

THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND PUBLIC POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL HEAD ELECTIONS IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted new approaches in organizing regional elections, emphasizing the use of information systems to reduce infection rates and improve election management effectiveness. In this context, the Regional Election Commission set high public political participation as a critical success measure. This study employed a quantitative approach, using a Slovin formula sample size of 402 respondents with a 95% confidence level. The research utilized a Likert scale, covering 12 items on information systems, 21 on political participation, and 12 on election effectiveness. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via LISREL software, focusing on determining the relationships between information systems, political participation, and election implementation effectiveness. Results indicated that information systems had a positive yet statistically insignificant effect on election effectiveness (T-value = 0.79, below the threshold of 1.96). However, political participation showed a significant positive impact (T-value = 6.79, exceeding 1.96), underscoring its role as a crucial factor in achieving effective election outcomes during the pandemic. These findings highlight the importance of public engagement in regional elections, particularly when leveraging information technology in crisis contexts.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic; Effectiveness; Information System; Public Political Participation; Simultaneous Regional Head General Elections;

INTRODUCTION

Local elections are an important element in the development of democracy in Indonesia, which not only includes political institutions and processes, but also has a direct impact on people's welfare. Democracy is not only about the election of leaders, but also involves the active participation of people in political decision-making, with the level of participation as an indicator of success. Local elections play a role in creating a more responsive and accountable government. In addition, an ideal democracy should be able to produce policies that are inclusive and equitable, thus contributing to improving the quality of life of the community (Sinaga, 2013). In democracies, elections are an indicator of the extent to which democratic principles are applied, because elections are the main instrument in carrying out democracy. Elections not only provide a space for people to express their freedom to choose leaders, but also a forum for people to evaluate and provide assessments of leaders (Perludem, 2011).

The Covid-19 pandemic (2019-nCoV) has not only caused significant loss of life but also affected the planned timeline for the regional head elections, which were originally set for September 23, 2020, but were postponed to December 9, 2020. In response to this situation, the General Election Commission (KPU) introduced KPU Regulation Number 13 of 2020, focusing on the enforcement of health protocols during the elections. Campaigns and information dissemination are recommended to be done online to minimize physical meetings. This adjustment aims to maintain the smooth running of democratic elections while protecting public health. This regulation emphasizes the importance of utilizing internet-based media platforms, such as electronic mass media, social media, and online media to play a role in the campaign process (Article 57 of General Election Commission Regulation Number 13 of 2020) as well as in conducting

public debates (Article 59 of General Election Commission Regulation Number 13 of 2020).

The application of information systems in regional head elections during the Covid-19 pandemic is crucial for enhancing public safety by minimizing direct contact and avoiding large gatherings, thereby reducing the risk of virus transmission among voters and election officials. This strategy aligns with the Minister of Home Affairs' recommendation to utilize social media in the 2020 Pilkada campaign (Aritonang, 2020). By employing these systems, election organizers can improve transparency and efficiency, provide essential voter education, and facilitate broader participation without compromising public health. This approach is particularly vital when traditional campaigning methods are restricted, allowing for effective communication about candidates and voting procedures online. Furthermore, adopting these technologies encourages innovative campaign strategies, enabling candidates to connect with constituents in creative ways. Ultimately, leveraging information systems not only prioritizes health and safety during the pandemic but also strengthens the democratic process by making it more accessible and responsive to voters' needs.

South Tangerang City is one of 270 regions that held simultaneous regional head elections on December 9, 2020. This is worth studying considering that there has been a pandemic of the Covid-19 virus (2019-nCoV) which has resulted in many residents getting sick and dying. Based on data from *Covid19.go.id*, until December 27, 2020 there were 17,488 confirmed positive cases and 396 people died (Ministry of Health, 2021).

According to the announcement from the General Election Commission of South Tangerang City (Number: 83/PL.02.1-Pu/01/3674/KPU-Kot/XI/2020) regarding the Permanent Voters List for the 2020 Mayor and Deputy Mayor election, there were 976,019 registered voters. However, community political participation fell short of the set goal. The Commission aimed for a voter turnout of 77%, but only 60.28% participated. This indicates that the implementation of the regional election during the Covid-19 pandemic was ineffective, as the voting turnout did not meet the established target. There are 4 dimensions that affect effectiveness, namely: breadth, equality, protection, and mutually binding consultation (Tilly, 2007).

The implementation of ineffective regional head elections in the Covid-19 era was caused by many factors. One of them is influenced by information system factors. There are 3 (three) aspects that affect the information system, namely: Human Resources, Technology, and Relationships (Indrajit, 2004). First, Human Resources Assets designate the staff responsible for planning and developing information technology in the organization. Second, Technology Assets include the entire information technology infrastructure system consisting of physical components and software applications. Third, Relationship Assets outline the relationship between information technology as an entity and decision-making management creating important linkages. Establishing this relationship means sharing risks and responsibilities between leaders and implementers. Another influencing factor is political participation. Political Participation Factors include 7 (seven) factors that play a role including socio-economic conditions, circumstances, political affiliation of parents, experience in organizations, awareness of politics, level of trust in government, and encouragement of participation obtained through mass media socialization and informal conversations. (Hendrik, 2010).

Some previous studies are relevant and differentiate this research, here are some relevant findings. Research conducted by Irawan in 2019 entitled "Political Participation of Indigenous People of Kampung Naga in the Regional Head Election of Tasikmalaya Regency" focuses on exploring the form of community participation in the regional head elections as well as the nature of that participation. The method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative analysis, which involves data collection through interviews, observation, and document analysis. The data analysis process includes identification, reduction, and drawing conclusions from the data obtained. The findings of this study reveal that community participation in regional head elections can be categorized as conventional participation, and the nature of participation shown by informants tends to lead to autonomous participation, which is independent participation without mobilization. Furthermore, research conducted by Sari in 2020 entitled "Political Participation of Novice Voters in the 2017 Bombana Regency Regional Head Election in Taubonto Village" aims to understand the form of political participation of novice voters in the regional head general election as well as the factors that hinder such participation. Data collection was conducted through interviews and documentation. The

findings revealed that the participation of novice voters includes several aspects, such as voting, discussing politics, participating in campaigns, and joining interest groups. On the other hand, factors that inhibit participation include daily busyness, a sense of inability, and family prohibitions regarding the distance traveled to participate in campaign activities. Furthermore, research conducted by Cahyaningsih in 2019 entitled “Penetration of Information Technology in the 2018 Simultaneous Regional Head Elections” focuses on the extent to which the penetration of information technology in the stages of regional head elections can meet public demands for quality and accountable implementation. The research method of assessing the utilization of information technology in regional head elections is carried out through three levels: *tools*, *enablers*, and *transformers*. The SITUNG application still acts as a tool (*tools*), while SIDALIH has reached the *enabler* level, helping to improve the process of updating data and verifying voters. However, to reach the *transformer* level, technology must be able to fundamentally change the conduct of elections to be more inclusive, transparent and participatory. Despite progress, more electoral technology development is still needed to improve effectiveness and accountability.

The primary distinction between this study and previous research lies in its focus. While earlier studies have frequently explored political participation, they have not specifically examined its connection to the effectiveness of regional head elections. This study addresses that gap by analyzing the relationship between political participation and the success of regional elections, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it emphasizes the crucial role of information systems in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections amid physical restrictions, demonstrating how these two factors political participation and information systems mutually influence the outcome of local elections. Unlike prior research, which primarily sought to understand the forms of political participation and the factors hindering it, this study focuses on evaluating how information systems impact the effectiveness of regional elections.

This study diverges from earlier work on the use of information systems and technology in elections. While prior research focused on the implementation of SMS gateways to enhance oversight functions and increase the penetration of information technology to meet public demands, this research takes a broader approach. It aims to analyze the overall influence of information systems on the effectiveness of regional elections without limiting itself to specific technologies like SMS gateways. This study also differs in several other ways. First, it offers new insights by being conducted in South Tangerang City, a location not previously studied in this context. Second, while earlier research occurred in normal conditions, this study examines the unique challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the research method also sets it apart, as this study uses a mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data, whereas previous studies tended to rely on interviews, observations, and secondary data. Through this approach, the study seeks to understand how information systems and political participation contribute to the success of elections during the pandemic, particularly in South Tangerang City.

Using a causal relationship model, researchers have developed the following theoretical hypotheses. First, the effectiveness of regional head elections during the Covid-19 pandemic is influenced by information systems, which are shaped by factors such as human resources, technology, and relationship networks. Additionally, community political participation's impact on the effectiveness of these elections is affected by social and economic status, social conditions, parents' political affiliations, organizational experience, political awareness, trust in the government, and various factors that promote participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of regional head elections is a crucial aspect of democratic governance, ensuring public representation and legitimacy in policymaking. The effectiveness of elections depends on various factors, including the role of information systems and the level of political participation among the public. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these factors became even more critical due to health risks, movement restrictions, and the need for digital transformation in electoral processes. Information systems play a pivotal role in modern electoral processes by enhancing transparency, accessibility, and efficiency. The adoption of e-voting, biometric verification, and digital voter registration has significantly improved election integrity and reduced fraud. Online platforms and mobile applications have facilitated voter education and information dissemination, ensuring better-informed decision-making among voters.

However, concerns regarding cybersecurity threats and digital literacy remain challenges that need to be addressed.

Political participation is a fundamental element of a democratic election, categorized into conventional forms such as voting and campaign involvement, and non-conventional forms including protests and digital activism. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital participation, such as social media engagement and online debates, has replaced traditional campaign methods, ensuring continued voter engagement despite physical restrictions. Nonetheless, disparities in internet access and political apathy pose challenges to achieving high voter turnout. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced unprecedented challenges to electoral management. Many countries postponed elections, while others adapted by implementing health protocols, mail-in ballots, and online voting systems. The effectiveness of these adaptations varied, with some regions experiencing delays, misinformation, and logistical issues. Nevertheless, the integration of technology and proactive public engagement strategies have proven to be essential in mitigating these challenges.

The effectiveness of regional head elections during the COVID-19 pandemic has been significantly influenced by information systems and public political participation. While technological advancements have improved accessibility and transparency, issues such as cybersecurity risks and digital divides remain pertinent. Similarly, increased digital political participation has facilitated electoral engagement, yet disparities in access and political interest require further attention. Future research should explore ways to enhance digital literacy and security measures to ensure more inclusive and credible electoral processes.

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative method. The focus population consists of human resources involved in organizing regional head elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula at a 95% confidence level, following the guidelines of Newman (2006). As a result of applying the Slovin formula, a sample of 402 respondents was drawn from a total population of 231,433 individuals.

Operational Information System variables (Indrajit, 2004) include the dimensions of human resources, technology, and relationships. Furthermore, the Community Political Participation variable (Hendrik, 2010) includes the dimensions of social and economic status, situation, political affiliation of parents, organizational experience, political awareness, trust in the government, and stimulation of participation. Finally, the variable Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head Elections in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Tilly, 2007) which includes *breadth*, *eqyuality*, *protection*, and *mutuallity binding consultation*.

This research data collection used a questionnaire with 45 indicators consisting of 12 indicators of information system variables, 21 indicators of political participation variables, 12 indicators of the effectiveness of the implementation of the covid-19 era regional head elections. Quantitative analysis in this study uses the LISREL *Structural Equation Model* (SEM).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the questionnaire distribution, the characteristics of the respondents are described as follows. Demographic analysis of the respondents revealed some important findings. First, in terms of age, the under 30 years group dominates with 31%, followed by the 30-40 years age group (29%), over 50 years (22%), and 41-50 years (18%), indicating the majority of respondents are young individuals. Secondly, there is a gender disparity among respondents, with men making up 64% and women 36%, indicating a difference in participation between the two genders. Third, in terms of formal education, respondents with high school education accounted for 46%, followed by bachelor's degree (S1) (45%), baccalaureate degree (D1-D3) (6%), junior high school (SMP) (2%), and master's degree (S2) (1%). This distribution of education shows that the majority of respondents have a middle to higher education background, which may influence their participation in elections. Fourth, regarding the respondents' workplace or institution, the majority were individuals not affiliated with any specific organization, accounting for 83%. This was followed by 11% who served as Voting Committee members (PPS), 3% from the Regional Election Supervisory Agency, 2% from the Regional Election Commission, and 1% who worked at the District Election Committee. Fifth, in terms of position / function, respondents who are voters dominate, namely 99%, followed by those who work at the Regional Election

Supervisory Agency as much as 1%, and those who work at the Regional General Election Commission as much as 0%. Finally, in terms of income, respondents who dominate are those with incomes above Rp2,500,000 to Rp5,000,000 as much as 42%, followed by respondents with incomes less than Rp2,500,000 as much as 41%, above Rp5,000,000 to Rp7,500,000 as much as 6%, above Rp12,500,000 to Rp15,000,000 as much as 6%, above Rp7,500,000 to Rp10,000,000 as much as 3%, and above Rp10,000,000 to Rp12,500,000 as much as 2%.

Recapitulation of Overall Model Fit Test Results

Based on the data processed with SEM LISREL, the analysis of the overall model assessing the impact of information systems and public political participation on the effectiveness of regional head elections during the Covid-19 pandemic indicates that the model fits well. The three absolute, incremental, and parsimonious measurement models have a total of 17 Goodness of Fit (GoF) measures. From the results, there are 10 measures that show a good level of fit and 7 measures of marginal fit. Thus, since the fit model fit measure is higher than the marginal fit measure, it can be concluded that the overall model fit (Goodness of Fit) is in a good category, namely Good Fit (Hair et al. in Wijanto, 2008).

Structural Model Testing Results and Hypothesis Testing

The analysis of the structural model shows that both the information system and public political participation have a simultaneous impact on the effectiveness of regional head elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. The values of the model are presented in the path coefficient estimation table to obtain relevant measurement results for the structural equation. The following is the table of results:

Table 1. Estimated *Path* Coefficient and Significance of the Effect of Information Systems and Community Political Participation on the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head Elections in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era.
on the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head General Elections
in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic

StruCTURE	Path	T-Value	Cut-off Value	Decision	R-Square
The Effect of Information Systems (X1) on the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head General Elections in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Y)	0,07	0,79	1,96	Insignificant	0,47
The Effect of Community Political Participation (X2) on the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head General Elections in the Covid Pandemic Era-19 (Y)	0,66	6,79	1,96	Significant	

Source: Lisrel output processed by researchers

Table 1 indicates that the simultaneous testing of structural equations reveals a significant impact of the information system and public political participation on the effectiveness of regional head election implementation during the COVID-19 era, with a determinant value (R-Square) of 0.47. This means that any increase in the two variables contributes 47% to the increase in election effectiveness. The combination of information systems and public political participation can explain almost half of the variation in electoral effectiveness. The model shows a fairly high level of determination, with 53% of the variation in effectiveness attributable to other unexamined factors. This finding underscores the importance of both variables as key elements in improving the effectiveness of local elections during the pandemic. Future research could explore and analyze additional factors that may contribute to election effectiveness, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding in the context of elections in times of crisis.

THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND PUBLIC
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
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The measurement analysis and hypothesis testing regarding the impact of information systems and political participation on the effectiveness of regional head elections during the COVID-19 pandemic reveal that the highest coefficient of determination (R-Square) is 47% when using simultaneous techniques. The structural analysis and path coefficients indicate that both exogenous latent variables influence the endogenous latent variables. The t-value for the information system is 0.79, while public political participation has a t-value of 6.79. With a 95% confidence level and a cutoff value of 1.96, the information system demonstrates a positive but insignificant effect on election effectiveness, leading to the conclusion that the hypothesis regarding the influence of the information system is "Not Accepted". In contrast, public political participation is shown to have a positive and significant effect, so the hypothesis is "Accepted." This finding confirms that public political participation is more influential in improving election effectiveness in the pandemic era.

This influence is also evident from the measurement of the path coefficient, where the information system variable has a value of 0.07, while community political participation has a value of 0.66. These two path coefficients contribute to the determinant (R-Square) of the effectiveness of the implementation of regional head elections during COVID-19 by 47%. Thus, although there is a relationship between the two variables, the contribution of information systems to election effectiveness appears less strong than that of community political participation. Increasing these two variables together can be expected to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of regional head elections during the pandemic resulting in a significant causal relationship of 47%.

Furthermore, to determine the contribution of the most dominant dimensions, simultaneous measurements are used on exogenous latent variables and endogenous latents presented in the following table:

Tabel 2. Kontribusi Dimensi-Dimensi Dalam Pengaruh Variabel Laten Eksogen
Terhadap Variabel Laten Endogen

Dimention/Factor	Loading	t-value	cut-off value	Dominant
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Information System				
Human Resources (X1.1)	0,49	5,92	1,96	III
Technology (X1.2)	0,71	8,36	1,96	II
Relationship (X1.3)	0,77	9,39	1,96	I
Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat				
Social and Economic Status (X2.1)	0,22	2,84	1,96	V
Situation (X2.2)	0,58	6,41	1,96	II
Political Affiliation of Parents (X2.3)	0,84	9,24	1,96	I
Organizational Experience (X2.4)	0,58	6,56	1,96	II
Political Awareness (X2.5)	0,46	5,40	1,96	IV
Trust in Government (X2.6)	0,55	6,39	1,96	III
Stimulation of Participation X2.7)	0,19	2,25	1,96	VI
Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head General Elections in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic				
Breadth (Y.1)	0,88	0,00	1,96	I
Equality (Y.2)	0,37	3,71	1,96	IV
Protection (Y.3)	0,66	4,89	1,96	II
Mutuality Binding Consultation (Y.4)	0,41	4.15	1,96	III

Source: Lisrel output from the analysis conducted by the researcher.

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the contribution of the most dominant dimensions By applying

simultaneous measurement to exogenous and endogenous latent variables, the most dominant dimension is the one that shows the highest path coefficient value on the variable concerned. The results of the most dominant dimensions can be seen in the following table:

Table 3. Recapitulation of the Most Dominant Dimensions
The Effect of Exogenous Latent Variables on Endogenous Latent Variables.

No.	Variable	Dimention	Loading Factor
1.	Information System	Relation (X1.3)	0,77
2.	Community Political Participation	Parents' Political Affiliation (X2.3)	0,84
3.	Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head General Elections in the Covid-19 Era	Breadth (Y.1)	0,88

Source: Lisrel output processed by researchers

According to Table 3, the Breadth dimension of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Pandemic Era Regional Head General Election variable has the highest loading factor, measuring at 0.88. In contrast, the relationship dimension within the information system variable has a loading factor of 0.77, while the parent political affiliation dimension in the community political participation variable has a loading factor of 0.84.

Discussion

Information Systems in the Effectiveness of Implementing Regional Head General Elections in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The results of measuring the path coefficient for the Information System variable with the Regional Head Election Implementation Effectiveness variable during the Covid-19 period obtained a value of 0.07, indicating that the relationship is not significant, or more extreme it can be said to be very insignificant, because the amount of influence is only 7%. Whereas during the Covid-19 pandemic era, many government and non-government activities used *online* technology to control the Covid-19 disease outbreak. One of the important activities carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic is the regional head elections, which should take place effectively. However, research shows that the implementation is very ineffective. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of budget use for political parties and legislative candidates, the implementation of a monitoring information system is very important. This system can help better monitor and manage budgets, increase transparency and accountability of fund spending, and optimize campaign strategies. By providing accurate and easily accessible information, the implementation of this information system is expected to encourage voter participation and overall improve the quality of regional head elections during the pandemic (Isanto et al., 2020). Pandemic is one of the factors that put pressure on the global democracy index is the argument of this study. In addition, there is an abuse of power by incumbents who seek to favor themselves as candidates in the contestation, including the politicization of social situations due to COVID-19 (Muhammad Habibi, 2021).

The results of more in-depth research that the implementation of regional head elections using information systems has the goal of transparency is one of the principles that must be met to organize elections with integrity, including the nomination process, delivery of information to voters, voting, and supervision of regional head elections. The development of web-based election information systems is expected to increase effectiveness and efficiency without requiring physical presence on site (Rembungan et al., 2021). Research results indicate that existing information systems have not been able to provide sufficient transparency. Some of the factors that influence this include inadequate system infrastructure, unwillingness of election participants to complete data and documents, unclear underlying legal aspects,

low participation from organizers, and lack of system socialization to voters. These conditions indicate a lack of accountability and legal compliance with the principle of transparency, which has an impact on candidacy information. As a result, the information system has not succeeded in improving electoral integrity (Femiliona, 2021).

Information systems often lead to conflicts in the cyber realm, which are triggered by various factors, including the weak system of organizing elections and the ambitions of candidates who use various means to win elections are the findings of this study. Conflict resolution can be done through technical and policy measures applied in the cyber domain, as well as to the parties involved, thereby increasing public trust in information systems. In addition, there are recommendations regarding measures to reduce conflict in the cyber domain related to the process of determining general election recapitulation results (Wulolo & Renmaur, 2020). Other problems arise due to the population information system that has not functioned optimally. The phenomenon of using multiple identity cards also played a role in increasing the number of voters who had more than one valid voting card, as well as causing slow data collection, delayed vote counting, delays in sending results, and vote-buying practices. These problems have a negative impact on the quality of elections and democracy. As a solution, one step that can be implemented is to hold online elections (Nani, 2015). Voters feel assured that they can cast their votes from any location without being restricted by requirements to be present at a specific site. Voters feel assured that they can cast their votes from any location without being restricted by requirements to be present at a specific site. Meanwhile, related to security and privacy, voters expect an electoral system that is protected from threats from both inside and outside, while still respecting privacy values (Setiawan, 2017). The research findings show that as trust in news media and politics decreases, trust in online disinformation increases. Empirical evidence is presented on the phenomenon of disinformation emerging against established information systems, aiming to undermine democracy (Zimmermann & Kohring, 2020).

Complex information operations in the digital age pose significant attribution challenges for targeted states, resulting in unprecedented uncertainty regarding the nature and extent of threats. The potential for cyber-enabled information warfare capabilities arises primarily from the transformation of the contemporary democratic information landscape through new media platforms, rather than from the cyber-conflict capabilities of state actors. In this context, the gradual enhancement of information warfare capabilities results from cyber operations, enabling aggressive governments to access new sources of private information, distract from critical elements of their information warfare strategies, weaken domestic counter-intelligence efforts, and subtly coerce key public figures (Whyte, 2020). Findings show the emergence of significant advances, such as the increasing role of traditional media, particularly television, and the fact that people previously alienated from information are now reconnecting with the news. As a result, inequality in news consumption among citizens has decreased, albeit partially. This creates potential benefits for democracy in terms of equality and access to public issues (Casero-Ripollés, 2020). Challenges in democratic governance can be tackled using information system solutions such as artificial intelligence, systems integration, and blockchain technology. When applied in a critical, transparent, and accountable way, these technologies can improve public service delivery and foster citizen trust and political participation (Anastasiadou et al., 2021).

The effectiveness of democratic safeguards relies on the variety of interests present within a society. Unlike other democratic protections, federalism is founded on a foundation of diversity; its framework accommodates the distinctions between national and state interests, even among members of the same political party. While this diversity can pose challenges to democracy, as evidenced by the painful history of racially discriminatory politics in the United States, it can also act as a valuable source of interests and a means of information sharing that helps protect democracy by addressing potential cross-sectoral divisions (Bednar, 2021).

Community Political Participation in the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Regional Head General Elections in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The measurement of the path coefficient between the Community Political Participation variable and the Regional Head General Election Performance variable during the Covid-19 pandemic yielded a value of

0.66, indicating a significant relationship. The implementation of regional head elections during the pandemic cannot be separated from the role of community political participation. The research findings indicate that community political participation in the 2018 Simultaneous Regional Elections was low, as demonstrated by the significant number of citizens who did not exercise their right to vote. This situation is largely due to a lack of understanding and awareness among the public regarding the importance of participating in regional head elections, posing a significant challenge to democracy in Indonesia, with many individuals unaware of the value of their vote. Barriers such as social and economic status make groups with low economic backgrounds feel they have limited access. However, support from parents' political affiliation and experience in organizations can increase political participation. By overcoming barriers and utilizing existing support, public participation is expected to increase, which in turn will improve the quality of elections and the legitimacy of government, as well as ensure that people's voices are heard in decision-making (Arif & Mulyana, 2020).

Research in Kota Lama Village revealed that 54% of the community falls into the category of the subjective type, 32% as participants, and 14% belong to the parochial type in political culture. In addition, 88% of the community has an autonomous type of political participation, while 12% are the mobilized type. Despite the variation in political culture and participation, no significant relationship was found between the two. This finding suggests that the political culture in the village does not directly influence the level of political participation, indicating the need for a deeper understanding of the factors that influence political participation at the local level (Yusnedi & Utami, 2019).

There is an increase in public political participation in the regional head elections in Surabaya in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic compared to the previous year (Sari & Farid, 2021). The formulation of Law Number 6 of 2020 does not consider the challenges of conducting regional elections under pandemic conditions, such as those brought about by the current Covid-19 crisis. Thus, policy makers need to revise the law by involving interested parties (Biroroh, 2021).

The decline in participation in regional head elections according to the results of the study was influenced by a low level of political awareness, lack of trust from the community, and lack of anticipation of potential conflicts between supporters of candidates and the Covid-19 Pandemic period as well as the determination of the implementation of inappropriate regional head elections (Meyliana & Erowati, 2020). In addition, social, economic, geographical, administrative, and community apathy factors also affect the level of political participation in the implementation of regional head elections (Risal & Pratiwi, 2019).

Another interesting result of the study shows that the implementation of regional head elections has not achieved freedom and justice as a whole, and there are still practices of money politics and violations of health protocols. The implementation of regional head elections has led to positive outcomes, particularly in enhancing community engagement in voting. Thus, it can be concluded that the quality of these elections remains relatively low and does not fully adhere to the principles of quality and integrity (Hasanuddin et al., 2021). This research also shows that public political participation in regional head elections between 2015 and 2020 has increased by 14.66%. This rise was motivated by a heightened awareness of the importance of active participation stemming from past hardships. In addition, socialization through mass media is very important to foster a political culture among the community. This shows the importance of guidance and supervision of political parties as a foundation in carrying out their functions in society (Mulyana & Tambunan, 2021).

The existence of a positive relationship between political trust and satisfaction with democracy, especially regarding political participation, is evident from the psychological findings in this study. When people have high levels of trust and satisfaction with the democratic process, their political engagement tends to increase. However, the impact of satisfaction with democracy on political participation is not direct, but rather influenced by the level of political trust. This suggests that political trust plays an important role as a link between satisfaction with democracy and political participation (Hasbi Wahyudi et al., 2013). The connection between satisfaction with democracy and political participation is indirect; rather, the influence of satisfaction is facilitated by political trust. This means that political trust serves as a bridge that connects satisfaction with democracy with political participation. In this context, individuals who are satisfied with democracy will have more trust in the political system, and this trust will motivate them to participate

actively. Political trust is not only important in strengthening civic engagement, but also plays a vital role in creating a healthy democratic environment. This research emphasizes the need for efforts to increase political trust among the public, so as to encourage greater participation and result in a stronger democracy that is more responsive to public needs.

Based on the problems described, it implies that the birth of politicians who are involved in corrupt practices and obstruct the conscience of the community in providing their political participation can result in the contamination of the democratic electoral process (Nuna & Moonti, 2019). This research shows that political accountability, rooted in public awareness and participation, has significant potential to interact with government and democratic institutions. Political accountability is not just a demand for transparency on the part of the government, but also reflects the capacity of society to hold public officials accountable for their actions and decisions. With increased political awareness, people become more proactive in engaging in political and governance processes, thus encouraging a more constructive relationship between citizens and state institutions (Iskandar, 2017). Strengthening political accountability requires increased public oversight that focuses on people's needs, values and opportunities. This oversight can be done through participatory actions, where people play an active role in political institutional structures, such as discussion forums, public consultations, and feedback mechanisms. This participation not only improves the quality of government decisions, but also makes policies more responsive to people's interests. Thus, political accountability and effective public oversight can create a transparent, responsive and accountable government.

Political participation in a democratic country reflects the sovereignty of the people and people's involvement in elections. A high level of participation indicates that people actively understand and engage in government affairs, while low participation reflects a lack of interest in political issues. To increase participation, collaboration between the government, political parties and civil society organizations is needed in organizing political education and extension campaigns. The low level of political participation can be seen in the phenomenon of white groups (golput) in general elections. From a democratic point of view, this abstention certainly has a negative impact on the development of the quality of democracy (Soebagio, 2009).

Sovereign people are a reflection of modern democracy where the election of leaders is carried out directly, which can be seen from the level of community participation in regional head elections. Increasing this participation requires efforts from candidates and election organizers to reach out to voters and convey the importance of voting rights. The level of public participation is an indicator of the success of democracy, because their involvement shows the quality and capacity in government decision-making and supports the legitimacy of elected leaders (Zarkasi & Rizal, 2020).

The relationship between scientific inquiry and democratic governance is intricate, revealing a tension between theoretical ideals and practical realities. In principle, there should be no barriers to pursuing science within a democratic framework; however, in practice, democratic priorities often guide scientific efforts toward practical applications, leading to three significant tensions: populist, plutocratic, and exclusivity. Populist tension emerges when public opinion influences scientific findings, which can undermine the integrity of scientific research. Plutocratic tension reflects the influence of wealth in shaping research priorities, favoring the interests of the affluent over broader societal needs. Exclusivity tension stems from the rationality that underpins both scientific inquiry and liberal democracy, which can alienate those lacking formal scientific education and diminish public engagement with science. Rejecting scientific rationality can result in exclusion from political discourse, undermining political rights. The professionalization of science and the concept of a 'republic of science' can foster perceptions of elitism and detachment from the public. These exclusionary tensions contribute to ongoing conflicts between science and democracy, as highlighted by Guston (1993). Addressing these tensions is crucial for promoting a more inclusive and collaborative relationship between science and democratic governance.

The recapitulation of the results of the *loading factors* value of the Information System variable shows that the **Relationship dimension (0.77)** and the Parental Political **Affiliation** dimension of the Community Political Participation variable (**0.84**) are the most dominant factors (weighted) in the process of forming an influence on the Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Covid-19 Pandemic Era Regional Head General

Elections in the *Breadth* dimension of 0.88. Thus, the Relationship dimension and the Parental Political Affiliation dimension are a series of decisive factors in supporting the Information System process and effective Community Political Participation and are one of the factors that contribute to determining the Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Covid-19 Pandemic Era Regional Head General Elections.

The relationship factor in this study includes several indicators, namely the relationship between the function of the information system, its role in decision making, policy implementation, and interaction with other parties. These indicators emphasize the importance of information systems in supporting communication, data-based decision-making, effective policy implementation, and establishing transparent relationships between the government and the community. On the other hand, the parents' political affiliation factor consists of political parties, decision-making, and decision implementation, which shows how family political values can influence children's political behavior. In addition, the effectiveness factor of local elections during the Covid-19 pandemic includes the breadth dimension, which includes extensive rights, political inclusion, and state jurisdiction. Extensive rights guarantee people's political participation, political inclusion emphasizes the importance of participation of all groups, and state jurisdiction reflects the government's responsibility in organizing fair and transparent elections. Taken together, these factors are interconnected and contribute to the effective conduct of elections in the modern era. The influence of these dominant dimensions can be conceptualized as "Political affiliation of parents for democracy in the era of the Covid-19 Pandemic". Thus, the concept is that the extent of democracy is largely determined by the political affiliation of parents. This can also be used as a strategy in the implementation of regional head elections in the Covid-19 Pandemic era. The political affiliation of parents in these various dimensions reflects the tension between the state's commitment to upholding cultural diversity as a democratic good and the limits of social and legal pluralism. (Siddiqui, 2020).

Perceptions of democracy significantly shape evaluations of government performance, and the impact of that performance on political trust varies based on these perceptions. Research indicates that improved government social performance boosts political trust, especially among those who consider elections a vital aspect of democracy. This positive effect diminishes for individuals who prioritize political rights as essential to democracy. For those who emphasize economic security, poor government political performance negatively affects their political trust (Zhai, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a reconfiguration of democratic spaces, leading to a reduction and overlap in participatory opportunities. There is a need for participatory interventions to address vulnerabilities, such as accountability. To fully understand how COVID-19 affects democracy, a systemic approach is essential to identify pressure points that both reinforce democratic values and participation while addressing the public health challenges posed by the pandemic (Parry et al., 2020).

Democracy and trust share a crucial yet paradoxical relationship. Democracy depends on the trust among citizens, enabling them to rely on one another. When citizens trust their government, they can create the conditions necessary for a good life collectively. However, democratic institutions are built on a foundation of skepticism, particularly toward those in power. Therefore, trust is essential both from a normative perspective and for the functional needs of a democratic political system (Warren, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the quantitative analysis in this study show that there is no significant influence between information systems and the effectiveness of the implementation of regional head elections amid the Covid-19 pandemic, with a T-value of 0.79, which is below the minimum threshold of 1.96. The rejection of the first hypothesis suggests that the connection between information systems and the effectiveness of elections during the pandemic is not significant, implying that information systems are seen as a less impactful factor. In contrast, this study found a positive and significant relationship between public political participation and the effectiveness of local elections, indicated by a T-value of 6.79, which exceeds the 1.96 threshold. This supports the second hypothesis which is accepted, indicating that there is a substantial causal relationship between community political participation and the effectiveness of regional head elections in the Covid-19 pandemic era. Thus, community political participation can be considered as a key factor that determines the effectiveness of local elections in this context.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS SECTION

Conceptualization - A.S.Y; *Methodology* – A.M; *Software* – K; *Validation* – A.S.Y.; *Formal Analysis* – K.; *Investigation* – A.M; *Resources* – A.S.Y; *Data Curation* – K.; *Writing – Original Draft Preparation* – A.S.Y, A.M.; *Writing – Review & Editing* – A.S.Y, K; *Visualization* – A.M.; *Supervision* – A.S.Y.; *Project Administration* – K; *Funding Acquisition* – A.M, A.S.Y.

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