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DESCRIPTIVE OF QUANTITATIVE DATA | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Image of the General Elections Commission (KPU) in the 2024 Presidential Election

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Abstract: Throughout the organization of presidential elections in Indonesia, the General Elections Commission (KPU) has often been in the public spotlight. In this context, the image of the KPU, which consists of trust, reality, cooperation, and awareness, serves as the indicators used by the public to evaluate the institution. This research employs a qualitative methodology and is based on a literature review of previous studies and surveys conducted by several independent organizations. Surveys by Kompas Research and Development (Litbang Kompas) and Databoks support this assessment. The results show that public trust in the KPU has declined due to political dispute issues, with a score of 277. However, according to the Litbang Kompas survey on the reality indicator, the public perceives the KPU's image positively, with a score of 62%. On the cooperation indicator, public political participation in the presidential election continues to increase. Regarding the awareness aspect, the lack of public political knowledge is a critical point in Indonesian politics. Therefore, as the institution responsible for organizing elections, the KPU needs to continuously improve its performance and image.

Keywords: Image, KPU, Presidential Election.

1. INTRODUCTION

The presidential election, often referred to as "pilpres," idealizes active public participation in electing and determining a leader who is trusted to represent their aspirations and realize their goals. In Indonesia, the president was historically elected and appointed by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and held accountable for their policies to the MPR, thus being referred to as the "mandataris MPR." Over time, in 2004, the presidential election was held directly, as a result of the 2002 amendment to the 1945 Constitution. This allowed for direct elections, where the president is elected by the people. Direct presidential elections were one of the mandates of the reform era, as democratization in Indonesia sought direct public participation in choosing their leader.

The Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), one of the election monitoring institutions, revealed that the implementation of direct presidential elections organized by the General Elections Commission (KPU) has been far from perfect. These findings can be observed from the distribution of ballots or logistics, which often experience issues in small towns at the far ends of Indonesia due to difficult access to these areas. Other problems include the readiness of human resources (HR) in KPPS (Voting Organizing Groups), who often lack understanding of the rules and procedures for voting and vote counting. Another critical issue is the problem with the Final Voter List (DPT), which often does not match the population data. This should be updated through a matching and research process, known as "coklit," but this issue continues to recur.

Understanding the concept of transparency in the organization of presidential elections seems difficult, especially within a procedural democracy system that prioritizes the majority's opinion over the actual facts (Febry Chrisdanty 2015). This is evident in every dispute over presidential election

issues brought before the Constitutional Court (MK) since 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, and 2024, where the court has consistently ruled in favor of the presidential election winner. Although the plaintiff presents evidence of irregularities, these are deemed insignificant as they do not drastically change the percentage of the vote. As a result, the losing party's claims are often rejected by the MK. Democracy tends to treat the truth as something uncertain.

Furthermore, in the 2024 presidential election, the KPU faced several issues, including ethical violations and complaints filed with the Election Organizers' Honorary Council (DKPP). The most controversial case involved the implementation of the Constitutional Court's Decision No. 90/PUU-XXI/2023 concerning the nomination of presidential candidates for the 2024 election, which was applied without going through the proper legislative process and was immediately enforced. As a result, KPU Chairman Hasyim Asy'ari was summoned by the DKPP and received a stern warning for ethical violations.

The series of events tarnishing the KPU's image can be seen as undermining the principle of direct, general, free, and secret elections (commonly known as "luber"), as well as fair and just elections ("jurdil"). Unfortunately, the KPU seems unwilling to improve and enhance its image in the eyes of the public or voters. For example, repeated stern warnings to KPU Chairman Hasyim Asy'ari by the DKPP (Saptohutomo 2024). Recently, the Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem) reacted to the DKPP's decision to dismiss Hasyim Asy'ari, Chairman of the KPU. Hasyim was found guilty of abusing his position and power in a case involving a female member of the Overseas Election Commission (PPLN) in The Hague, Netherlands, due to unethical behavior. The dismissal of Hasyim Asy'ari had a significant negative impact on public perception of the KPU (Perludem 2024).

Nevertheless, as an independent state institution, the KPU should evaluate its image in the eyes of the public. By reflecting on the various issues outlined above, the research title "The Image of The General Elections Commission in the 2024 Presidential Election" has been chosen.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method. Citing Gunawan (2015), the qualitative method aims to help researchers understand and interpret events within a specific context related to human behavior interaction (Maryadi 2020). The type of research is descriptive, and descriptive research illustrates the reality that occurs without explaining the relationship between variables (Sari and Ali 2021). This research is also supported by previous research journals and observations from several research data sources.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

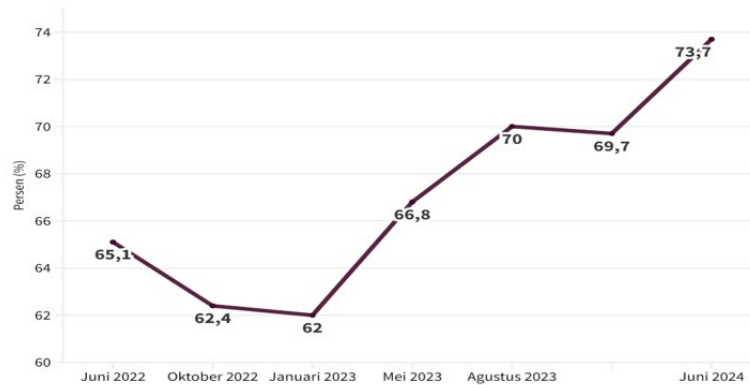
3.1. General Overview

Based on the results of a survey by Litbang Kompas, the image of the KPU (General Elections Commission) in the public eye tended to strengthen after the 2024 elections. In June 2024, 74% of respondents expressed a positive view of the KPU. This value increased by 4 points compared to the period before the 2024 elections. In the December 2023 survey, 69.7% of respondents rated the KPU's image as good. Looking at this trend, the KPU's image has shown an upward trajectory from June 2022 to June 2024. However, from October 2022 to January 2023, the rating decreased sequentially to 62%.

Litbang Kompas stated that the trend of positive appreciation for the election organizers post-2024 elections indicater growing public trust. Litbang Kompas considers this positive public image

as a strong social asset for the 2024 Regional Elections (Pilkada), which will be held on November 27, 2024. Public trust in the KPU is also evident from KPU data. Political participation in the legislative elections reached 81.42%, and voter turnout in the presidential elections reached 81.78%. Participation levels in the 2024 elections exceeded the KPU's predicted target of 79.5%.

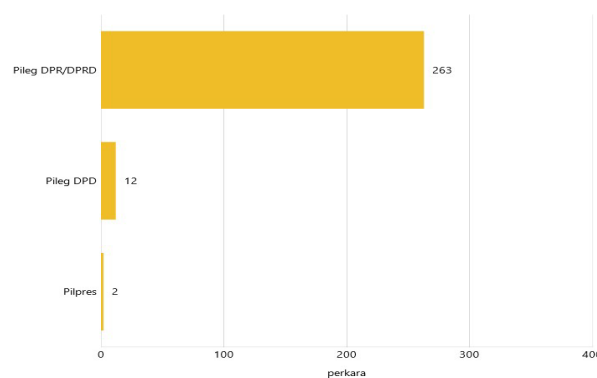
The survey regarding the KPU's image was conducted from May 27 to June 2, 2024, with 1,200 respondents spread across 38 provinces. Meanwhile, the margin of error is $\pm 2.83\%$ at a 95% confidence level, using a simple random sampling method (Ridha Kusuma Perdana 2024).



Source: Litbang Kompas, 2024

Figure 1. Positive Image Trend of the KPU

During the 2024 election period, as shown in Figure 1, there was a high number of disputes over election results, particularly for the legislative elections (DPR/DPRD). This issue is also assumed to have implications for the image of the General Elections Commission (KPU) in the eyes of the public.

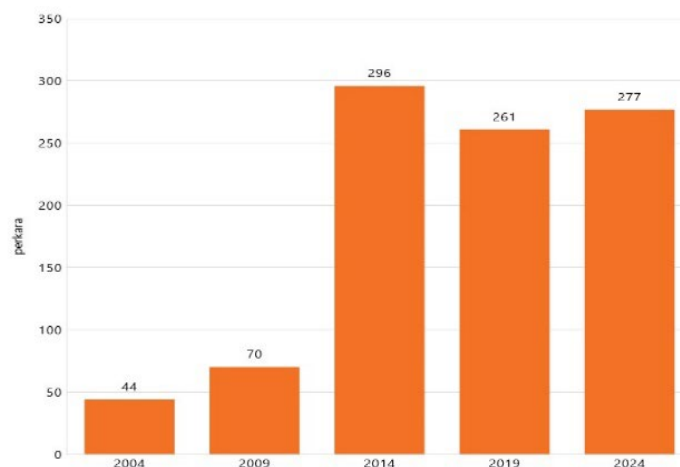


Source: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id>

Figure 2. The Number of Election Disputes in 2024

The number of election disputes in the 2024 elections was higher compared to the 2019 elections, with a total of 261 election disputes. The increase in the number of disputes indicates that the KPU still struggled to properly organize the 2024 elections, as numerous irregularities and systemic fraud emerged, affecting the election results. About 95% or 263 cases this year involved disputes over legislative elections for the DPR/DPRD. Additionally, 4% or 12 cases were related to the DPD legislative elections. Disputes concerning the presidential and vice-presidential election (pilpres) accounted for only about 1% (Adi Ahdiat 2024).

Figure 3 shows that the number of election disputes in 2024 was higher than in the 2019 elections.



Source: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id>

Figure 3. Development of Election Disputes Over the Years

According to records from Perludem, the 2024 election dispute cases include 263 cases for the DPR/DPRD elections, 12 cases for the DPD elections, and 2 cases for the presidential and vice-presidential elections. These figures show that the cumulative number of disputes this year is higher than in the 2019 elections. This increase in cases is evidence that the KPU, as the election organizing body in 2024, has not yet been able to resolve many existing issues, such as irregularities and systemic fraud that have impacted the election results' recapitulation (Adi Ahdiat, 2024).

3.2. Discussion

An image cannot be measured quantitatively or mathematically, but it can be observed through evaluations of an institution's track record, such as how the public perceives it—whether positively or negatively. Soemirat and Ardianto describe image as the way others perceive an institution, figure, organization, or activity (Pepayosa et al. n.d.). Elihu Katz (Soemirat and Ardianto, 2004) explains that every company has not just one image, but several, due to the many different perspectives people have. A company's image comes from its customers, seasonal buyers, residents near the company, competitors, or distributors of its goods and services (Alma 2018). In the end, image formation is influenced by several variables, such as attitudes, opinions, responses, or specific behaviors, related to interactions between institutions and stakeholders—in this case, the KPU with voters and presidential or legislative candidates. Thus, this research is considered significant because it aims to understand the public's perspective of the KPU. Does the public like or dislike the KPU as the election organizing body? Referring to previous research, Khoiruddin Muchtar (2016) found that political image is based on information received directly by the public or through the mass media, providing general and up-to-date information (Muchtar 2016). Putri and Lintang discussed how to create a positive image, stating that public relations officers are the face of an organization, and public, organizational, and media perceptions are the responsibility of the PR team to ensure the organization is respected (Putri and Lintang Muliawati 2023).

Lintang Yunisha Dewi and colleagues conducted research to determine the success of democracy in Indonesia. Their findings showed that political participation in local elections (pilkada) was relatively low. This situation was evidenced by the increasing number of people who did not vote

(known as "golput"), which Lintang considered a representation of public indifference toward political conditions, indicating apathy. The study revealed several factors contributing to the low political participation rate, including low political awareness among voters, limited public knowledge of politics, inadequate socialization by the KPU, low credibility of political candidates, and low public trust in the government or election organizers (Dewi et al. 2022). Rosy Febriani Daud and Slamet Haryadi discussed several aspects related to the election system as follows, First, the best election system is one that provides a dispute resolution mechanism that can restore citizens' rights lost due to administrative negligence and enhance public trust in the election organizers. This ensures the public can trust that the KPU can support democracy and form a legitimate and trustworthy government. Second, election disputes generally fall into two categories: administrative disputes and election result disputes (Daud and Haryadi 2022). Sekar Amalia Putri and Lintang Muliawati explained that the PR department of the KPU in Magelang Regency acts as a communicator, relationship backup management, and a good image maker by publishing activities on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube (Putri and Lintang Muliawati 2023).

According to Shockley and Zalabak, there are four indicators of image (Putri & Lintang Muliawati, 2023):

a. Trust

Trust is formed when one party believes in another, and the latter provides a positive impression and assessment. Referring to Khoiruddin Muchtar's study in 2016, political image related to political parties is based on information received by constituents either directly or through mass media. The information or political messages voters receive are general and up-to-date. Based on this, if we relate it to the results of the Litbang Kompas survey on the KPU after the 2024 presidential election and the high number of disputes-277 cases, according to Databoks-this could affect the public's trust in the KPU as an institution capable of conducting fair and transparent elections.

b. Reality

Reality refers to the image of the KPU as perceived and evaluated by the public based on the institution's actual performance. The image seen or felt by the public can be accounted for and serves as proof of careful and systematic planning. When discussing this reality indicator, we can reflect on the findings of Lintang Yunisha Dewi and colleagues. Putri and Lintang concluded that a positive public relations image is the face of an organization, and public, institutional, and media perceptions are the PR team's responsibility to ensure the organization is respected (Putri & Lintang Muliawati, 2023). Looking at the Litbang Kompas survey results, the measurement of the KPU's image before the voting period showed a significant decline, dropping to 62%. This reflects public doubt about the KPU's credibility and integrity.

c. Cooperation

The KPU has the ability to foster mutually beneficial cooperation between itself as the election organizer and the public by being accountable for its performance and holding elections that are transparent and fair. According to Sekar Amalia Putri and Lintang, the PR department of the KPU in Magelang Regency acts as a communicator, relationship backup management, and a good image maker by publicizing activities on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. The high number of disputes—277 cases—could shake the KPU's integrity as the election organizer. This also raises questions about the KPU's ability to maintain transparency and fairness in the election process, as well as its credibility. If there are numerous disputes, this may influence the public's perception of the KPU's ability to work collaboratively and ensure fair and transparent elections.

d. Awareness

The public has an awareness of the election organizing body and the election results announced by the KPU. Lintang Yunisha Dewi and colleagues conducted research to determine the success of democracy in Indonesia, and the findings showed that political participation in local elections was relatively low. This was evidenced by the increasing number of people who did not vote (golput), which Lintang identified as a representation of public indifference toward political conditions and apathy. The study revealed several factors contributing to the low political participation rate, including low political awareness among voters, limited public knowledge of politics, inadequate socialization by the KPU, low credibility of political candidates, and low public trust in the government or election organizers. Based on the above findings and the Litbang Kompas survey results, which show low public trust in the KPU, this situation can be seen as a reflection of the KPU's poor image.

4. CONCLUSION

The erosion of the KPU's image leading up to the election period highlights voters' distrust in the commission's ability to fulfill its duties effectively. This distrust is exacerbated by the Election Organizers' Honorary Council (DKPP), which issued multiple reprimands, culminating in the dismissal of KPU Chairman Hasyim Asy'ari. Additionally, the reality reflected in the Litbang Kompas survey results during the pre-election period showed a continuous decline in the KPU's image. However, after the election, the KPU's image gradually improved as the commissioners became more aware of the need to enhance their performance and as the public recognized the KPU's efforts to address the existing issues.

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