

## Implementation Of The Principles Of Transparency And Accountability In Regional Heads Elections With Integrity During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

*This study examines the implementation of the principles of transparency and accountability in the implementation of an integrity-based regional head election during the COVID-19 pandemic in Solok Regency. This research is based on allegations of violations of the code of ethics regarding the implementation of the principles of transparency and accountability in the 2020 regional head election in Solok Regency. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the obstruction of all life activities, one of which is in the implementation of the regional head election in Solok Regency which was originally carried out in September 2020 but with the continued increase in COVID-19 cases in Indonesia and in accordance with the issuance of PERPPU Number 2 of 2020, it was postponed to December 2020. This study aims to find out how the KPU of Solok Regency as the organizer of the regional head election makes policies that are integrity-based during the pandemic so that a transparent and accountable regional head election is realized. The researcher uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through interviews with informants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. The results of the study show that there are still improvements for the future in the implementation of the Solok Regency Regional Head Election.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The democratic celebrations are a moment for all parties involved to prepare themselves for the competition for leadership positions for the next term. This includes regional head elections, a form of implementing the broadest possible regional autonomy. Through Law No. 32 of 2004, in 2005, Indonesia held its first direct regional head elections, an effort to accommodate the voices of various interests in each region. The importance of holding regional elections is realized through various regulatory improvements in order to present elections with integrity so that there is a peaceful rotation of leadership by obtaining leaders who have strong legitimacy from the local people directly.

In the book Election Governance (2019), integrity is defined terminologically as a characteristic or condition that demonstrates a complete unity, thus possessing the potential and ability to radiate authority or honesty. Election organizers are required to have a commitment in carrying out their duties and authorities in order to control all election processes so that they can run smoothly according to applicable rules and legal norms. The implementation of the principles of elections with integrity

includes the preparation, implementation, and post-implementation stages, in order to realize elections with integrity. The two main principles that will be put forward are;

In the book on Governance of the Indonesian Elections (2019), it is explained that from the perspective of the ACE Project (2013), the theme of genuine elections is the heart of elections with integrity, which includes four main aspects, namely: accountability, transparency, accuracy dan ethical behavior. These four aspects must be alive and developing in every election cycle implemented by election organizers. According to online media (databoks.id, October 11, 2021), data obtained by the West Sumatra Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) shows that in Solok Regency, there were 9 violations during the 2020 regional elections, 3 of which were criminal offenses and 6 were other violations.

In relation to the transparency and accountability case of the regional elections, the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) has been embroiled in a dispute, namely regarding alleged violations of the code of ethics (KEPP) that ensnared the Solok Regency KPU, which occurred during the official determination of the Solok regent candidates consisting of 4 candidate pairs. Reported by online media (langgam.id Date 02/18/2021), which reported that the pair Iriyadi Dt Tumanggung - Agus Syahdeman did not meet the requirements (TMS). Based on the doctor's recommendation, Iriyadi Dt Tumanggung was experiencing health problems, so it would be risky to carry out his duties as the regent of Solok if elected. Even reported by the online media page jawa pos, which stated that Iriyadi was using a pacemaker, so it would be risky in carrying out his daily routines. As a result, the Solok General Elections Commission (KPU) only determined three candidate pairs on September 23, 2020, through Solok Regency KPU Decree Number 80/PL.02.3 - Kpt/1302/KPU-Kab/IX/2020 concerning the Determination of Candidate Pairs for the Election of Regent and Deputy Regent of Solok. The following are the names of the candidate pairs along with their ballot numbers:

1. H. Nofi Candra, SE – Yulfadri, SH
2. H. Epyardi Asda, M.Mar – Jon Firman Pandu
3. Drs. Desra Anantanur, MM – Dr. Adli, SE, M.Si

The prospective candidate finally conducted a review of the decision, even though the Iriyadi pair had time to do an independent health check at M. Djamil Padang Hospital, which showed different results. Until finally, the pair filed a lawsuit to the Bawaslu of Solok Regency with the respondent KPU of Solok Regency, but the applicant's request was rejected. Dissatisfied with the decision of the Bawaslu of Solok Regency, the struggle was continued by Iriyadi to the Medan PTTUN. The trial decided in favor of the respondent (KPU of Solok Regency) to revoke the decree of determination and issue a new decree by including pair 04 as a candidate for the 2020 Solok Regent Election. The KPU did not file an appeal to the Constitutional Court but complied with the decision of the Medan PTTUN, thus issuing a KPU decree numbered: 3 / G / Pilkada / 2020 / PT.TUN-MDN on November 3, 2020, which placed the Iriyadi - Agus Syahdeman pair at number 4, so that in the Solok Regency election it was completed to 4 candidate pairs. (source: Kompas.com – 09/23/2020, 16:58 WIB)

This problem has undoubtedly shown the inconsistency of the regional election organizers, which has the potential to eliminate the democratic rights of the people, namely to elect and be elected as stated in Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, which regulates the right to vote, namely Article 43, which reads;

*“Every citizen has the right to be elected and to vote in general elections based on equal rights through direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair voting in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations.”*

This issue has been politically detrimental to Iriyadi by shortening his campaign period, while other candidate pairs have already been running since being confirmed as candidates for the regional elections. Not to mention the material losses that candidate pair 04 must bear due to the settlement of this dispute. This incident has also involved many parties, such as the Medan Administrative Court and the Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI) for the West Sumatra region. This is an urgent matter

that requires further examination because it is related to the integrity of the regional elections in Solok Regency.

Transparency is a crucial element in increasing public trust in election organizers in providing information and ensuring easy access to accurate and adequate information. In the 2020 regional elections in Solok Regency, as reported by online media ([www.mkri.id/](http://www.mkri.id/) on March 22, 2021), there were allegations of vote reduction for candidate pair Number 1, which they experienced by damaging valid ballots by the KPPS (Polling Station Working Committee) so that the ballots were invalid, as well as many voters voting twice, which involved KPPS officers, and issues related to the unprofessionalism of the KPU.

Previous research that is almost similar to the dispute is what happened in the 2015 Purwekorto regional election dispute, which was a thesis assignment researched by Ahmad Junaedi (2017), which showed that the dispute over the determination of Purwekorto regional election candidates reaped problems due to allegations of falsification of required documents, which disqualified one of the candidate pairs, until the dispute ended up in the Constitutional Court. The research focuses more on the election resolution mechanism by the Purwekorto KPU.

Another related research is by Vita Novianti et al. (2015) in the Master of Business Administration Program, Brawijaya University. With the title "Political Accountability of the Regional General Election Commission in the Implementation of the 2010 Pilkada Situbondo Regency," the study explains that the measurement of Accountability must be based on the provisions contained in the Law. Many factors cause the principle of KPU performance accountability to be in the spotlight, which comes from internal and external KPU. The measurement of KPU political accountability in the study is that the KPU, as an independent institution, of course, in carrying out its performance remains firm in carrying out existing laws and regulations. In the implementation of accountability in the study, there are several things that certainly need more attention related to accountability, especially in the implementation of the nomination stage. The public can only measure how much political accountability the KPU has from how smoothly and orderly the stages that have been prepared by the KPU itself.

Meanwhile, this research is quite interesting and different from previous research because there has been no research related to the 2020 regional elections as just held by the Republic of Indonesia, especially in the Solok Regency area, including regarding the candidacy dispute that occurred, as stated by one of the Bawaslu staff of Solok Regency that this case is quite rare and is the first time it has occurred throughout Indonesia (interview with Bawaslu Solok Regency, on January 28, 2020). In this study, the researcher wants to answer how the implementation of regional elections with integrity is carried out through transparent and accountable elections by the KPU and Bawaslu Solok Regency. Compared to previous studies, such as Ahmad Junaedi (2017), which focused on document falsification disputes in candidate determination, and Vita Novianti et al. (2015), which measured political accountability based on statutory provisions, the scientific contribution of this study lies in its focus on the interrelation between transparency and accountability principles in a candidacy dispute that was resolved through the administrative court during the COVID-19 pandemic, a context not yet addressed in prior literature. This study therefore extends the existing body of knowledge on election governance by providing empirical evidence on how election organizers uphold integrity principles amid overlapping legal, political, and public-health pressures.

Based on the explanation above, the author tries to analyze the problem with the title ***“Implementation of the Principles of Transparency and Accountability in the Implementation of Regional Head Elections with Integrity in Solok Regency 2020”***.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The study was conducted at the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Solok Regency. Informants were selected purposively based

on the criteria of direct involvement in or first-hand knowledge of the 2020 Solok Regency Pilkada process, particularly the candidacy dispute, so that they could provide accurate and relevant information; on this basis, the informants consisted of KPU commissioners and staff who handled the dispute, Bawaslu officials who processed the complaint, village-level election officials who oversaw voting and vote counting, and members of the public who witnessed the events directly. Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, consisting of members of the KPU of Solok Regency, Bawaslu, village officials, and members of the public involved in the implementation of the 2020 Pilkada. The research data includes primary data obtained through interviews and secondary data obtained from documentation studies. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, the data were analyzed qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and concluding to obtain an overview of the implementation of the principles of transparency and accountability in the election of regional heads with integrity during the COVID-19 pandemic in Solok Regency. During data reduction, the raw interview transcripts and documentation were sorted and coded according to the themes of transparency and accountability; the coded data were then presented in narrative and matrix form to identify patterns before conclusions were drawn and verified against the initial research questions. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher applied source and technique triangulation by cross-checking information obtained from interviews with KPU, Bawaslu, village officials, and community members against documentary evidence such as KPU decrees, Bawaslu rulings, and news reports, so that findings were only accepted when they were corroborated by at least two independent sources. The validity of the research results was further strengthened through member checking, in which preliminary findings and interpretations were confirmed with key informants to ensure that the researcher's understanding accurately reflected their statements, as well as through peer debriefing with academic colleagues to review the consistency of the coding and interpretation process. This combination of source and technique triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing was intended to enhance the credibility and dependability of the qualitative findings on the implementation of transparency and accountability principles in the 2020 Solok Regency Pilkada.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Research result

##### 1. Implementation of the Principle of Transparency in the Election of Regional Heads with Integrity during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Solok Regency

The research results show that the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) has implemented the principle of transparency by providing public information accessible to the public throughout all stages of the 2020 Pilkada. This transparency is realized through the use of the Voter Data Information System (SIDALIH) to check voter lists and the Nomination Information System (SILON), which contains information on nomination requirements, administrative verification processes, and campaign fund reports for candidate pairs. The existence of these two systems makes it easier for the public to obtain information quickly, openly, and accurately.

The findings of this study align with Mardiasmo's (2018) opinion, which states that transparency is the government's openness in providing governance information, so that the public has the opportunity to learn about, obtain, and monitor every policy taken. In the context of regional elections, transparency is a crucial indicator in achieving elections with integrity because the entire process can be monitored by the public and election participants. Furthermore, the information disclosure carried out by the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) also complies with Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, which mandates that every public body is required to provide access to information to the public. Interviews revealed that information regarding

voter data, the nomination process, and the implementation of the regional elections was provided openly, thus increasing public trust in the election organizers.

Thus, the implementation of transparency by the Solok Regency KPU has supported the implementation of Pilkada with integrity because it is able to provide broad access to information to the public while strengthening public oversight of all stages of the election.

## **2. Implementation of the Principle of Accountability in the Election of Regional Heads with Integrity during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Solok Regency**

The research results show that the principle of accountability was realized through the implementation of all stages of the regional elections in accordance with statutory provisions and the implementation of health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) held plenary meetings, compiled budget requirements, distributed election logistics, and implemented health procedures at each polling station (TPS), such as temperature checks, mask use, handwashing facilities, social distancing, and special booths for voters exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. However, this implementation was not free from constraints. Interviews with KPU and TPS officials revealed that the additional health protocol procedures, such as temperature checks and the provision of a separate booth for symptomatic voters, lengthened queuing times and required extra personnel and personal protective equipment that had not been fully budgeted for in the original election logistics plan. Coordination between the KPU, Bawaslu, and local health authorities also took time to consolidate, particularly at the village level, so that the application of health protocols in the early stages of the Pilkada was not yet fully uniform across all polling stations. These constraints indicate that accountability under pandemic conditions depended not only on regulatory compliance but also on the organizers' capacity to adapt logistics and cross-agency coordination under limited time and resources.

These findings align with Mardiasmo's (2018) opinion, which explains that accountability is a public organization's obligation to account for the success or failure of program implementation to the public as the party entrusted with the mandate. In the Solok Regency Pilkada, this form of accountability was evident in the KPU's compliance with applicable regulations and its commitment to ensuring public safety during the voting process.

The implementation of regional elections during the pandemic also refers to Government Regulation instead of Law (Perppu) No. 2 of 2020, Law No. 6 of 2020, and the General Elections Commission Regulation (PKPU) No. 6 of 2020 and its amendments, which regulate the implementation of regional elections during non-natural disasters. Compliance with these regulations demonstrates that election organizers' accountability is demonstrated not only through administrative reporting but also through the implementation of duties in accordance with applicable legal provisions.

Therefore, the implementation of the accountability principle by the Solok Regency KPU has demonstrated institutional responsibility in organizing the regional elections in a safe, orderly, and integrity-based manner, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **3. Evaluation of the Implementation of the Solok Regency Regional Elections during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The research results indicate that the 2020 Solok Regency Pilkada went well overall. However, the study identified several aspects that require evaluation, particularly regarding voter data updates. Some individuals were still not registered on the final voter list despite exercising their right to vote on Election Day. This situation indicates that the voter data collection process still requires improvement.

According to the concept of good governance put forward by the UNDP (1997), transparency and accountability are two principles that must go hand in hand to ensure government administration can provide quality public services. Therefore, evaluating voter data updates is a crucial part of improving the quality of future regional elections.

Based on the research results, the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) has implemented various improvement efforts by optimizing SIDALIH (Selection for Local Elections) and coordinating with election officials at the sub-district and village levels to update voter data. These efforts demonstrate the organizers' commitment to continuously improving the quality of public services and maintaining the integrity of the regional election process.

Overall, the research results prove that the principles of transparency and accountability have been well implemented by the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) in the implementation of the 2020 Regional Elections. Although there are still several obstacles, especially in the aspect of voter data collection, various policies implemented show that the implementation of the Regional Elections can still take place democratically, transparently, accountably, and with integrity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Implementation of the Principle of Transparency in the Election of Regional Heads with Integrity during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Solok Regency**

The results of the study show that the Solok Regency KPU has implemented the principle of transparency through information disclosure at every stage of the 2020 Pilkada implementation. Transparency is realized through the use of the Voter Data Information System (SIDALIH) and the Nomination Information System (SILON), which make it easy for the public to obtain information regarding voter data, the nomination process, administrative verification, and campaign fund reports for candidate pairs.

These findings align with the transparency theory proposed by Mardiasmo (2018), which states that transparency is the government's openness in providing information to the public so that the public can understand and monitor the administration of government. In the implementation of the Solok Regency Pilkada, the openness of information through SIDALIH and SILON shows that the KPU has provided access to information to the public in accordance with the principle of transparency and the provisions of Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure.

This transparency of information also increases public trust in election organizers. Easy access to information allows the public to participate in monitoring every stage of the regional elections, thereby ensuring a more open, democratic, and integrated election process.

### **2. Implementation of Accountability Principles in Regional Head Elections with Integrity During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Solok Regency**

Based on the research results, the principle of accountability has been implemented through the implementation of all stages of the regional elections in accordance with statutory provisions and the implementation of health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) held plenary meetings, compiled budget requirements, distributed logistics, and implemented various health procedures at each polling station (TPS), such as temperature checks, mask use, handwashing facilities, social distancing, and special booths for voters exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.

According to Mardiasmo (2018), accountability is the obligation of public organizations to account for every activity and outcome of their duties to the public. Research findings indicate that the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) has fulfilled this

responsibility through compliance with regulations, orderly implementation of the regional election stages, and efforts to protect public health during the voting process.

The implementation of this accountability also demonstrates the KPU's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the regional election process. Compliance with Government Regulation instead of Law (Perppu) No. 2 of 2020, Law No. 6 of 2020, and KPU Regulation No. 6 of 2020 and its amendments demonstrates that all stages of the regional election were carried out in accordance with applicable laws.

### **3. Evaluation of the Implementation of Regional Head Elections during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Solok Regency**

The research results indicate that the 2020 Solok Regency Pilkada went well overall. However, several aspects still require evaluation, particularly regarding the voter data updating process. The continued presence of voters not yet registered on the final voter list indicates that the data collection process still requires refinement to ensure that all eligible voters are properly accommodated.

From a good governance perspective, transparency and accountability are principles that must be continuously implemented to improve the quality of public services. Therefore, the evaluation conducted by the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) through optimization of SIDALIH and coordination with election officials at the sub-district and village levels is an appropriate step in improving the quality of regional election implementation.

Thus, evaluation is not interpreted as a form of failure of the organizers, but rather as an effort for continuous improvement so that the implementation of the next regional elections will be more transparent, accountable, and have integrity in accordance with the principles of democracy.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the principles of transparency and accountability in the 2020 Solok Regency Regional Head Election during the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out well as an effort to realize regional head elections with integrity. The implementation of the transparency principle was realized through the provision of information systems such as the Voter Data Information System (SIDALIH) and the Nomination Information System (SILON), which provide easy access for the public to information regarding voter data, nomination stages, and the election process in an open manner.

The principle of accountability was implemented through the implementation of all stages of the regional elections in accordance with statutory provisions and consistent implementation of health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. Various policies implemented by the Solok Regency General Elections Commission (KPU), from planning and logistics distribution to the actual voting itself, demonstrated the organizers' responsibility to ensure a safe, orderly, and democratic election.

Nevertheless, this study still identified several aspects that require attention, particularly in updating voter data to ensure all eligible voters can be accurately registered. Therefore, improvements in the quality of information systems, strengthening coordination between election organizers, and refining the voter registration process are essential to ensure a more transparent, accountable, and integrated regional head election in the future.

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