

THE EFFECTS OF WEST JAVA'S GOVERNOR POLICY ON NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN A CLASSROOM IN 2025: CASE STUDY ON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN MAJALENGKA REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the effects of numbers of students in a classroom based on West Java's governor policy in senior high schools in Majalengka in 2025 and to give recommendations from the perspectives of experts as well as stakeholders in educational institutions. This policy has caused negative effects both on state senior high schools and private senior high schools in Majalengka. The methods used in this research was qualitative through in depth interviews with stakeholders and students of state senior high school and private senior school in Majalengka as well as literature reviews sourced from experts in classroom managements. The results showed that the implementation of policy which allows 50 students maximum in a senior high school classroom caused many problems, namely classroom and infrastucture deficiencies, student deficiencies in private senior high schools and senior high schools that were considered not favorite school as well as effectiveness of study.

Keyword(s): Numbers Of Students, Classroom Management, Senior High School, Governor's Policy, Policy On Education.

INTRODUCTION

Since the start of his job as West Java Governor until present time, Dedi Mulyadi or abbreviated as KDM (Kang Dedi Mulyadi) has implemented some new regulations on educations in the province. One of those regulations is to put students in a classroom to 50 maximum. This regulation is implemented into all school grades from elementary to senior high schools. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) as of June 2025, West Java recorded the highest number of dropouts nationally, at 612,782 students. This figure places West Java at the top, followed by East Java and Central Java.

Senior high schools, both state or private usually put 36 students maximum in a classroom. This is based on Permendikbud Nomor 17 tahun 2020 regulation. Governor Dedi Mulyadi on media (Kompas.com) stated that this policy aims to prevent dropout cases caused by limited access and economy. He explained that this policy would not be applied in an absolute manner. If there are many students in an area that are close to a school but have limited economic resources, then the schools nearby should accomodate them. To address some forecasted problems, he promised that the government of West Java will build new classrooms that would accomodate 30 to 35 students each. According to data published by PD Data Kemdikbud/Data Center of Ministry of Education and Culture, West Java has the highest dropout cases of students (ATS) and graduated but do not continue (LTM).

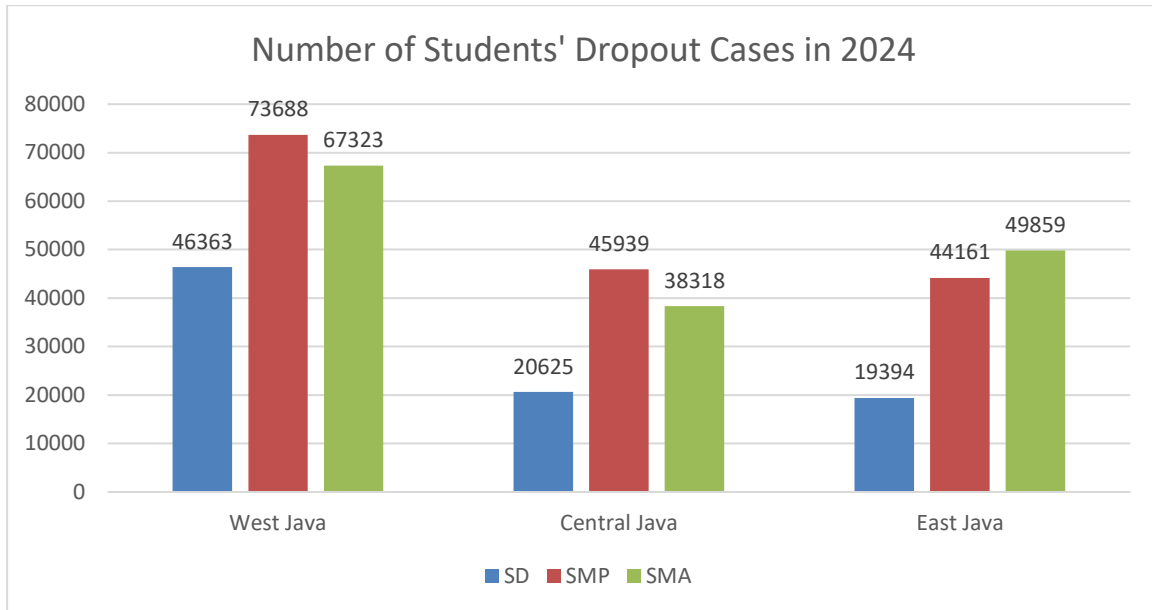


Figure 1. Number of Students' Dropout Cases (ATS) in 2024

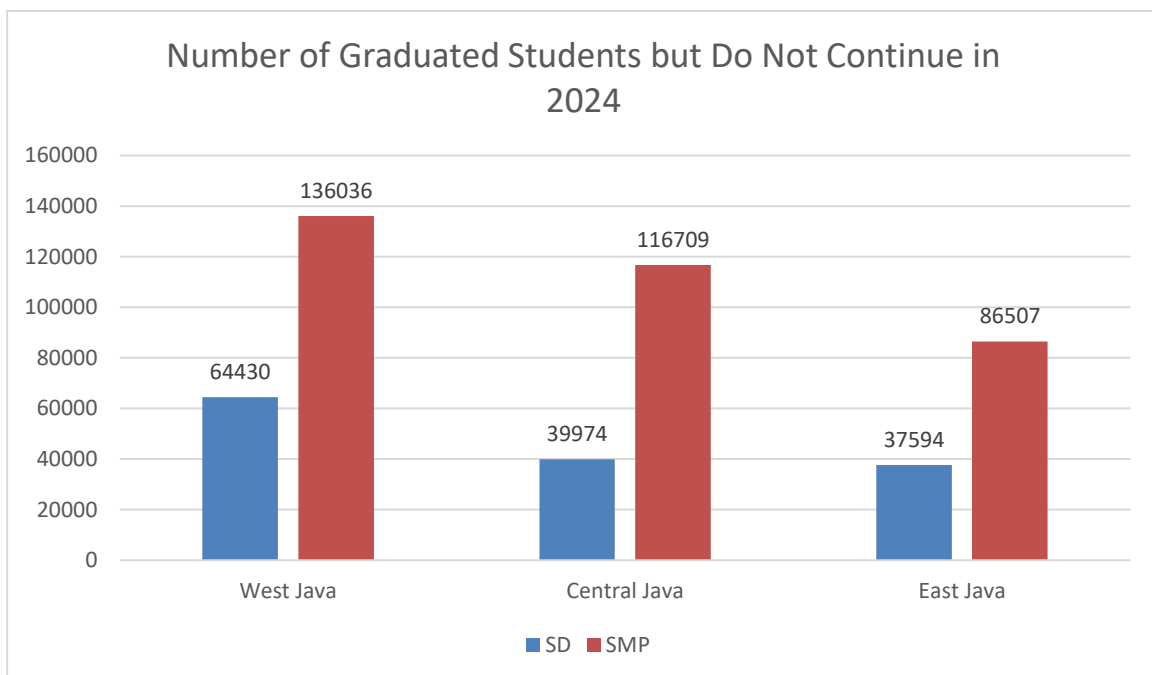


Figure 2. Number of Graduated Students but Do Not Continue (LTM) in 2024

As seen in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2, West Java indeed has the highest number of dropout cases and graduated students that do not continue to the next grades. While West Java remains the province that has the highest number of population in Indonesia, these numbers reflect a huge problem that should be gradually addressed. Dedi Mulyadi policy is aimed to prevent dropout cases through some strategic steps, which is expanding access to educational services for students who are obstructed in the regular admission processes, guaranteeing the rights of West Java residents to obtain quality educational services and increasing educational participation rates at senior high schools (SMA) and vocational high schools (SMK).

While its purpose is good, such policy can not just be implemented without researches and academic recommendations from experts, particularly in areas with limited infrastructure and uneven distribution of students, such as Majalengka Regency. While this research only focuses on senior high school students, many problems have emerged as soon as this regulation is implemented. One of the problems is that schools have to adjust immediately once this regulation is applied. The primary concern voiced was the potential decline in educational quality. Teachers argued that the ideal class size should be 36 to ensure effective learning and student comfort. The 50-student policy was deemed to have the potential to significantly reduce learning quality, especially if not accompanied by additional classrooms and adequate teaching staff.

This paper aims to identify the effects of numbers of students in a classroom based on West Java governor policy in senior high schools in Majalengka in 2025 and to give recommendations from the perspectives of experts as well as stakeholders in educational institutions. Furthermore, we will discuss how this policy impacts on aspects of learning effectiveness, the dynamics of public and private schools, and the managerial challenges faced by schools. This research is expected to contribute to policymakers and stakeholders in developing regulations that support equitable and sustainable education quality.

METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative approach with a case study design. The primary data collection methods involved in-depth interviews with various key stakeholders, including principals, teachers, education agency representatives, parents, and students at public and private high schools in Majalengka Regency. In addition, direct observation of classroom conditions and school facilities, as well as analysis of documents related to school policies and data were conducted to enrich the data. The collected data has been analyzed using thematic analysis techniques as well as literature studies to identify patterns, themes, and categories emerging from the narratives and observations, in order to comprehensively understand the impact of class size policies on various aspects of education in Majalengka.

Given that the negative impacts of this policy have been specifically identified in Majalengka Regency through preliminary studies, an in-depth case study in this region is highly relevant and urgent. This regional case study approach is crucial for analyzing education policy from a critical perspective, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how provincial-scale policies are implemented and influence education dynamics at the local level. This allows the identification of weaknesses, strengths, and program recommendations that align with the region's potential and strengths, as well as providing a more nuanced picture of the policy's impact, which may vary across regions.

Regional case studies could also help to recommend the development of relevant and contextualized programs. The emphasis on regional case studies is methodologically sound because education policies, while provincial in nature, often have highly localized and varied impacts due to diverse socioeconomic conditions, existing infrastructure, and community dynamics. Macro-level policies may manifest differently in Majalengka compared to other districts, justifying a focused and in-depth case study approach.

Beside using in depth interviews, the data collection in this study was carried out using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Informants were selected subjectively using the assumption that people who have an issue are needed for the research (Sugiyono, 2022). Initial informants were determined through the identification of key actors such as principals, teachers, and local Education Office officials as well as students from both state and private senior high schools in Majalengka. Furthermore, the informant network was

developed gradually based on recommendations from previous informants in order to expand the scope of information.

Additionally, data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by Miles & Huberman (Sugiyono, 2019), which includes the processes of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study applied the triangulation technique of sources and methods. This technique was carried out by combining various data sources (interviews, observations, and documents) and comparing findings from several different informants to find the appropriateness of the information. This triangulation aims to increase the credibility of the research results and minimize subjective bias in data interpretation. With this methodology, the study is expected to provide an objective and in-depth picture of the effectiveness and challenges of implementing the policy of limiting the number of students per class, while providing data-based input for policymakers in designing a more adaptive and contextual approach according to regional needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study show that the implementation of the policy of increasing the number of students per classroom to 50 maximum in Majalengka has had a broad impact. Positively, this policy opens up wider access to education, especially for lower income communities. However, the negative consequences are quite complex as well. The lack of classroom space and learning resources is a major obstacle to effective learning. This is consistent with the findings of Blatchford et al. (2016) and Putri & Wibowo (2022), which state that large classes have a direct impact on learning effectiveness and student engagement.

This policy has led many students to choose public high schools because they are considered more affordable, resulting in a decline in enrollment at private high schools and non-favorite schools. Several private schools in Majalengka are even experiencing drastic student shortages and are facing closures. On the contrary, public schools are experiencing a significant surge in student enrollment, especially the favored ones. This impacted the learning effectiveness, classroom availability, quality of teacher-student interactions, and the sustainability of private school operations. Furthermore, this policy widens the gap between favored and non-favored schools, as students tend to crowd certain schools without considering the capacity and quality of educational services.

Many senior high school students in Majalengka drop out due to financial constraints. Twelve students that have been interviewed admitted that they are forced to leave school because they have lack of resources, primarily tuition fees, to continue their studies. This situation also places a psychological and professional burden on teachers. The OECD (2019) noted that teachers who teach in large classes tend to experience higher stress and lower job satisfaction, a finding also found in the Majalengka context. Ten teachers from several state senior high schools expressed disatisfactions towards the Governor's policy.

Not all schools have supporting facilities like chairs, extra whiteboards, digital learning tools, or adequate ventilation. Some classrooms use extra chairs that are cramped and crowded to ether. Moreover, teachers face challenges in providing effective learning because their time and attention are divided among many students. Furthermore, individual assessment and guidance are suboptimal. Many students report feeling neglected. Teachers reported high levels of burnout, particularly in classroom supervision, assessment and administrative activities. There were no incentives or additional training related to managing large classes.

The Indonesian government has established various standards through regulations to ensure the comfort, safety, and smoothness of the teaching and learning process in schools. These standards include classroom size and the ideal student-teacher ratio. Based on Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 8 of 2018 and Minister of National Education Regulation No. 24 of 2007, the classroom size for junior high school (SMP) is 7x9 meters (63 m²), with an ideal ratio of 2 m² per student.

For senior high school (SMA), Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 22 of 2023 explicitly stipulates a minimum classroom area ratio of 2 m² per student. Other documents also reinforce that the minimum ratio of high school (SMA/MA) classroom area is 2 m² per student, with a minimum width of 5 meters. Even for study groups with fewer than 15 students, the minimum classroom area is set at 30 m². The Directorate of High School Development of the Ministry of Education and Culture further stipulates that the standard size of high school classrooms is 9x8 meters, resulting in an area of 72 m².

Regarding the student-teacher ratio, Article 17 of Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008 concerning Teachers stipulates an ideal ratio of 20:1 for high schools as one of the requirements for teachers to receive professional allowances. Furthermore, the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) state that for schools with more than 168 students, the minimum standard is 28 and the maximum is 32 students per class. Regarding the student-teacher ratio, Article 17 of Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008 concerning Teachers stipulates an ideal ratio of 20:1 for high schools as one of the requirements for teachers to receive professional allowances. Furthermore, the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) state that for schools with more than 168 students, the minimum standard is 28 and the maximum is 32 students per class.

Table 1. Comparison of National Student-Teacher Ratio and Classroom Size Standards vs. West Java's 2025 Policy

No.	Parameter	Nat. Standard/Ideal Recommendation	West Java Policy 2025	Emerged Effects
1.	Classroom area ratio per student (m ² /student)	Minimum 2 m ² /student.	50 maximum in a classroom.	A 72m ² classroom for 50 students would yield 1.44 m ² per student that is below the standard of 2 m ² per student. A 72m ² classroom is only ideal for 36 students.
2.	Ideal classroom size (m ²)	High school: 9x8 m (72 m ²); minimum 30 m ² for <15 students.	Not mentioned, but facilitates 50 students.	A 72m ² classroom for 50 students creates a space deficit of 28m ² (a requirement of 100m ²).
3.	Ideal student-teacher ratio	High school: 20:1 (professional allowance requirement).	Maximum 50:1.	A ratio of 50:1 far exceeds the ideal standard, potentially impacting the quality of teaching and teacher well-being.
4.	Ideal number of students per study group	Minimum 28, maximum 32 students (for schools >168 students).	Maximum 50 students.	Increasing number of students per class beyond the ideal limit has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of learning.
5.	Optimal number of students for effective learning	No more than 20 students.	Maximum 50 students.	Far beyond the optimal capacity for effective learning and comprehensive teacher supervision.

This comparison on Table 3.1 demonstrates a striking quantitative discrepancy between the West Java Governor's 2025 policy and established national standards. While a typical high school classroom measures 72m², a class of 50 students would require at least 100m² (50 students multiplied by 2m² per student, as per Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 22 of 2023), meaning a space deficit of 28m² per class. Furthermore, the 50:1 student-teacher ratio resulting from this policy drastically exceeds the ideal 20:1 ratio required for teacher professional allowances, as well as the standard of 28-32 students per class. This quantitative conflict indicates that the West Java Governor's policy directly challenges established national benchmarks for education quality, potentially leading to non compliance, disrupted learning environments, and increased teacher workloads.

In addition to the situation, teacher workloads are expected to increase dramatically, potentially requiring teachers to handle up to 600 students per week. This burden is considered disproportionate to the salary and makes it difficult for teachers to identify the characteristics and provide individual attention to each student. There are also concerns that the learning environment will become unconducive, feeling stuffy, hot, and making it difficult for students to focus. There are even concerns that large class sizes could increase the risk of bullying between students.

Moreover, the uneven distribution of teachers also poses a significant challenge. Highly qualified and experienced teachers tend to be concentrated in urban areas, while schools in rural or remote areas often face a shortage of adequate teaching staff. This also occurs in Majalengka. Policies that impose large class sizes can exacerbate this problem, especially if not accompanied by adequate teacher recruitment. The challenges identified in the broader literature—limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and uneven teacher distribution—represent the exact negative impacts observed in the initial study in Majalengka. This reinforces the notion that the West Java Governor's policies, rather than effectively addressing underlying problems, may actually exacerbate existing systemic weaknesses in the education sector, ultimately leading to a cascade of problems.

This research demonstrates that the policy of limiting the number of students per class requires a comprehensive review. This review is crucial, taking into account the educational infrastructure capacity available in each region and ensuring equitable distribution of students across schools. A policy implemented uniformly without considering real-world conditions has the potential to create new inequalities and even hinder efforts to improve educational quality. Therefore, a systematic evaluation mechanism and a locally tailored approach are needed to adapt the policy to the characteristics and capacities of each region.

Furthermore, multi-stakeholder involvement is essential in the formulation and implementation of education policies. Local governments, educational institutions, and the community need to collaborate synergistically to develop more adaptive, inclusive, and equitable policy implementation strategies. This collaboration will not only increase policy effectiveness but also ensure that education policies truly address issues at the grassroots level and contribute to the sustainable strengthening of the education system. Therefore, further studies regarding the students' drop out problems and its solutions are needed to improve the quality of education in West Java and Majalengka Regency.

Based on in depth interviews with principal and several stakeholders in Majalengka and West Java as well as literature studies, there are some multi-faceted approaches that could be tried to solve students' drop out cases. This includes socio-economic, cultural, and systemic factors, namely:

1. Scholarships and cash transfer programs (e.g., Program Indonesia Pintar/PIP) to reduce financial burdens;
The West Java government can re-register the population and sort out school age residents from underprivileged groups to be able to receive cash assistance for education.
2. School operational assistance (BOS) to ensure schools can provide free or subsidized education;
The West Java government should draft new regulations requiring a portion of BOS funds to be used for a subsidized education program.
3. Building more schools in rural areas to reduce travel distance;
New schools in rural areas can open wider access for students from various economic classes.
4. Providing transportation support (e.g., free buses or bicycles);
Transportation means easy access to education.
5. Teacher training programs to improve interactive and inclusive teaching methods;
Teachers' abilities must always be improved to provide new skills in providing effective and efficient teaching.
6. Mentorship initiatives to keep at-risk students motivated;
At-risk students should always be given the right motivation and can lighten their burden.
7. Awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of education;
Campaigns about the importance of education must always be conveyed and accompanied by assistance that makes it easier to access it.
8. Parent-teacher partnerships to monitor student attendance;
Teachers and schools must work together more closely in monitoring students' learning activities and progress.
9. Non-formal education (NFE) and alternative schooling for students who work or have family obligations;
Some students are forced to face the situation of having to be the backbone of the family, so they have difficulty in adjusting their time to earn money and to get an education.
10. Digital learning platforms to reach students in underserved areas;
Education must be provided in any form, including through the use of technology.
11. Data tracking to identify at-risk students early (e.g., frequent absences, declining grades);
Students who are at risk of dropping out of school should receive attention and monitoring in their learning activities, especially if they are absent from school a lot.
12. Intervention programs (counseling, tutoring) before dropout occurs.
Teachers and schools must be sensitive to the activity patterns of students who are likely to drop out of school.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results show that this policy actually creates several major problems: (1) There is a shortage of adequate classrooms and supporting facilities, especially in public schools with high enrollment numbers. This condition worsens the overcrowding of classrooms and reduces the comfort and effectiveness of the learning process, (2) Private schools and public schools that are not categorized as "favorites" experienced a significant decline in student numbers. As a result, many schools have difficulty maintaining operational continuity due to reduced funding sources from students or government and

(3) The effectiveness of learning is disrupted due to overcrowded classroom conditions, where teachers are unable to provide optimal attention to all students. This has an impact on reducing the quality of learning interactions and the potential for student academic achievement.

These findings emphasize that uniformly implemented education policies without considering local capacity and conditions can be counter-productive to efforts to improve education quality. Therefore, a more comprehensive policy evaluation and the implementation of a regional needs-based approach are needed. The opposition from various stakeholders—from teachers, private schools, education experts, and the general public—coupled with specific negative impacts such as financial pressure on private schools and an increased risk of bullying, suggests that this policy, while likely well-intentioned for equity of access, has had significant external consequences. These consequences were likely not considered or considered acceptable by policymakers, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive cost-benefit analysis that goes beyond access metrics to encompass broader social and educational impacts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the effectiveness of the learning process also declines due to excessive class loads, which impacts teacher-student interaction, student engagement in learning activities, and general classroom management. This situation has the potential to reduce the quality of learning outcomes and create inequalities in educational services between educational units. Therefore, it is recommended that this policy be reviewed by considering the actual capacity of school facilities and infrastructure, the distribution of students between schools, and its impact on learning quality. A data-driven approach and local context are essential for implementing similar policies in the future in a more proportional and equitable manner.

Overall, this policy is not supported by adequate infrastructure and teacher capacity building. Policy evaluation and improvement are essential to ensure that the goal of increasing access does not compromise learning quality. Furthermore, the impact on private high schools demonstrates that local government policies need to consider the sustainability of non-state schools. The decline in enrollment in private schools is not simply a matter of competition, but also concerns the sustainability of educational institutions that have long supported access to education. In this regard, collaboration between the Education Office, local governments, schools, and the community is a crucial factor in designing an adaptive, inclusive, and equitable policy implementation strategy. This approach will not only strengthen education quality but also open up opportunities to integrate local potential as part of the learning process and community economic development.

Table 2. Summary of Identified Effects of Numbers of Students in a Classroom based on West Java's Governor Policy in 2025.

No.	Effect Aspects	Effect Description	Source of Information
1.	Availability of classrooms and infrastructures.	Deficiency of classrooms and inadequate infrastructure to accommodate larger numbers of students.	Secondary data & documentation.
2.	Number of students in private/non-favorite schools.	Drastic decline in the number of new students that threatens financial operations of private schools.	Secondary data & documentation.
3.	Learning effectiveness and quality of education.	Potential decline in learning quality, difficulty for teachers in supervising students, and a less optimal learning environment.	In depth interviews & literature studies.

4.	Teacher workloads & students' individual attentions	Significant increase in teacher workloads, difficulty in recognizing students' characters and in providing individual attentions.	In depth interviews, documentations and literature studies.
5.	Learning environment and student well-being.	Unconducive learning environments (stuffy, hot, unfocused) and potentially increasing the risk of bullying.	In depth interviews, documentations and literature studies.

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