SAEFULLOH
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Teacher Quality, Facilities, and Cost: A Discourse Analysis of *Quora* Narratives on Public vs. Private Schools in Indonesia

Muhammad Saefulloh
Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Indonesia
E-mail: sam14petra@gmail.com

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Abstract. This study examines public perceptions of public versus private schools in Indonesia using user-generated content from Quora. Parents face a difficult decision when choosing between Indonesia's large number of public (7,396) and private (7,049) senior high schools. Thirty answers to the question, "Apa perbedaan yang signifikan antara sekolah negeri dan sekolah swasta?" (What are the significant differences between public and private schools?), were analyzed using discourse analysis to identify the key distinctions between these two types of schools? The investigation identifies three key factors that influence the narratives around these two kinds of schools: teacher quality and professionalism, school facilities, and cost and accessibility. The results show that public schools are regarded for their affordability and socioeconomic inclusion, whereas private schools are perceived to offer better facilities and more qualified teachers. This study contributes to the ongoing conversations around educational equity and quality by highlighting the influence of online platforms on educational decision-making and the complexity of the Indonesian educational system

Keywords: Educational Equity, Indonesian Education, Private Schools, Public Schools, Quora

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important issues facing Indonesian parents is the decision between public and private education. With 7,049 private and 7,396 public senior high schools as of 2024 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024), both kinds of schools are important components of the educational system. The government provides funding for public schools, but non-governmental organizations run private schools, which frequently receive some assistance from the government. The public's impression of the quality of the two school types may differ as a result of this overlap.

In the ongoing debate over public vs. private schools, the intricacy of educational systems and the impact of several factors including cost, accessibility, teacher quality, and school infrastructure are highlighted. Even though private schools are more expensive, they are frequently thought to provide superior facilities, individualized attention, and higher academic standards. On the other hand, a significant percentage of students receive free education from public schools, which are thought to be more accessible.

Despite these broad differences, opinions of these schools vary greatly and are influenced by social norms, public discourse, and individual experiences. Many parents and students now use online forums like Quora to express their experiences and thoughts regarding education, demonstrating the growing significance of these platforms. Because it reflects individual experiences and social beliefs that influence public perceptions and decision- making, Quora offers a singular chance to examine public opinions on education.

Previous studies have looked at academic performance, school climate, and as determinants of parents' school selections (Yaacob et al., 2014). One important topic, nevertheless, is still unresolved: how do parents get the information that influences their preferences? Online resources like Quora probably contribute significantly to the knowledge that parents use to

make decisions. By examining the prevalent opinions about Indonesian public and private schools as they are presented in Quora user- generated content, this study seeks to close this gap. The study will employ discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) to identify the main themes and narratives that drive public perceptions of these two kinds of schools, advancing our knowledge of how online platforms affect educational choices.

This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the dominant perceptions of public and private schools in Indonesia as expressed in user-generated content on Quora. Through discourse analysis, the research will uncover the key narrative and themes that influence the public's views of these types of schools, contributing to a deeper understanding of how online platforms shape educational decisions. The central research question guiding this study is: What are the dominant perceptions of public and private schools in Indonesia as expressed in user-generated content on Quora?

In Indonesia, the continuous debate about public versus private schools emphasizes the complexity of educational systems and the effects of different elements like accessibility, cost, teacher calibre, and school infrastructure. This study is informed by a social constructionist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), which treats public perceptions of schooling as collectively constructed through discourse and social interaction. Building on this, discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) is employed as the analytical lens to uncover how language and narratives in online platforms shape the way people understand and compare public and private schools. This chapter critically reviews the body of research on these topics, referencing important studies and theoreticalframeworks that help us comprehend how public and private educational institutions differ from one another.

When discussing how to distinguish between public and private schools, school facilities are a major source of disagreement and play a critical part in forming educational experiences. As Stern and Smith (2016) point out, Indonesian private schools benefit from significant private funding, which allows them to provide better facilities than state ones. The availability of contemporary technology, well-maintained facilities, and a wide range of extracurricular activities at private schools contribute to the idea that they offer a superior educational environment. This idea is further supported by research by Pang et al. (2025), which identifies large facility investments as crucial factors influencing student involvement and happiness in private schools.

On the other hand, public schools frequently lack the sophisticated amenities that the private counterparts have due to resource limitations. Dependency on meager government funding and parental contributions exacerbates these constraints, resulting in ill-maintained infrastructures that could impede successful educational results (Stern

& Smith, 2016). Because a lack of assistance affects student involvement and reflects systemic financial issues within the larger educational setting, this accessibility issue highlights the need for equitable resource distribution (Olivia et al., 2020).

It is important to recognize that such generalizations are themselves socially constructed perceptions shaped by public discourse (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), and that private schools should not be seen as a monolith since they include a variety of establishments with differing resources and capacities, as Quora posters and prior literature have pointed out (Bedi & Garg, 2000). A fuller comprehension of Indonesia's educational system can result from a more thorough investigation of the differences between private schools.

Since teachers are frequently seen as being essential to the overall success of educational institutions, the topic of teacher professionalism and quality is central to the conversation about education. Research backs up the claim that teachers' credentials have a big influence on students' academic achievement (Casian et al., 2021). It is generally believed from public discourse, including Quora user comments, that teachers in private schools are more qualified, a perception that reflects collectively constructed social narratives about educational quality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gee, 2005).

This view might result from the competitive character of private education, where parents and schools have higher expectations for instructors' performance (Djazilan et al., 2023). Private schools typically have smaller class sizes because they provide more individualized attention, which improves student-teacher relationships and may lead to better academic results (Djazilan et al., 2023). Moreover, the idea that teachers at private schools are genuinely passionate about pupil achievement and creative teaching methods supports the widely held assumption that their dedication is greater than that of teachers in public schools.

However, there are sometimes complaints about how consistently good teachers are at various private schools. Some contend that better teaching results aren't always guaranteed by private schools with lower resources (Samuel). Important concerns about the quality of teacher training and continuing professional development are brought up by this perspective, and these concerns equally affect educators working in public schools. Recent research shows that a variety of classroom issues put public school teachers under more scrutiny, and there is still a clear need for further assistance and training (Kayyali, 2023; Howard & Milner, 2021).

Families' decisions about their children's education and the experiences of students are greatly impacted by the cost of education. Because private schools are exclusive and have expensive tuition and other expenses, they put lower-income families at a disadvantage, which contributes to educational inequality (Olivia et al., 2020; Jahic & Pilav-Velic, 2021). Private schools are thought to provide better educational experiences, a socially constructed narrative (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) that exacerbates disadvantage and creates a situation where access to high-quality education can be determined by privilege.

Conversely, public schools are praised for being affordable and accessible because they normally offer free education to all students, regardless of their financial situation (Muttaqin et al., 2020). Diversity in the classroom is encouraged by this inclusive approach, which creates a social atmosphere that mirrors the larger community. By providing vital resources and opportunities to students who might not otherwise have access to them, public education plays a crucial role in promoting social mobility (Blankenberger & Williams, 2020).

Assessing educational achievements requires an understanding of the effects of cost structures in both public and private institutions. Parental involvement and student accomplishment have been found to be strongly correlated by research, and families attending private schools frequently feel more obligated to actively contribute to the development of stimulating learning environments (Fitriani, 2020). Inadequate financing and high student-teacher ratios are two issues that public schools must deal with that could impede student progress and worsen already-existing inequities (Parolin & Lee,

2021).

The understanding that educational outcomes are closely related to the dynamics and structures of both public and private schools arises from the examination of facilities, teacher quality, and economic considerations. Public schools are essential for fostering social skills and resilience, especially in kids from underprivileged backgrounds, even when private schools could offer more resources and chances for student participation (Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024).

Since both public and private schools have an impact on students' prospects, the long- term effects of having access to high-quality education should not be understated. Understanding the intricacies of these systems provides important insights into the larger framework of educational equity, which this study approaches through discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) to examine how these narratives are constructed and circulated in online platforms, requiring ongoing discussion and work to resolve the issues raised by differences in the distribution of resources and support systems among educational models.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative text analysis approach to examine the discourse on public and private schools in Indonesia within a social networking forum. Adopting the methodology of Chang-Kredl and Colannino (2017) for analyzing teacher images, this research differs in its choice of platform; while their study utilized Reddit, the present study analyzes data collected from Quora. The data consists of "ready-made" content, meaning it was not specifically generated for research purposes, allowing for the capture of authentic discourse among users. Data collection focuses on responses to questions addressing the differences between public and private schools in Indonesia. The keywords used to identify relevant discussions are 'Sekolah negeri versus sekolah swasta' and 'perbedaan sekolah negeri dan sekolah swasta.'

The top question, which elicited the most responses and discussions, was selected for analysis. The chosen question, "*Apa perbedaan yang signifikan antara sekolah negeri dan sekolah swasta?*", received 32 answers, with many responses prompting further discussions from other users. Each researcher thoroughly read the answers and their corresponding discussions, identifying emerging themes. To ensure the accuracy of the analysis, each answer was read twice. Of the 32 responses, two were excluded from the study: one was a duplicate of a previously posted answer, and the other was deemed irrelevant to the question. Consequently, the final analysis focuses on 30 answers.

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis, a method commonly employed to investigate existing messages such as social media posts (Neuendorf, 2018). This analysis identified nine themes ordered from most to least frequently discuss: (1) teacher quality and professionalism, (2) facilities, (3) cost and funding, (4) parental involvement, (5) discipline and student behavior, (6) curriculum and teaching methods, (7) social diversity and environment, (8) student achievement, and (9) school policies and management. Since this research aims to explore the most frequent discourse when comparing public and private schools, the analysis focuses on the three most discussed themes: teacher quality and professionalism, facilities, and cost and funding.

The data in this study consist of publicly accessible, user-generated posts on Quora, which users published voluntarily in an open, unrestricted forum. No private or restricted content was accessed, and no direct interaction with or recruitment of participants took place. To protect the privacy of individual posters, all usernames were replaced with sequential anonymous codes (P1–P30) prior to analysis, and these codes are used consistently throughout the Results section. No individual informed consent was sought, as the data are publicly available and fully anonymized, consistent with established ethical practice for research on publicly accessible online discourse.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A.Teacher Quality and Professionalism

The quality and professionalism of teachers are the most frequently discussed themes in the discourse on private versus public schools among Quora users. This issue is raised in 19 (62%) of the 30 posters (see Table 2), reflecting the general belief that teachers play a major role in a school's performance. This belief aligns with current research on the impact of teacher qualifications, which shows that teacher quality significantly influences the academic performance of students (Casian et al., 2021).

A.1 Private Schools' Teachers

Private school teachers are often portrayed as more qualified and meeting higher professional standards compared to their public-school counterparts. In fact, private school educators are frequently depicted as more qualified and upholding higher professional standards than public

school teachers. Furthermore, it is believed that teachers in private schools are eager to implement innovative teaching strategies because they face fewer administrative restrictions than those in public schools, which further enhances their expertise.

One common argument for greater accountability for private school teachers is the competitive nature of the private education sector. Posters imply that educators in these schools are under pressure to meet the demands of the school and parents while achieving outstanding student performance. Since private school teachers are held to higher performance standards, they are perceived as more committed to their students' success. Additionally, private schools typically have smaller class sizes, which enable teachers to interact more extensively with pupils.

This setting is often associated with a greater emphasis on individualized attention. Ultimately, the small student-to-teacher ratio, such as that typically found in private schools, is believed to positively impact students' academic (Bondebjerg et al., 2023).

Apart from their qualifications and accountability, teachers at private schools are often characterized as having a great deal of compassion. Numerous posters emphasize that teachers at private schools are not only committed professionals but also sincerely care about the success of each of their students. They are regarded as going above and beyond to provide individualized support, motivation, and a nurturing atmosphere. This caring nature is frequently cited as a primary differentiator between teachers in private and public schools, adding to the general impression of their superior quality and dedication. Despite these favorable perceptions, there are mixed opinions regarding the consistency of teacher quality across all private schools. Some people wonder if teachers' performances are always superior in private schools, particularly those that are less well- known or have less funding. Concerns are also expressed regarding lower pay and job insecurity at private schools; some argue that these issues could impede long-term professional development, although this concern is not universally emphasized, see Table 1.

Table 1. *Discussion Related to Teachers' Quality and Professionalism*

No.	Poster	Frequency
1.	P1	Parents will meet with the class teacher/guardian one-on-one to discuss the child's development, including the child's strengths and weaknesses. During PTM, we can connect directly with our child's homeroom teacher to gain valuable insights into their development.
2.	P2	The school's commitment to the quality of education is also reflected in its competent teaching staff, such as the principal, who has a master's degree in chemistry and can fill in for sick teachers with easy-to-understand explanations.
3.	P3	The author highlights that private schools offer competent teachers who are held accountable. Meanwhile, Public schools, on the other hand, are more affordable or even free but often with less competent teachers who lack accountability.
4.	P4	Lastly, public schools tend to have more empty periods due to a lack of substitute teachers, while private schools ensure that substitutes are available, maintaining a more structured schedule.
5.	P5	In private schools, for example, teachers are very involved, attending trainings and workshops, and because of the smaller class sizes, there is good communication between teachers and parents. On the other hand, public schools are government-funded, so they have lower costs for families and generally larger class sizes.

No.	Poster	Frequency
6.	P6	Teachers in private schools are generally more engaged with students, while public school teachers may have less interaction.
7.	P7	For instance, in private schools, the teaching approach is often more engaging, with deeper conceptual understanding emphasized, and some schools even follow an international curriculum, as seen in the writer's experience at their previous Catholic elementary and Christian middle schools.
8.	P8	In the public school (*SDN*), teachers predominantly hold S.Pd degrees, with one teacher typically covering multiple subjects, and students experience a more uniform socio-economic background, often walking or taking public transport to school. Meanwhile, the private school (*SD Swasta*) features a diverse range of teacher qualifications, such as *S.Si* and *S.Sos*, with each teacher typically handling only one or two subjects.
9.	P9	Additionally, teachers in private schools are described as more caring, fostering closer relationships with students, whereas public school teachers enforce strict discipline.
10.	P10	Public schools often face disruptions due to teacher absenteeism, leading to more frequent free classes for students.
11.	P10	In public schools, respect for teachers is emphasized, often tied to grades, while in private schools, teachers are more caring, which can lead to some students being disrespectful.
12.	P11	Private schools emphasize regular supervision and training, unlike public schools.
13.	P12	More varied teaching methods in private schools.
14.	P13	Some teachers at public schools are not caring.
15.	P14	Private schools prioritize hiring skilled professionals, including those from non-education fields while encouraging further education. Public schools rely on government-hired teachers with varying qualifications and face challenges like large class sizes.
16.	P15	Private schools can attract experienced or specialized teachers by offering higher salaries or better work conditions. Public schools rely on government-hired teachers, whose quality may vary.
17.	P16	Private school teachers show a high level of dedication, going above and beyond by conducting early morning Zoom sessions and actively engaging with students during PJJ. Public school teachers, on the other hand, primarily assign tasks through WhatsApp. Teachers in private schools are often compensated less than their public-school counterparts, particularly those with certification.
18.	P17	Private schools tend to be more favored in various regions, partly due to teachers, and teaching methods.
19.	P18	At public schools, teachers' lack of professionalism is evident in favoritism and neglecting duties, such as assigning tasks meant for them to students. This undermines fairness, creating an unjust learning environment and lowering the quality of education.

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A.2 Public Schools' Teachers

Teachers in public schools are frequently at the center of debates over the efficacy of education because they deal with a wide range of opinions from parents, pupils, and the general public. These opinions range from praise for their dedication to overseeing diverse classrooms to criticism about matters like training and accountability. Gaining knowledge of various viewpoints helps one better understand the potential and problems facing the public education system.

The respect that teachers receive for effectively leading sizable, diverse classes is among the most notable features of teaching in public schools (Edmonds, 2020; Leithwood, 2021). Despite obstacles including diverse student origins, learning preferences, and skill levels, many public-school teachers exhibit an amazing ability to establish inclusive learning environments. As they work to ensure that everyone has access to an equal education; their ability to encourage student participation and teamwork is admirable. Teachers who go above and beyond to develop flexible lesson plans and use differentiated education to meet the requirements of all students are admired by the respondents. These educators' devotion to professional development, long hours, and involvement in community events that foster a closer relationship between schools and families exemplify their dedication (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

Alongside this appreciation, though, there is a stream of criticism aimed at public school teachers about matters of training and accountability. Numerous stakeholders argue that the lack of rigor in accountability standards causes disparities in the quality of instruction in various districts schools. Critics contend that some teachers could not be sufficiently committed or motivated, particularly in institutions with demanding curricula, large student-teacher ratios, and little funding (Kayyali, 2023). Students' educational experiences may be impacted by this inconsistent responsibility, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds who depend significantly on good instruction to succeed. Therefore, a widespread lack of trust in the educational system may be exacerbated by the belief that certain public-school teachers need to sufficiently participate in continuing professional development or pedagogical reform (Porcenaluk et al., 2023).

The problem of teacher preparation, which continues to be a major concern in public education, makes matters worse. There are continuous debates concerning the quality of pre-service and in-service training for teachers, even if many of them have the required credentials. According to critics, teacher preparation programs might not adequately prepare teachers to handle the complexity of contemporary classrooms, especially in urban settings where kids may pose distinct social, emotional, and intellectual difficulties (Howard & Milner, 2021). Additionally, instructors frequently feel inadequate and frustrated after entering the field because they are ill-prepared to deal with behavior management, cultural responsiveness, and varied education. Because of this training gap, teachers may experience excessive stress and burnout, which can affect their performance in the classroom (Young & Chambers, 2020).

In the end, public school teachers' conflicting opinions highlight the complexity of the educational system. Even though many teachers are praised for their ability to handle the difficulties of varied classrooms and show unshakable dedication to their pupils, problems with accountability and training need to be resolved to further improve the quality of education. In addition to empowering teachers, a strong support system for continual professional development, sufficient training, and accountability measures would also help to improve student results. To create an atmosphere where public-school teachers are respected, encouraged, and held to the high standards that every kid deserves, stakeholders must work together. Every student can have fair access to high- quality education if the public education system cultivates a culture of respect, professional development, and accountability.

B. School Facilities

Comparing the facilities offered by public and private schools is a major topic of discourse among Quora users. Among 30 posters, 15 explicitly highlighted the differences in facilities (see Table 2), underscoring the critical role of infrastructure in shaping educational preferences and perceptions. There is a prevailing belief that private schools always provide better facilities. Private schools are often commended for their well-maintained infrastructure, including air-conditioned classrooms, CCTV systems for security, and advanced audio systems that enhance the learning environment. As Stern and Smith (2016) point out, private schools can make significant investments in high- quality facilities because they benefit from substantial private funding. Therefore, it is understandable that their restrooms and canteens are typically described as clean and comfortable. Moreover, private schools often have access to modern technologies and provide a wider range of extracurricular options, including specialized learning spaces, swimming pools, and sports facilities.

Public schools, on the other hand, are recognized for offering sufficient facilities, especially in cities where government support is typically stronger. Nonetheless, such facilities are usually characterized as basic, with noticeable deficiencies, such as the lack of modern libraries, science labs, and specialized learning spaces. One major issue is the dependence on limited government financing and parental contributions. Due to strict budgetary constraints, public schools are unable to offer a comparable learning environment, reflecting systemic funding problems in educational contexts. Evidence of this issue is captured in poorly maintained restrooms and canteens, which are often described as basic and lacking the degree of comfort seen in private institutions.

When considering extracurricular activities and technology integration, the disparities between public and private schools become even more noticeable. Private schools can afford to invest in cutting-edge audio equipment and CCTV systems, while public schools frequently lack the funds to make such improvements. As a result, private schools tend to offer a wider variety of extracurricular activities, such as access to swimming pools, whereas public schools often provide only limited options. These disparities greatly impact student experiences, with private schools offering settings that promote higher levels of satisfaction and engagement. To raise the general standard of education in Indonesia, steps should be taken to reduce disparities among schools. The ultimate objective is to ensure that every student has access to a learning environment that promotes both academic success and personal growth.

It is interesting to note that Quora discourse reveals that posters perceive private schools as homogeneous, whereas other researchers—such as Bedi and Garg (2000) and Stern and Smith (2016)—acknowledge private schools as a diverse group that includes independent, government-dependent, religious, and non-religious institutions. Posters seem to oversimplify this complexity by treating private schools as a single, uniform group while ignoring the subtle differences in their capabilities and resources. The generalized perceptions that result from this oversimplification may not take into account the varied quality of private schools and their ability to provide superior facilities, see Table 2. A more nuanced discussion that considers these distinctions might offer a better understanding of how public and private schools differ from one another.

Table 2. *Discussion Related to School Facilities*

No.	Poster	Frequency
1.	P2	Private schools offer complete facilities, including air conditioning, CCTV, and speakers provided by the school, enhancing learning comfort without relying on donations from parents.

No.	Poster	Frequency
2.	P5	Facilities in public schools are often adequate in large cities, but private schools tend to offer more advanced amenities.
3.	P6	In contrast, private schools like SMAK 1 BPK Penabur, owned by foundations or individuals, tend to have a more homogeneous student population, higher fees, a wider variety of curricula (e.g., international Cambridge), as well as superior facilities such as air-conditioned classrooms and modern amenities.
4.	P19	Public schools, despite having facilities that are not as good as private schools
5.	P9	For example, private schools are known for cleaner, more comfortable facilities, such as spotless toilets and well-maintained canteens, which contrasts with the often-neglected conditions in public schools. In sports, private schools offer a variety of equipment, enabling students to engage in activities like swimming, while public schools primarily focus on running with limited resources.
6.	P9	Private schools' toilets are clean and well-maintained; in public schools, they are poorly maintained. Private school canteens resemble clean mini markets, while public school canteens are less appealing, often resembling basic roadside stalls with limited hygiene. Private schools provide diverse sports facilities that encourage skill development, such as swimming, while public schools often have limited equipment and activities.
7.	P11	Well-funded private schools often have better facilities, though this varies.
8.	P19	Huge difference in facility
9.	P13	Private elementary schools are described as having superior facilities, meanwhile public schools are mentioned as lacking basic amenities, such as functional restrooms.
10.	P20	Private schools provide superior facilities. Public schools may lack these opportunities due to limited funding.
11.	P21	Private schools often provide well-maintained facilities, such as complete libraries and functional science labs, unlike some public schools where resources may be limited or poorly maintained.
12.	P15	Private schools often have better facilities due to higher funding from tuition fees. Public schools may face limitations due to budget constraints.
13.	P22	Swimming pools are typically found in private schools, not in public schools.
14.	P17	Private schools tend to be more favored in the facilities they provide.
15.	P23	Private schools often have better facilities, like well-equipped laboratories.

C. Cost and Accessibility

The cost of education has a big impact on student experiences, family decisions, and academic results. In the collected data, it is discussed by 13 out of 30 posters (42%). The main topics of accessibility and cost in relation to both public and private education are covered in detail in this section.

C.1 Financial Implication of Private Schools

High tuition costs are a common characteristic of private schools, which can put a significant financial strain on families. In addition to tuition, private school premiums frequently include other expenses such as textbooks, uniforms, fees for extracurricular activities, and donations to technology. Poor families that can afford such an investment in education are greatly reduced because the annual total costs can amount to tens of millions of Indonesian Rupiah for many families. Families with lower to middle incomes are routinely denied access to what is frequently marketed as a top-notch educational experience because of this business model's exclusivity (Olivia et al., 2020; Jameaba, 2021).

Furthermore, parents who are thinking about private education base their decision heavily on the idea of "return on investment." Families are sometimes inspired by the belief that private schools offer their kids more social networking chances in addition to higher-quality education. Elite private school graduates frequently have access to prominent universities and well-paying employment prospects (Jahic & Pilav-Velic, 2021). The cycle of privilege may be strengthened if parents with the means prioritize private education due to the possibility of upward mobility. In these situations, education turns into a privilege that only the wealthy can afford, which causes the socioeconomic divide in society to deepen (Kearney, 2023).

Additionally, private schools frequently make significant investments in resources and facilities, which raises their perceived worth even more (Mintz, 2021). These universities can maintain contemporary classrooms, well-equipped sports facilities, and cutting-edge labs by utilizing tuition money and private donations. By enabling a range of extracurricular activities, artistic endeavors, and advanced coursework, these resources directly enhance the educational experience. This component is essential since it not only increases student involvement but also gets them ready for a competitive job market. However, there are urgent concerns about educational equity raised by the difference in resources between private and public schools. The gap between various socioeconomic groups expands when families place a greater emphasis on high-quality education as a method of advancement, resulting in cycles of inequality that can persist for generations (Blanden et al., 2023).

C.2 Affordability of Public Education

Unlike private schools, which are exclusive, public schools are more egalitarian and usually provide pupils with free or reasonably priced education. Because it gives them a practical way to obtain high-quality education without having to shoulder debilitating financial obligations, this systemic structure is essential for lower-income families. Public schools may serve a wide range of demographics since there is no tuition costs, which encourages social inclusion and diversity in the classroom. Regardless of socioeconomic status, this accessibility is crucial to guaranteeing that every kid receives a basic education that is necessary for both their academic and personal growth (Muttaqin et al., 2020).

The foundation of society's dedication to equal opportunity is public education, regardless of the inherent difficulties that public institutions may have, such as financial constraints and packed classrooms. All students must receive an education, and this is emphasized by the fact that public schools are frequently funded by the federal, state, and municipal governments. Even if the unequal distribution of resources between wealthy and impoverished communities has drawn criticism, the core goal of public education is to remove obstacles to learning. Student collaboration and the development of critical social skills are made possible

by this accessibility, which creates an atmosphere where variety thrives (Hershkoff & Yaffe, 2020).

Furthermore, public schools play a key role in socioeconomic mobility. They give students the chance to participate in recreational and academic activities that mold their goals and personalities. Public schools allow students to imagine possibilities that would have appeared unreachable without access to educational support by providing a curriculum that reflects the needs of the community (Blankenberger & Williams, 2020). Programs such as after-school activities, tutoring, and meal programs are designed to help students who are struggling financially so they can succeed both academically and socially. Public education is therefore an essential component of the larger educational ecosystem since it can close equity gaps and advance socioeconomic development (Rasmitadila et al., 2022).

Discussion

Implication for Educational Outcomes

Both public and private education's financial structures have a significant impact on learning outcomes, influencing not just students' performance but also their long-term success paths (Sakhiyya & Rahmawati, 2024). Parental involvement and student accomplishment are strongly correlated, according to empirical data. Families frequently feel more obligated to participate in their children's education in private school environments, which leads to a rise in volunteerism, school events, and at-home educational support. Higher graduation rates and improved student performance can result from this engaged approach, which can create an enriching environment (Fitriani, 2020).

On the other hand, public schools may encounter difficulties that limit the chances of student achievement even when they cater to a larger population. Individualized attention is frequently hampered by financial limitations, particularly in schools with high student- teacher ratios. Access to technology, advanced courses, and enrichment activities may be limited in public schools due to a lack of supplementary resources (Parolin & Lee, 2021). Additionally, there can be significant differences in the quality and accessibility of educational resources among districts, leading to inequalities that may impact students' self-esteem and motivation (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). These differences can show up as lower academic achievement and increased dropout rates for students from under- resourced backgrounds, which feeds the cycle of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Still, public schools are crucial for developing students' resilience and adaptation, especially for those who are struggling financially. Students frequently gain important life skills by managing diverse classes, such as empathy, cultural understanding, and teamwork. These qualities are becoming more and more important in today's globalized society, where good collaboration with people from different backgrounds is frequently the key to success. In essence, the social and emotional skills that students acquire in private schools are just as important for their future pursuits, even though public education may not have all of the resources available in private schools (Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024).

Ultimately, knowing how accessibility and cost interact in education offers important insights into the larger forces influencing the environments of both public and private schools. Although private schools might be more financially advantageous in terms of resources and student assistance, public schools continue to play a crucial role in guaranteeing that everyone has fair access to education, hence reaffirming the necessity of inclusivity in a diverse society. To achieve educational fairness, it is necessary to recognize the difficulties that both educational models face and work toward developing systems that give every student, regardless of socioeconomic background, the chance to succeed, see Table 3.

Table 3. *Discussion Related to Cost and Accessibility*

No.	Poster	Frequency
1.	P3	The author highlights that private schools are expensive, with examples like SD Al-Azhar costing tens of millions annually. Public schools, on the other hand, are more affordable or even free.
2.	P6	The main differences between private and public schools lie in costs (one among other factors). Public schools are government- owned, and often have lower school fees.
3.	P24	Public schools are more socially diverse, with students from various socio-economic backgrounds, providing a broader view of Indonesian society. They also offer affordable education but may struggle with discipline and resources due to larger class sizes and varying teacher management styles. In contrast, private schools often have stricter discipline, more flexible curricula (including international programs like IB and Cambridge), and better facilities, such as advanced sports fields and labs. However, they come at a higher cost.
4.	P25	While private schools typically charge higher fees, such as 500k IDR per month for kindergarten, public schools are generally more affordable, with the writer's own public high school offering a low fee of around 320k-350k IDR.
5.	P26	Although there are extra expenses like uniforms and graduation fees, students do not pay tuition at public schools, which are run by the state and receive education funding through BOS. Additionally, schools provide free books. For example, in public schools, the majority of teachers are civil servants who are paid by the government. In contrast, private schools are managed by the private sector with tuition fees borne by parents, and the amount of fees depends on the quality of the school, such as in international schools or madrasahs.
6.	P8	Public school students use standard, often minimal resources, like LKS books, while private school students are required to buy expensive textbooks, highlighting a financial divide.
7.	P11	Private schools are generally more expensive.
8.	P12	A comparison between public and private schools in terms of expenses.
9.	P13	Private schools are expensive; the cost correlates with the level of facilities provided.
10.	P21	Private schools generally require higher fees, including tuition, exam fees, and extracurricular costs, which can increase significantly as students approach graduation.
11.	P16	In Jakarta, private schools require tuition fees (SPP), which can be costly for families. In contrast, public schools are free of charge.
12.	P27	Private schools charge school fees; yet public schools under Depag charge fees, despite public schools being considered free.
13.	P28	Public schools offer more free services, while private schools involve more fees.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of public and private schools in Indonesia reveals a complicated environment influenced by a number of variables, such as the role of teachers, perceived educational quality, accessibility, and cost. The prevalent beliefs that affect parents' decisions about their children's education are brought to light by the examination of user- generated content on websites such as Quora.

According to the findings, private schools are usually regarded as having higher academic standards, better facilities, and higher-quality teachers. The benefits of more individualized instruction, better resources, and smaller class sizes in private schools were highlighted by several respondents. This view is reinforced by the idea that teachers at private schools are more skilled and committed, creating a supportive atmosphere that encourages student achievement.

Public schools, on the other hand, serve a diverse student body and are renowned for their affordability and accessibility. Even though they might not have the cutting-edge resources and facilities of private schools, public schools are essential for fostering social inclusion and educating children from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. One important way that public schools contribute to the educational landscape is by helping students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, develop resilience and adaptation.

The study emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend the subtle differences between the public and private educational systems. Public schools continue to be crucial for guaranteeing equal access to education, even when private schools could have some advantages. Each system’s success is still up for question, which emphasizes the need for more discussion and investigation to address the differences in educational resources and quality.

In the end, a thorough grasp of the distinct advantages and disadvantages of each system should guide the decision between public and private education. When parents weigh their alternatives, it's important to take into account both the short-term advantages of educational institutions and their long-term effects on children's academic and psychological growth. Stakeholders can endeavor to create an educational climate that promotes fairness, quality, and inclusivity for all Indonesian students by promoting a better-informed public conversation.

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