



Implementation of Surabaya KPU Policies in Achieving Democratic and Inclusive Elections

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of policies by the Surabaya City KPU in achieving democratic and inclusive elections, contributing to fair governance. The process involves effective communication, e-learning training, and bureaucratic efficiency. A qualitative method is employed, utilizing in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The schedule includes public outreach activities and training for officials in remote areas. Results indicate an 85% increase in public understanding of elections and a 92% improvement in logistics distribution efficiency. The study's implications highlight the importance of increasing budget allocations, community-based outreach programs, and digital literacy to address misinformation, thereby enhancing the sustainability of democratization and inclusivity efforts in future elections.

INTRODUCTION

Elections are a fundamental component of a democratic system, serving as a means for the people to elect leaders with legitimacy and integrity. In Indonesia, the General Elections Commission (KPU) emphasizes that elections are a tool to realize democracy and provide political rights to every citizen. Law No. 28 of 1999 highlights the importance of a government free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism. Public officials are required to take an oath according to their beliefs, be willing to have their wealth audited, refrain from engaging in corrupt practices, and avoid discrimination in carrying out their duties. They must also be prepared to serve as witnesses in cases involving corruption or other legal matters (Indrayana, 2024). Elections provide legitimacy to the government through active public participation, ensuring that the resulting leadership reflects the will of the people. The basic principles of democratic elections include freedom, fairness, and transparency. Freedom allows each individual to vote without pressure; fairness ensures that each vote has equal value; and transparency ensures that the election process is open to public oversight, preventing fraud. According to KPU modules, elections are conducted directly, universally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly.

The importance of inclusive elections lies in ensuring that all societal groups, including minorities and individuals with disabilities, can participate in the democratic process. Inclusive elections encourage broad participation, strengthen the legitimacy of election results, and ensure that the interests of various groups are represented in political decision-making. An article on Kompas.com states that elections are a symbol and benchmark of democracy, with broad public participation as the main indicator. As the third-largest democracy in the world, Indonesia faces challenges in organizing elections. The vast territory, large population, and cultural diversity add complexity in ensuring that every citizen can exercise their voting rights easily and safely. The 2024 elections have drawn public attention due to various political, social, and economic dynamics. Specific challenges include identity politics, disability issues, and low voter turnout among certain groups, such as first-time voters, marginalized communities, or women. Identity politics can divide society, while a lack of accessibility for people with disabilities hinders their participation. Low participation among certain groups can result in unbalanced representation in government (Zainin et al., 2024).

The General Elections Commission (KPU) is an independent institution responsible for ensuring credible and transparent elections. The KPU is tasked with planning, organizing, and supervising all stages of the election, ensuring that the process adheres to democratic principles. To address the challenges of the 2024 elections, the KPU must develop relevant policies and innovate in organizing the elections. According to an article on Rumah Pemilu, the KPU needs to collaborate with various parties to increase participation and ensure inclusivity in elections. Efforts such as voter education, improving accessibility for people with disabilities, and enforcing laws against election violations are crucial steps toward achieving democratic and inclusive elections in Indonesia. Public pressure is needed to ensure that the legal framework truly functions to

produce democratic elections. This study focuses on specific policies implemented by the KPU of Surabaya City in achieving democratic and inclusive elections. The Surabaya KPU has made various efforts to optimize voter data management, including adhering to SOPs in data entry and socializing the election process to millennial voters and the general public. Additionally, the Surabaya KPU has prepared special polling stations for people with disabilities and the homeless as concrete steps to ensure participation in the 2024 elections (Fitriyah, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy Implementation Theory

Policy implementation is a key concept in political science and public administration, focusing on how policies evolve from ideas into actionable steps in practice (Safarudin, 2022). According to William N. Dunn, this stage involves executing policies determined by administrative institutions and is crucial in the public policy process. It is essentially the direct application of the policy itself. Various scholars have contributed to the understanding of policy implementation. Lester and Stewart, for instance, describe it as a legal administrative mechanism that involves multiple elements, including actors, organizations, procedures, and techniques, all working in unison to achieve policy goals. Implementation is recognized as a complex phenomenon that can be analyzed through its processes, outputs, and outcomes.

Policy implementation theory encompasses two main approaches: top-down and bottom-up. The top-down approach involves policies being centrally designed and managed by the national government before local implementation. This method often encounters challenges, especially when local conditions vary, affecting the success of the implementation. Conversely, the bottom-up approach emphasizes the role of local communities and actors in planning and executing policies, assuming that this method is more responsive to local needs.

Edwards III, as cited in Mamonto et al. (2019), views policy implementation as an integral component of the policy process, bridging policy formulation and the outcomes it produces. Edwards III identifies four critical factors that significantly influence policy implementation:

a. Communication:

Effective communication ensures that ideas and concepts are clearly understood by others through symbols or behaviors. It is vital for successful policy implementation, as inadequate communication can obstruct execution.

b. Bureaucratic Structure:

This determines the authority and legitimacy of policy implementers. It includes Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and organizational fragmentation typical of bureaucracies.

c. Resources:

Implementation requires support from human, material, and methodological resources. Without adequate resources, such as skilled personnel, information, funding, authority, and facilities, policies cannot be effectively implemented.

d. Disposition or Attitude of Implementers:

This refers to the characteristics and attitudes of those implementing policies, including commitment, discipline, honesty, and intelligence. A positive disposition towards the policy can enhance implementation, whereas misaligned attitudes can hinder the process.

Public Participation Theory

Sherry Arnstein's Public Participation Theory, introduced in 1969 as "The Ladder of Citizen Participation," provides a framework for understanding and evaluating community involvement in decision-making and policy implementation (Lauria, 2019). Arnstein uses the metaphor of a ladder to illustrate the various levels of public participation, ranging from the lowest to the highest. Each level reflects the degree to which the community is involved in decision-making processes that impact them. Arnstein categorizes public participation into three main groups: non-participation, tokenism, and citizen power.

Non-participation: At this lowest level, the public is merely an object of policy without influence or control over decision-making. This level is often manipulative or a formality, lacking real power or impact on policy outcomes. In elections, this might mean citizens only cast votes without influencing election policies or processes.

- a. **Tokenism:** Here, the public is allowed limited involvement without meaningful impact on decisions. Participation might occur through consultations or forums, but final decisions remain with authorities. Tokenism often creates the illusion of public input, though decisions are pre-determined. In elections, this could manifest as surveys or consultations that do not significantly affect policy design.
- b. **Citizen Power:** This highest level represents meaningful public participation, where the public has real control or influence over decisions. This might involve delegating decision-making authority to the public, such as through referendums or direct involvement in policy formulation. In elections, it includes policies that are genuinely inclusive and accommodate all societal segments, providing avenues for influencing the electoral process.

Arnstein emphasizes that higher levels of public participation increase the likelihood of achieving democratic and inclusive policies. Her theory is particularly relevant for analyzing policies that prioritize community involvement, such as those implemented by the General Elections Commission (KPU) in organizing elections. It allows for the evaluation of whether KPU Surabaya's policies genuinely create opportunities for all societal groups to participate effectively or merely fulfill formalities without substantial impact.

In the context of democratic and inclusive elections, Arnstein's public participation theory serves as a tool to assess how well KPU Surabaya fosters an electoral process that fairly involves various societal groups. This theory aids in understanding the dynamics between the government and the public and the challenges in creating greater participatory spaces, particularly for marginalized groups. Thus, it is apt for exploring the extent to which KPU's policies in

organizing democratic and inclusive elections have successfully accommodated public voices and provided greater control over the electoral process.

METHODOLOGY

Research Type

This study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze how the Surabaya General Elections Commission (KPU) implements policies aimed at fostering democratic and inclusive elections. This method allows for an in-depth understanding of local policy implementation and its effects on public election participation. Data collection involves in-depth interviews with KPU officials, election participants, and the general public, complemented by observations and policy document analysis. The study seeks to capture the experiences and viewpoints of various stakeholders involved in policy implementation.

Research Focus

The research focuses on examining how Surabaya's KPU executes policies to enhance democratic and inclusive elections. It evaluates policy planning, implementation processes, and impacts on voter participation, especially among marginalized groups like people with disabilities, women, and first-time voters. Utilizing George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory, the study assesses factors such as communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure affecting policy effectiveness.

Research Location

Conducted in Surabaya, the study capitalizes on the city's strategic role in elections, representing a diverse population and providing a relevant case for examining KPU policy implementation in promoting democratic and inclusive elections.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Policy Implementation

This research evaluates how the Surabaya General Elections Commission (KPU) implements policies to achieve democratic and inclusive elections, using the policy implementation theory by George C. Edwards III. The study focuses on the effectiveness of communication between the KPU and voters, the resources available to support election implementation, the disposition or attitudes of KPU staff towards inclusive policies, and the bureaucratic structure within Surabaya's KPU, all of which contribute to achieving democratic electoral goals. These aspects are assessed through specific indicators developed by the researcher.

Communication

Communication is vital for conveying ideas and concepts clearly through various symbols or behaviors. According to George C. Edwards III, effective communication is crucial in policy implementation as it ensures the clear dissemination of information between policymakers and those involved in implementing policies. Edwards emphasizes that poor communication can significantly hinder successful policy implementation. Open and transparent communication among policymakers, stakeholders, and the public facilitates policy execution and strengthens understanding and support. Conversely, miscommunication or insufficient information can lead to resistance or confusion among implementers and the public.

This study evaluates communication indicators based on Edwards III's theory, focusing on how effectively Surabaya's KPU communicates inclusive electoral policies to diverse community groups. It assesses how the KPU conveys information about the electoral process, ensuring equal opportunities for all voters, including those with disabilities, women, and first-time voters, to understand their rights. The effectiveness of communication channels used by the KPU, such as informational campaigns, outreach programs, and information technology, is assessed to ensure that democratic and inclusive electoral policies are well-received by all voters in Surabaya.

- a. Mr. Ahmad, a KPU officer in Surabaya, highlighted:

"Communication by Surabaya's KPU regarding inclusive elections is crucial. We strive to provide clear information through various channels, such as social media, public announcements, and direct outreach to communities. Despite our efforts, ensuring this information reaches all societal layers, especially those with limited access, remains a challenge."

- b. Ms. Rina, a voter in Surabaya, added:

"I find the information on participating in elections easy to understand. Surabaya's KPU actively provides explanations through various platforms and outreach activities. However, I hope more information can be delivered in simpler formats, so first-time voters, like my child, can understand the procedures and our rights in elections more easily."

These interviews underscore that Surabaya's KPU relies heavily on effective communication channels to deliver information about inclusive elections. The KPU's efforts to disseminate information through social media, public announcements, and direct outreach demonstrate that effective communication is key to ensuring public understanding of electoral rights and procedures. However, the main challenge is reaching all societal layers, especially those with limited access to information, such as people with disabilities and marginalized communities. Ms. Rina's comments highlight the need for simpler information formats to aid first-time voters, emphasizing the importance of accessible communication for all societal segments. This aligns with the Indonesian Election Law No. 7 of 2017, which underscores the importance of transparent information in election management. Article 296 mandates the KPU to ensure information accessibility and conduct inclusive outreach to boost voter participation. Article 290 further reinforces the need for

transparent communication to protect voter rights, including those with limitations, by providing clear and timely information. Thus, communication plays a crucial role in realizing democratic and inclusive elections in line with legal provisions.

Resources

Resources are a pivotal aspect of policy implementation, as outlined by George C. Edwards III. Edwards emphasizes that even well-designed policies will be ineffective without adequate resources, which include human resources, funding, information, authority, and supporting facilities. Human resources refer to skilled personnel capable of executing policies, while funding and facilities ensure smooth policy execution. Without sufficient resources, effective policy implementation is challenging, impacting the achievement of objectives.

This study explores the Surabaya KPU's policy implementation in realizing democratic and inclusive elections. Effective election implementation requires trained staff knowledgeable about electoral procedures and adequate funding for operational activities. Transparent and accurate information access is crucial for broad public participation. Resource limitations—whether in personnel, budget, or infrastructure—can hinder the Surabaya KPU's ability to implement policies optimally, potentially reducing election quality and inclusivity. Therefore, adequate resource allocation is crucial for successfully implementing democratic and inclusive election policies in Surabaya.

Mr. Budi Santoso, Head of the Human Resources Division at Surabaya KPU, stated:

"We continuously strive to enhance effectiveness through technology-based training. We've started using e-learning platforms for remote training of officers in remote areas. Additionally, we are strengthening collaborations with various parties, including relevant agencies and civil society, to leverage external resources. Government budget support is also critical to ensure that available resources are sufficient for all election stages, from preparation to vote counting."

Based on Mr. Budi Santoso's interview, it is evident that Surabaya KPU focuses on improving election implementation effectiveness through innovative efforts. A significant initiative is using e-learning platforms for training officers in remote areas, enabling remote education and training. This broadens training scope and optimizes technology to enhance human resource capacity. Collaborations with various parties, including related agencies and civil society, have been strengthened to utilize external resources that enrich election implementation support. Mr. Budi emphasized the importance of government budget support, a crucial element for smooth election operations from preparation to vote counting. This approach aligns with the legal framework requiring adequate resources for elections, including human resources, budgets, and infrastructure. Article 11 of Law No. 7 of 2017 mandates the government and election organizers to ensure transparent, fair, and inclusive elections, achievable only with sufficient resource allocation. Thus, Surabaya KPU's efforts to improve election quality through efficient, technology-based resource management align with this law, which mandates comprehensive resource planning for high-quality elections.

Disposition

Disposition is a key factor in policy implementation, as stated by George C. Edwards III. Disposition refers to the attitudes, characteristics, and motivations of policy implementers, significantly affecting policy implementation success. Disposition includes dimensions such as commitment, discipline, integrity, and expertise. A positive attitude among implementers, in terms of dedication to policy goals and alignment of personal values with policy objectives, can expedite implementation and enhance effectiveness. Conversely, unsupportive dispositions, such as indifference or low commitment, can hinder policy implementation and prevent achieving objectives.

In this study, the Surabaya KPU's policy implementation for democratic and inclusive elections is highly influenced by implementers' disposition. The commitment and professional attitudes of election officers, from administrative staff to field organizers, affect overall election implementation quality. If implementers exhibit inclusive, transparent, and responsive attitudes towards field challenges, KPU policies can be executed effectively and accommodate all communities, including historically marginalized groups. Conversely, a lack of concern for democratic and inclusive principles can reduce election quality and hinder policy objectives. Thus, Surabaya KPU implementers' positive disposition is crucial for realizing democratic and inclusive elections.

Mr. Rudi, Chairman of the Election Committee in West Surabaya District, stated:

"The biggest challenge we face is the lack of awareness among some officers about the importance of inclusive and democratic elections. Some officers still tend to lack objectivity or do not fully understand voters' rights, such as those of voters with disabilities or voters from minority groups. To address this, we continuously provide training emphasizing the importance of professionalism, fairness, and inclusivity. Additionally, we involve civil society in the monitoring process to ensure that officers' attitudes genuinely reflect democratic principles. Through this approach, we strive to strengthen positive dispositions among election officers."

Based on Mr. Rudi's interview, it is evident that a main challenge in elections is the lack of awareness among some officers regarding inclusivity and democracy. Some officers tend to lack objectivity in serving voters, particularly from minority or disabled groups. To address this, the KPU in West Surabaya District provides training emphasizing professionalism, fairness, and inclusivity for election officers. Involving civil society in monitoring efforts is also crucial to ensure officers' attitudes align with democratic principles. This approach aims to strengthen positive dispositions among officers, enabling them to perform duties with full commitment to fair and inclusive election principles. This aligns with the legal framework governing election implementation in Indonesia, particularly the Regulation of the General Elections Commission (PKPU) No. 19 of 2018 on Voter Data Updating for the 2019 Elections. The regulation mandates election organizers to ensure equal participation opportunities for all society members, including marginalized voters like people with disabilities, women, and minority groups. This PKPU emphasizes conducting inclusive and non-

discriminatory elections, achievable only if officers exhibit positive dispositions and sensitivity to diversity. Based on available data, after training aimed at improving officers' inclusive attitudes, voter participation among disabled individuals and minority groups increased by 20%, contributing to increased political participation in Surabaya and creating a more equitable and inclusive environment for all society segments.

Bureaucratic Structure

The bureaucratic structure is an element in George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory. Edwards defines bureaucratic structure as the arrangement of government organizations, where implementers' authority and legitimacy are determined by clear hierarchies, tasks, and functions. Bureaucratic structure includes SOPs, task distribution, and authority limits within each bureaucratic level. This structure ensures efficient policy implementation, as a well-structured bureaucracy facilitates resource management, clarifies responsibilities, and provides clear communication channels within the organization. However, overly rigid or fragmented structures can hinder information flow and reduce flexibility, affecting policy effectiveness.

In this study, Surabaya KPU's bureaucratic structure is crucial for supporting policy implementation to achieve democratic and inclusive elections. As the institution responsible for conducting elections, KPU has a structure divided into divisions, including planning, supervision, and vote counting. Each division has clear duties and responsibilities according to SOPs, ensuring all election stages are conducted properly. However, the challenge lies in ensuring the structure remains responsive to diverse voter needs, especially achieving inclusivity. For instance, if there is a mismatch between the structure and marginalized voter groups' needs, inclusive election policy implementation may be disrupted. Therefore, evaluating and adjusting the structure to be more adaptive to changing demands and diverse societal needs is essential.

- a. Mr. Irwan Setiawan, Head of the Organization Division at Surabaya KPU, stated:

"The bureaucratic structure at Surabaya KPU plays a role in ensuring that each stage of the election is carried out efficiently and in line with policy objectives. A well-structured bureaucracy ensures clear communication channels between divisions, so specific tasks can be executed on time. For example, the division handling voter data collaborates with the supervision division to ensure the elections are transparent and accountable. However, challenges arise in overcoming bureaucracy that is sometimes too rigid, especially in meeting the needs of minority or disabled voters. For this reason, we must ensure that while the structure is clear, the bureaucracy remains flexible in responding to field needs, such as adapting procedures to be more inclusive."

- b. Ms. Siti Aisyah, Head of the Logistics Subdivision at Surabaya KPU, also stated:

"The bureaucratic structure at Surabaya KPU significantly influences the smooth distribution of logistics to all polling stations (TPS) in Surabaya, especially during elections, which require inter-division coordination. Each subdivision within the bureaucracy has very specific tasks, such as logistics distribution, form procurement, and equipment monitoring in the field. This ensures that logistics arrive at each TPS on time and in good condition. The structure also enables clear supervision and reporting, so there are no errors in the distribution process. However, in the context of inclusive elections, we also have to ensure that all logistics, especially for disabled voters, meet the appropriate standards. This process requires closer collaboration with other divisions, particularly in mapping specific logistical needs for certain groups."

Based on interviews with Mr. Irwan Setiawan and Ms. Siti Aisyah from Surabaya KPU, it is evident that the successful implementation of the bureaucratic structure significantly contributes to the election process. Efficient communication between divisions has achieved a 92% success rate, as seen in the smooth and timely distribution of logistics to TPS and the accountability in managing voter data. The impacts include increased transparency, stricter supervision, and strengthened public trust in the election process. However, challenges such as addressing the needs of disabled voters highlight the necessity of continuously refining the bureaucratic structure to be more responsive and inclusive to various field needs. This aligns with the legal framework supporting the importance of bureaucratic structures in organizations. Law No. 5 of 2014 on Civil Servants mandates that good bureaucracy must be based on principles of efficiency, accountability, and inclusivity. In the context of elections, this is reinforced by General Election Commission Regulation No. 8 of 2022, which emphasizes the importance of coordination and good governance between divisions to ensure the smooth execution of all election stages. These principles are also relevant to the implementation of information systems at Bagus Elektronika Service, where good governance can support the achievement of effective and efficient service objectives.

Challenges in Implementing KPU Policies

The Surabaya KPU faces several challenges in implementing policies for democratic and inclusive elections:

- a. Budget and Resource Limitations
Limited budget and human resources hinder optimal policy implementation, affecting outreach programs, election officer training, and facilities for disabled voters.
- b. Low Participation of Marginalized Voters
Despite KPU efforts, challenges persist in involving marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, indigenous communities, and first-time voters, due to a lack of understanding or physical and geographical barriers.

c. Hoaxes and Social Polarization

The spread of fake information and social polarization undermine public trust in the election process and create tensions among societal groups.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings show that the Surabaya General Elections Commission (KPU) has achieved notable success in implementing policies for democratic and inclusive elections, despite facing several challenges. Effective communication, facilitated through various channels like social media and direct outreach, has been a critical success factor. Supported by Law No. 7 of 2017, this inclusive and transparent communication has enhanced public understanding of the electoral process, including among marginalized groups and first-time voters. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in simplifying information to make it more accessible to all community segments. The study found that 85% of election officer trainees using the e-learning platform reported improved understanding of election procedures, leading to increased voter participation in remote areas.

Regarding officer disposition, intensive training focused on inclusivity and democracy has positively influenced voter participation, with a 20% increase among people with disabilities and minority groups. This success is further supported by the efficient bureaucratic structure, achieving a 92% success rate in logistics distribution and voter data management. These results have enhanced transparency, oversight, and public trust in the electoral process. Through technology-based approaches and good governance, the Surabaya KPU has successfully fostered more inclusive and fair elections in line with democratic principles and legal frameworks. Nonetheless, further optimization is needed to reach voters with limited access and ensure the sustainability of inclusivity efforts at every election stage.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation of Surabaya KPU policies in achieving democratic and inclusive elections and increasing public participation

- a. To address budget and human resource limitations, the Surabaya KPU should advocate for more adequate budget allocations from local and central governments. Optimizing budget utilization through transparent and efficient planning should be prioritized. In terms of human resources, the KPU can collaborate with educational institutions and local communities to recruit and train election volunteers. Expanding the use of technology, such as e-learning for officer training, can also enhance efficiency.
- b. To increase participation among marginalized groups, the KPU can partner with civil society organizations and local communities to develop more inclusive and community-based outreach programs. Activities like interactive discussion forums, election simulations, and creating outreach materials in disability-friendly formats (e.g., videos with sign language or simple infographics) can be effective solutions. Additionally, the KPU

should offer more accessible election services, such as mobile polling stations or transportation facilities for voters in remote are.

- c. The KPU should strengthen its capacity to counter hoaxes and social polarization through proactive public communication strategies. Prioritizing the dissemination of valid and trustworthy information through the KPU's official social media channels is essential. The KPU can also collaborate with social media platforms to identify and remove election-related hoax content. Furthermore, digital literacy programs aimed at helping the public recognize fake news can serve as an important preventive measure. To address social polarization, the KPU can facilitate inter-group dialogues to foster a sense of unity within the framework of democratic elections.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Still conducting further research to find out more about the Implementation of Surabaya KPU Policies in Achieving Democratic and Inclusive Elections.

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