and problem-solving, supporting Sagala's (2016) assertion that intensive leadership enhances program effectiveness.

Monitoring activities ensured administrative order and data accuracy, supporting (Leonard et al., 2010) findings on the relationship between management supervision and admission success. Finally, evaluation reports prepared by the Vice Principal provided evidence-based recommendations for improvement, consistent with (Tuc & Karadag, 2023) emphasis on evaluation as a foundation for continuous program development.

## **CONCLUSION**

The most important finding of this study is that the student admission process should be understood as an initial phase of student management rather than merely an administrative procedure. The study reveals that the Vice Principal for Student Affairs plays a strategic role as a planner, coordinator, supervisor, and evaluator in ensuring that the admission process functions

effectively and aligns with the institutional vision. The integration of academic assessment, Qur'an reading tests, interviews, and boarding readiness evaluation demonstrates that a well-managed admission system can serve as an early mechanism for shaping student discipline, character, and learning readiness. This insight highlights the broader educational value of admission management as a foundation for sustainable student development.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study enriches the literature on student management by positioning student admission as a formative stage of character and discipline development, particularly within integrated school-boarding contexts. However, this study is limited to a single institutional case and relies on qualitative data, which may restrict generalizability. Future research is recommended to employ comparative or mixed-method approaches across multiple institutions to examine the long-term impact of integrated admission systems on student outcomes. Further studies may also explore parental involvement and policy-level support to strengthen the effectiveness of student admission management.

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