

Implementation of Good Governance Principles in the 2024 Election: A Study of Transparency and Accountability in the Central Maluku Regency KPU

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes the governance of the 2024 elections in terms of transparency and accountability of the Central Maluku Regency KPU. The results show that the governance of the 2024 elections in Central Maluku Regency, when viewed from the aspects of transparency and accountability, can be described as follows. First, the implementation of the elections in Central Maluku Regency has shown a fairly good level of transparency. This is evident from the openness of information to the public, the involvement of various stakeholders, and the ease of public access to data and the processes of each stage of the elections. The Central Maluku Regency KPU has consistently applied the principle of openness from the stage of updating voter data, the process of recruiting ad hoc bodies, to the announcement and recapitulation of voting results. Second, the institutional accountability of the election organizers has been carried out in accordance with applicable regulations, through administrative, financial, and ethical accountability mechanisms supervised by internal and external supervisory bodies such as Bawaslu and DKPP. The performance of the KPU and Bawaslu also shows good synergy in monitoring stages and handling violations, although there are still obstacles in technical aspects, especially in terms of reporting and consistency of monitoring results documentation. However, strengthening is still needed in the aspects of information systems, internal supervision, and increasing the technical capacity of organizers in the field. Therefore, recommendations for improvement can be made to strengthen the governance of future elections by strengthening regulations and compliance, optimizing public information disclosure, improving human resource competencies, and strengthening participatory oversight and inter-agency collaboration.



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INTRODUCTION

The introduction should contain (shortly and consecutively) a general background and a literature review (state of the art) as the basis of the brand-new research question, statements of the brand-new scientific article, main research problems, and the hypothesis. In the final part of the introduction, the purpose of the article should be stated. They should be represented in the literature review from previous research to show the novelty of the scientific article. (Cambria, 11pt, 1 line spacing)

General elections are a fundamental instrument in the implementation of a democratic political system, as they embody the principle of upholding the sovereignty of the people as the highest authority in the state. This process serves not only as a political procedure, but also as a manifestation of the people's will in determining the direction and policies of the state in a legitimate and constitutional manner. Elections cannot be viewed merely as routine political activities held every five years, but rather as an instrument for assessing the extent to which the political system functions in a transparent, participatory, and accountable manner. In the context of modern democracy, elections provide a space for the people to express their political rights freely and equally. Through this mechanism, the people assess whether the basic principles of democracy, such as openness, honesty, and fairness, have been consistently implemented by both the organizers and participants of the elections. According to Robert A. Dahl (1989), elections are a key element of polyarchy, which is the ideal form of modern democracy that promotes open competition, freedom of expression, and broad public participation. Therefore, the success of elections is largely determined by the integrity of the organizing institutions, fair regulations, and active public participation (Dahl, 1989). Elections are a means of realizing people's sovereignty.

Indonesia is one of the countries in Southeast Asia that implements a democratic system of government, specifically representative democracy. Elections serve as a competitive arena that allows citizens who meet the legal requirements to vote and fill public offices through a formal election mechanism. Overall, elections are seen as an important instrument in realizing people's sovereignty, forming a legitimate and democratic government, as well as a forum for channeling the interests and aspirations of the people. The implementation of electoral democracy is regulated in Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, which explains that elections are a means for the people to exercise their sovereignty to elect members of the Regional Representative Council, the President and Vice President, and members of the Regional Representative Council, which are carried out directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly, and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Huntington (1997) states that "a country can be called democratic if it has a mechanism for general elections that are held periodically to circulate the elite. (Huntington, 1997).

In general, an organization can be defined as a unit that functions as a forum for individuals or groups to achieve common goals. It consists of various important elements, such as a group of people working together, a structured work relationship pattern, specific task distribution, and the rational awareness of each member in accordance with their abilities and areas of expertise. According to Robbins (1994), an organization is defined as a social unit that is consciously coordinated, has relatively clear boundaries, and operates continuously to achieve specific goals (Robbins, 1994). Meanwhile, Hasibuan (2011) refers to an organization as a structured and coordinated formal association system, consisting of a group of people working together to achieve common goals (Hasibuan, 2011). In addition, according to Mardiasmo (2002), bureaucracy as a form of organization is similar to a production machine, where administrative processes run routinely and systematically (Mardiasmo, 2002).

According to Larry Diamond (1999), true electoral democracy is characterized by free, fair, competitive, and periodic elections, allowing the people to truly determine who will lead and represent them. Thus, elections serve as an instrument of political legitimacy for the government formed after the reform, when the public demanded a more open, accountable, and responsive system of government. The process of holding elections requires good, transparent, and accountable governance so that the results are widely accepted by the public. According to Stiglitz (2002), transparency describes a situation in which the public can obtain relevant, accurate, and reliable information about government actions, enabling them to make rational assessments and decisions (Stiglitz, 2002). In addition, Hood (2006) explains that transparency is a condition in which the activities of public institutions can be observed and evaluated openly by external parties. This principle aims to ensure that every policy, program, and decision of public institutions is carried out with honesty and moral responsibility towards the interests of the wider community (Hood, 2006). According to Norris (2014), transparency is a key indicator of public trust in elections, because the public tends to legitimize results obtained through an open and directly observable process (Norris, 2014). In the Indonesian context, the 2024 elections will be an important moment to test the quality of governance in various regions, including Central Maluku Regency as one of the political centers in Maluku Province.

The Central Maluku Regency KPU, as the organizing body, has a strategic role in ensuring that each stage of the election proceeds in accordance with the principles of direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair (*luber-jurdil*). However, the complexity of implementing elections in regions such as Central Maluku Regency poses its own challenges, both in terms of coordination between levels, distribution of logistics, and transparency of vote recapitulation results. A number of reports and public observations show that there is still a perception among the public that there are delays in the publication of voter data, logistical data, and election results, limited access to official data, and objections to the vote recapitulation process at the sub-district level, especially in Leihitu and West Leihitu Sub-districts, as well as at the regency KPU level. These conditions indicate a gap between the principle of transparency, which is the normative reference in regulations, and its implementation in practice. Although the Central Maluku Regency KPU has opened access to information through various official channels, some members of the public still consider that data distribution has not been carried out quickly and evenly. This shows that the mechanism for disseminating information has not fully met public expectations regarding the transparency of the election process.

The issue of limited data access also shows the weakness of the election information system management. In a number of PPS and PPK, especially those located in areas that are quite far from the regency capital, technical obstacles were found, such as network disruptions and delays in data input into the Recapitulation Information System (*Sirekap*) due to the archipelagic geographical contour. As a result, the publication of provisional results has been inconsistent between regions and has raised doubts about the accuracy of the data. This situation shows that the use of digital infrastructure to support information disclosure still faces real obstacles, both in terms of technological readiness and the technical capacity of operators in the field.

Although many studies on election governance, transparency, and accountability have been conducted in Indonesia, most of them tend to focus on the national or provincial level and emphasize the normative and regulatory aspects of election administration. These studies generally assess the KPU's compliance with laws and regulations without delving deeply into the implementation of transparency and accountability practices at the district level, especially in regions with archipelagic geographical characteristics. In addition, previous studies have been limited in integrating the dimensions of information technology utilization, accessibility of election information, and public accountability mechanisms into a single framework for analyzing

election governance. The local context of Central Maluku Regency, which has geographical, infrastructural, and socio-political challenges, has not been widely used as a locus of research to see how the principles of transparency and accountability are actually implemented by election organizers. Therefore, this study fills the research gap by empirically analyzing the governance practices of the 2024 elections at the Central Maluku Regency KPU, while also offering a contextual perspective on strengthening the quality of local democracy.

In addition, public objections to the recapitulation process at the subdistrict and regency levels indicate that there are still shortcomings in the accountability system. Several political party witnesses revealed discrepancies between the results forms at the polling stations and the digital recapitulation data, although these discrepancies did not significantly affect the final election results. In general, these indications of weakness show that the governance of the election administration in Central Maluku Regency still faces structural and technological problems in realizing transparency and accountability. This condition emphasizes the importance of assessing the extent to which transparency and accountability were implemented by the Central Maluku Regency KPU in the 2024 elections.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study research design. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of election governance based on the perceptions, experiences, and practices of those involved in the field. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research seeks to explore the meaning that emerges from social experiences, rather than testing quantitative hypotheses. This research was conducted at the Central Maluku Regency KPU, Maluku Province. The process of collecting data and information in this study used the triangulation technique as described by Miles and Huberman (1994), which states that triangulation is an important strategy for checking the validity of data in qualitative research. Interviews, observation, documentation. Data Analysis Techniques The data analysis techniques used follow the concepts of Miles and Huberman (2014), namely: Data Collection, Data Display, Data Condensation, and Conclusion: Drawing/Verifying.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Central Maluku Regency General Election Commission (KPU) is a regional election organizing body that plays a strategic role in ensuring democratic, transparent, and accountable elections. Based on Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, the KPU of Central Maluku Regency is positioned as part of the hierarchical institutional structure of the KPU nationally, with the Maluku Provincial KPU and the KPU of the Republic of Indonesia. This position makes the KPU of Central Maluku Regency the election organizing body at the regency level, tasked with coordinating the implementation of elections and voting in the Central Maluku region.

The organizational structure of the Central Maluku Regency KPU consists of five (5) commissioners, each of whom is in charge of strategic divisions such as planning and voter data, technical implementation, community participation and socialization, law and supervision, as well as logistics and finance. In carrying out their duties, the commissioners are assisted by the KPU Secretariat, which functions as an administrative and operational support unit. The KPU Secretariat is led by a Secretary who is responsible for managing human resources, finances, equipment, and institutional documentation. The working relationship between the commissioners and the secretariat is coordinative and mutually supportive for the smooth running of all stages of the elections.

In its institutional practice, the Central Maluku Regency KPU acts as the spearhead in implementing election policies at the local level. However, the Central Maluku Regency KPU also

faces a number of challenges, particularly those related to geographical conditions, limited resources, and social dynamics within the community. The implementation of elections in the Central Maluku Regency requires a well-thought-out logistics and coordination strategy to ensure the timely and targeted distribution of election equipment. In addition, increasing human resource capacity, utilizing information technology, and strengthening oversight mechanisms are urgent needs to strengthen institutional accountability.

Transparency in the Implementation of the 2024 Elections in Central Maluku Regency

Public Information Disclosure

Public information disclosure is an important element in realizing a democratic government that is oriented towards the interests of the people. This principle guarantees the right of the public to access various information held by public institutions as a form of transparency and accountability of state administrators. The General Election Commission (KPU) of Central Maluku Regency strives to realize transparency in the implementation of elections through the application of the principle of public information disclosure. This effort is reflected in the policy of publishing various official election documents and data openly to the public. Through its official website and various social media platforms, the KPU provides broad access to information related to all stages of the elections, from planning and implementation to the determination of results. This step not only demonstrates a commitment to the principle of transparency but also serves as a strategic means of building public trust in the election organizing agency.

Transparency is the main focus in the implementation of the 2024 elections at the KPU of Central Maluku Regency, demonstrating a strong commitment to the principle of public information disclosure through the publication of various official election documents and data that are widely accessible to the public. Through its official website and social media, this institution provides complete information on the stages of the election, the final voter list (DPT), the final candidate list (DCT), the campaign schedule, and the vote recapitulation results. This step not only demonstrates compliance with regulations but also strengthens public trust in the credibility of the KPU as an independent and professional organizer. According to Schedler (1999), public accountability consists of two main components, namely answerability and enforcement. Answerability refers to the obligation of public institutions to provide explanations for the actions and decisions taken, while enforcement emphasizes the existence of sanctions or consequences for violations committed (Schedler, 1999). Furthermore, Denhardt & Denhardt (2015) explain that public accountability has moral and professional dimensions, which demand integrity, responsibility, and compliance with legal norms and ethical values in the administration of government (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). According to Bovens (2007), accountability is a social relationship in which public actors or institutions are obliged to explain and justify their actions to the authorities or the public, and accept the consequences of their actions (Bovens, 2007).

Participation and Access to Information

Participation and access to information are two important elements in strengthening democratic governance. Public participation reflects the active involvement of the community in the process of decision-making, implementation, and oversight of public policy, including in the context of elections. As Arnstein (1969) states in his theory of the Ladder of Citizen Participation, participation is not merely the presence of the community in formal activities, but must be interpreted as substantive involvement that provides space for citizens to influence policy outcomes.

The Central Maluku Regency KPU has shown a high level of commitment to increasing community participation through various voter education and election procedure socialization programs. The Central Maluku Regency KPU carries out activities such as Elections Go to Campus and Elections Go to School, which are aimed at strengthening the political awareness of the younger generation and encouraging the creation of smart and honest voters. These programs also involve various elements of society, such as traditional leaders, youth organizations, and local media, to expand the reach of information and build public understanding of the importance of participation in democratic elections. However, the results of the interviews also revealed challenges in the field, especially in coastal areas and the outermost islands of Central Maluku Regency. Bawaslu informants emphasized that limited communication networks and difficulties in distributing socialization materials were the main obstacles to equal access to election information. Nevertheless, Bawaslu and the KPU continue to strive to overcome these obstacles through community-based approaches and cooperation with traditional institutions, religious leaders, and local governments. These efforts demonstrate strong institutional synergy in realizing transparency and inclusive participation, although communication strategies still need to be improved to reach communities in remote areas.

Based on the analysis, the research findings show that the KPU has systematically pursued transparency in the implementation of the 2024 elections in Central Maluku Regency through the application of the principle of public information disclosure. The KPU actively published various strategic election documents and data, such as the stages of implementation, the final voter list (DPT), the final candidate list (DCT), the campaign schedule, and the vote recapitulation results through its official website and social media. This practice reflects the fulfillment of the answerability dimension as stated by Schedler, because the KPU provides explanations and information that can be accessed by the public regarding every decision and action related to the implementation of the elections. In addition, these transparency efforts demonstrate the KPU's moral and professional commitment to maintaining the integrity of the institution, in line with Denhardt and Denhardt's views on public accountability. However, this study also found that the dimension of enforcement has not been fully demonstrated, especially in responding to criticism or findings from public oversight. Therefore, although information transparency has been quite good, strengthening accountability mechanisms that are responsive to the public remains a challenge in election governance at the local level.

Accountability for the Implementation of the 2024 Elections in Central Maluku Regency Accountability of the Performance of the KPU and Bawaslu

The accountability of the performance of election organizing institutions such as the KPU of Central Maluku Regency is a concrete manifestation of the application of the principle of public accountability in a democratic system. In addition, the accountability of the performance of the KPU of Central Maluku Regency is reflected in the submission of work reports, evaluation of election stages, and openness to public and media scrutiny. According to Rosen (2015), public accountability plays an important role in improving institutional effectiveness and strengthening the integrity of the government system. The results of the study show that this institution has a strong commitment to the principles of public accountability and transparency in all aspects of the 2024 election administration as part of the implementation of good governance in the administration of democracy at the local level. The Central Maluku Regency KPU carries out its accountability through the preparation of Government Agency Performance Accountability Reports (LAKIP) and Election Administration Reports, which are submitted openly to the public and supervisory agencies. Meanwhile, Bawaslu actively carries out its supervisory and regulatory enforcement functions to ensure that each stage of the election proceeds in accordance with regulations and the principle of fairness.

In general, the performance accountability of the KPU and Bawaslu of Central Maluku Regency in the 2024 elections not only serves as an administrative obligation but also as an instrument to build public trust in the election process and results. However, improvements are still needed in the areas of internal evaluation, refinement of the digital reporting system, and equitable access to information in the islands so that the principle of accountability can be realized more comprehensively and fairly.

Ethics Monitoring and Enforcement

In general, ethics monitoring and enforcement by the KPU and Bawaslu are an important part of the governance system for conducting elections with integrity. In general, the results of the study show that ethics monitoring and enforcement of the 2024 election organizers in Central Maluku Regency have been carried out quite well and reflect a commitment to the principles of integrity and professionalism. Bawaslu Central Maluku Regency carried out its monitoring function closely throughout all stages of the elections, from administrative verification and campaigning to vote recapitulation. Through intensive coordination with the KPU, any findings of administrative violations could be resolved quickly through a mechanism of clarification and recommendations for improvement. No serious violations leading to ethical sanctions were found, which indicates the effectiveness of the oversight mechanism and increased ethical awareness among organizers at the technical and ad hoc levels.

Meanwhile, the Central Maluku Regency KPU has also demonstrated strengthening in the aspect of internal oversight through tiered evaluations of the performance of ad hoc bodies, accompanied by ethical guidance and technical training. This step strengthens institutional capacity while reducing the potential for ethical violations in the field. The collaboration between the KPU, Bawaslu, and DKPP in maintaining the ethical standards of organizers is a tangible manifestation of the application of the principles of accountability and transparency in election governance. Thus, it can be concluded that the system of supervision and enforcement of ethics for the 2024 election organizers in Central Maluku Regency has been effective, although it still needs optimization in the islands and coastal areas so that the integrity of the elections can be maintained evenly throughout the city's administrative area.

Theoretical analysis Based on the perspective of transparency theory, the implementation of the elections in Central Maluku Regency has accommodated the element of openness in every stage of the process, both through the publication of election stage data, the announcement of the final voter list (DPT), and the delivery of vote recapitulation results online and offline. This is in line with Hood's (2006) view that transparency is an important prerequisite in public governance to ensure the visibility and openness of government institutions' actions before the public. However, equal access to information still needs to be improved, especially in coastal and outlying island areas, so that all levels of society have the same opportunity to access information and participate in monitoring the implementation of the elections. In this context, Bovens' (2010) view is relevant, namely that public accountability consists of three important elements, namely responsibility, answerability, and enforcement (sanctions). The KPU and Bawaslu of Central Maluku Regency consistently implement all three elements, both through the preparation of Government Agency Performance Accountability Reports (LAKIP) and through follow-up on the results of Bawaslu's monitoring and recommendations.

Furthermore, these practices of transparency and accountability demonstrate that the principles of good governance have been effectively implemented in the management of elections at the regional level. This is in line with the UNDP (1997) view, which places transparency, participation, and accountability as the main elements of good and democratic governance. Thus, the application of transparency and accountability in the 2024 elections in Central Maluku

Regency can be said to have contributed significantly to strengthening the legitimacy of local democracy and the quality of governance with integrity.

The findings of the study show that the governance of the 2024 elections in the Central Maluku Regency KPU has sought to implement the principles of transparency and accountability, particularly through the provision of information on the stages of the elections, the results of vote recapitulation, and the use of the KPU's official digital platform. However, the level of transparency is not yet fully optimal due to limited access to information for communities in island areas, delays in data updates, and low digital literacy among some voters. In terms of accountability, the KPU has implemented administrative accountability mechanisms in accordance with regulations, including reporting to the provincial KPU and coordination with Bawaslu, but public participation in the oversight process is still passive and procedural. This study also found a gap between normative election governance policies and their implementation in the field, which is influenced by resource constraints, geographical conditions, and the capacity of ad hoc organizers. Overall, these findings confirm that strengthening election transparency and accountability at the local level requires a contextual approach that is adaptive to the characteristics of island regions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of discussions and analysis of the governance of the 2024 elections in Central Maluku Regency, with a focus on transparency and accountability, it can be concluded that the governance of the elections in Central Maluku Regency has demonstrated a good level of transparency, as reflected in the openness of public information, the involvement of stakeholders, and public access to data and the electoral process. The Central Maluku Regency KPU has consistently applied the principle of openness in every stage, from updating voter data and recruiting ad hoc bodies to recapitulating the voting results. The mechanism of digital publication and coordination forums with stakeholders also strengthens the legitimacy and public trust in the election process. The aspect of institutional accountability of election organizers in Central Maluku Regency is carried out within the established regulatory framework, with administrative, financial, and ethical accountability supervised by internal and external institutions, including Bawaslu and DKPP. The KPU's performance showed fairly effective coordination, especially in monitoring stages and resolving violations, although there were still obstacles in terms of technical reporting and consistency in documenting monitoring results.

Overall, the governance of the 2024 elections in Central Maluku Regency can be categorized as good, with a relatively strong implementation of the principles of transparency and accountability, although there is still a need for strengthening in the areas of information systems, internal supervision, and increasing the technical capacity of organizers in the field.

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