

Electoral Integrity and Democratic Participation in Indonesia: A Legal Perspective on Election Governance

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ABSTRACT

Electoral integrity and democratic participation are fundamental elements of democratic governance because they influence the legitimacy, accountability, and effectiveness of electoral systems. This study examines the role of electoral integrity and democratic participation in Indonesia through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and doctrinal analysis of Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections and Law Number 10 of 2016 on Regional Head Elections. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, relevant literature published between 2018 and 2024 was systematically reviewed and analyzed through thematic synthesis. The findings indicate that electoral integrity is strengthened by effective legal frameworks, institutional oversight, and accountable election administration, while democratic participation enhances political representation and democratic legitimacy. The study concludes that strengthening electoral governance, public trust, and voter engagement is essential for sustaining democratic development and ensuring credible elections in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Electoral Integrity, Democratic Participation, Election Governance, Electoral Accountability, Voter Engagement, Democratic Legitimacy.*

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : January 12, 2024

Final Revised : March 11, 2024

Accepted : May 17, 2024

Published : June 30, 2024

1. | INTRODUCTION

Elections are widely regarded as the cornerstone of democratic governance because they provide citizens with the opportunity to participate directly in the selection of political leaders and public representatives. Through elections, democratic societies establish mechanisms for political competition, peaceful transfer of power, and public accountability. The quality of elections therefore plays a decisive role in determining the legitimacy of democratic institutions and the credibility of governance systems. In contemporary democracies, attention has increasingly shifted beyond the mere occurrence of elections toward broader concerns regarding electoral integrity, fairness, inclusiveness, and public trust in electoral processes.

The concept of electoral integrity has emerged as a central theme in democratic governance studies. Electoral integrity refers to the extent to which elections are conducted according to democratic principles, legal standards, and internationally recognized norms of fairness. James, Garnett, Loeber, and Van Ham (2019) argue that electoral integrity depends significantly on the effectiveness of electoral management institutions, regulatory frameworks, and administrative processes. Similarly, Judge and Korhani (2020) emphasize that electoral integrity requires protection against manipulation, disinformation, and unequal access to political information. These perspectives suggest that democratic elections must not only be legally organized but also perceived as fair, transparent, and trustworthy by citizens.

Democratic participation represents another fundamental dimension of electoral democracy. Elections provide a mechanism through which citizens exercise political rights and influence public decision-making. High levels of voter participation are often interpreted as indicators of democratic legitimacy and political inclusion. Lindgren, Oskarsson, and Persson (2019) argue that participation strengthens democratic equality by enabling broader representation of societal interests. Likewise, Djuyandi and Herdiansah (2018) demonstrate that citizen engagement, particularly among younger voters, contributes to the vitality of democratic processes and strengthens democratic institutions. These findings indicate that democratic participation serves as both a democratic right and a measure of democratic effectiveness.

The relationship between electoral integrity and democratic participation is particularly important because public confidence in elections significantly influences citizen engagement. Citizens are more likely to participate in elections when they perceive electoral processes as fair, transparent, and accountable. Conversely, concerns regarding electoral misconduct, political manipulation, or institutional bias may reduce public trust and weaken democratic legitimacy. Grant, Flores, Pedersen, Sherman, and Van Boven (2021) argue that perceptions of electoral legitimacy play a significant role in shaping public acceptance of election outcomes. Similarly, Garbiras-Díaz and Montenegro (2022) emphasize that citizen oversight mechanisms can strengthen electoral integrity by increasing accountability within electoral processes. These

findings suggest that electoral integrity and democratic participation are mutually reinforcing components of democratic governance.

In Indonesia, democratic reforms following the Reformasi era have transformed the country's electoral system and expanded opportunities for political participation. Electoral reforms have sought to strengthen democratic institutions, improve election administration, and enhance public representation at both national and local levels. One of the most significant legal developments was the enactment of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which consolidated regulations governing presidential elections, legislative elections, and election administration. The law establishes legal principles governing electoral management, electoral supervision, political party participation, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

The implementation of Law Number 7 of 2017 has significantly influenced Indonesia's electoral governance framework. Sarah and Suatmiati (2022) explain that the legislation provides a comprehensive legal basis for election administration while supporting democratic principles within electoral processes. Likewise, Rannie (2020) highlights the evolution of Indonesia's electoral system and emphasizes the importance of legal reforms in improving democratic governance. Despite these developments, challenges remain regarding electoral administration, legal certainty, political competition, and institutional effectiveness. These issues demonstrate the continuing importance of evaluating the effectiveness of electoral governance frameworks.

At the local level, democratic participation is further supported through direct regional head elections governed by Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections (Pilkada). The legislation regulates the election of governors, regents, and mayors while promoting citizen involvement in local governance. Direct regional elections have become an important mechanism for strengthening democratic decentralization and enhancing political accountability within local government structures. Hindiawati (2019) argues that the legal framework for regional elections reflects ongoing efforts to improve democratic representation and local governance. Similarly, Bs and Fadhlillah (2023) note that post-Reformasi electoral reforms have significantly expanded opportunities for democratic participation at regional levels.

Although Indonesia has made substantial progress in democratic development, concerns regarding electoral integrity continue to attract scholarly and public attention. Issues such as political polarization, electoral disputes, misinformation, campaign regulation, and institutional trust have become increasingly prominent in electoral discussions. Warburton and Aspinall (2019) argue that democratic regression and political challenges remain important concerns within Indonesia's democratic landscape. Likewise, Gustrinanda and Tanjung (2023) highlight the influence of misinformation and hoax news on public trust in electoral processes. These developments indicate that maintaining electoral integrity requires continuous institutional adaptation and legal oversight.

Technological transformation has further reshaped electoral environments. Digital platforms, social media, and online political communication have expanded opportunities for voter engagement while simultaneously introducing new risks related to disinformation and electoral manipulation. Garnett and James (2020) emphasize that technological innovation presents both opportunities and threats for electoral integrity in modern democracies. Similarly, Aichholzer and Rose (2019) demonstrate that digital participation tools can enhance democratic engagement when implemented effectively. These findings suggest that election governance must adapt to emerging technological challenges while preserving democratic values and electoral fairness.

Despite the growing body of literature on elections and democracy, existing studies often focus separately on electoral integrity, voter participation, election law, or democratic governance. Comparatively fewer studies integrate these themes within the context of Indonesia's legal framework governing both national and regional elections. As a result, there remains a need for a comprehensive examination of how election laws contribute to electoral integrity and democratic participation in contemporary Indonesia.

In response to this gap, this study investigates electoral integrity and democratic participation in Indonesia through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The study focuses on the implementation and significance of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections. By synthesizing contemporary literature on election governance, electoral integrity, democratic participation, and democratic legitimacy, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how legal frameworks support democratic elections and strengthen democratic governance in Indonesia.

2. | LITERATURE REVIEW

Electoral Integrity and Democratic Governance

Electoral integrity is widely recognized as a fundamental requirement for democratic governance because it ensures that elections are conducted fairly, transparently, and in accordance with legal principles. Democratic systems rely on elections not only as mechanisms for selecting political leaders but also as instruments for maintaining public confidence in governance institutions. Consequently, the quality and integrity of electoral processes significantly influence democratic legitimacy and political stability.

The concept of electoral integrity encompasses adherence to legal standards, fairness in electoral competition, protection of political rights, and effective administration of electoral processes. James, Garnett, Loeber, and Van Ham (2019) argue that electoral integrity is strongly influenced by the organizational effectiveness of electoral management bodies and the quality of election administration. Similarly, Partheymüller, Müller, Rabitsch, Lidauer, and Grohma (2022) emphasize that public involvement in election administration contributes positively to perceptions of electoral integrity and democratic legitimacy. These findings suggest that electoral integrity

depends not only on legal frameworks but also on institutional performance and public confidence.

The literature further highlights the importance of protecting elections from emerging threats. Judge and Korhani (2020) argue that disinformation, unequal access to political information, and digital manipulation can undermine electoral integrity by influencing voter perceptions and electoral outcomes. Likewise, Garnett and James (2020) emphasize that technological developments have introduced both opportunities and risks for democratic elections. These perspectives indicate that electoral integrity requires continuous adaptation to changing political and technological environments.

Electoral integrity also contributes directly to democratic governance by strengthening legitimacy and accountability. Garbiras-Díaz and Montenegro (2022) demonstrate that citizen oversight mechanisms improve electoral accountability and reinforce public trust in election outcomes. Similarly, Røiseland (2022) argues that democratic legitimacy is strengthened when citizens perceive governance processes as fair and inclusive. These findings suggest that electoral integrity functions as an important foundation for democratic governance and institutional credibility.

Legal Framework of Election Governance in Indonesia

Legal frameworks play a critical role in ensuring that electoral processes operate according to democratic principles and constitutional requirements. Election laws establish rules governing electoral administration, political competition, voter participation, campaign activities, dispute resolution, and institutional responsibilities. Effective legal frameworks contribute to electoral integrity by providing legal certainty and promoting fairness throughout electoral processes.

In Indonesia, Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections serves as the principal legal framework regulating national elections. The law governs presidential elections, legislative elections, electoral administration, and electoral supervision while defining the responsibilities of key institutions such as the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu). Sarah and Suatmiati (2022) explain that the law was designed to strengthen democratic elections through more integrated and comprehensive electoral regulation. Similarly, Rannie (2020) highlights the significance of electoral legal reforms in supporting Indonesia's democratic development and institutional consolidation.

Several studies have examined specific aspects of Law Number 7 of 2017. Zain and Basuki (2019) discuss legal challenges related to political party registration under the law, while Abiyasa (2019) emphasizes the importance of Bawaslu's supervisory authority in maintaining electoral integrity. Likewise, Wijaya (2020) argues that legal certainty remains a critical issue in election governance because ambiguous legal provisions may affect the effectiveness of electoral administration. These findings indicate that election governance depends heavily upon clear legal frameworks and effective institutional implementation.

At the local level, democratic governance is further supported through Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections (Pilkada). The legislation regulates direct elections for governors, regents, and mayors while promoting democratic participation and local representation. Hindiawati (2019) argues that reforms introduced through the law contribute to improving democratic representation within local governance structures. Similarly, Bs and Fadhlillah (2023) note that post-Reformasi electoral reforms have expanded opportunities for political participation and democratic accountability at regional levels. These findings demonstrate the importance of legal frameworks in supporting democratic decentralization and local democracy.

The broader constitutional context also influences election governance in Indonesia. Crouch (2022) emphasizes that democratic institutions require legal frameworks capable of protecting political rights while maintaining electoral legitimacy. Likewise, Fahmi, Isra, Muchtar, and Hilaire (2019) argue that legal institutions play a crucial role in safeguarding electoral democracy and protecting democratic values. These perspectives suggest that election governance depends upon both legal regulation and institutional commitment to democratic principles.

Democratic Participation and Voter Engagement

Democratic participation is one of the most visible indicators of democratic vitality because it reflects the extent to which citizens engage in political processes and exercise political rights. Elections provide citizens with opportunities to influence governmental leadership, public policies, and democratic development. Consequently, participation represents a central objective of democratic governance and an important measure of democratic legitimacy.

Lindgren, Oskarsson, and Persson (2019) argue that participation promotes democratic equality by enabling broader representation of societal interests within political processes. Similarly, Fossati (2018) demonstrates that electoral accountability is strengthened when citizens actively engage in local political processes. These findings suggest that democratic participation contributes not only to electoral outcomes but also to broader governance effectiveness and accountability.

The literature further highlights the importance of voter engagement among younger populations. Djuyandi and Herdiansah (2018) report that youth participation in regional elections contributes positively to democratic development and civic engagement. Likewise, Ulum (2020) emphasizes the continuing importance of political parties and democratic institutions in encouraging citizen participation following Indonesia's democratic reforms. These findings indicate that participation remains essential for maintaining democratic legitimacy and strengthening democratic institutions.

Political communication also plays an important role in shaping voter engagement. Susila, Dean, Yusof, Setyawan, and Wajdi (2020) demonstrate that political communication influences public trust and voter perceptions during electoral processes.

Effective communication strategies can increase political awareness, strengthen electoral participation, and improve democratic engagement. These findings suggest that democratic participation is influenced not only by legal frameworks but also by broader political and social factors.

Electoral Accountability and Public Trust

Electoral accountability represents an essential component of democratic governance because it ensures that political actors, electoral institutions, and elected officials remain answerable for their actions and decisions. In democratic systems, accountability mechanisms provide citizens with the ability to evaluate political performance, monitor electoral conduct, and influence future political outcomes through elections. Consequently, accountability strengthens democratic legitimacy by connecting public authority to citizen oversight and political responsibility.

The concept of electoral accountability extends beyond the electoral process itself and encompasses the broader relationship between citizens and public officials. Elections serve as mechanisms through which voters reward or sanction political actors based on their performance and responsiveness. Fossati (2018) argues that electoral accountability plays an important role in shaping local political dynamics by encouraging elected officials to remain responsive to citizen preferences. Similarly, Said, Minan, and Huda (2021) emphasize that both horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms are necessary to ensure democratic governance and effective political representation. These findings suggest that accountability contributes significantly to the quality and sustainability of democratic institutions.

Electoral accountability is also closely related to electoral integrity. Fair and transparent elections enable citizens to make informed political choices and hold political actors responsible for their actions. Fahmi, Isra, Muchtar, and Hilaire (2019) argue that legal frameworks play a crucial role in protecting electoral democracy by ensuring that elections are conducted according to democratic principles and legal standards. Likewise, Garbiras-Díaz and Montenegro (2022) demonstrate that citizen oversight initiatives can strengthen electoral accountability by increasing transparency and reducing opportunities for electoral misconduct. These findings indicate that accountability and integrity are interconnected dimensions of democratic elections.

Public trust represents another important outcome of accountable electoral systems. Citizens are more likely to accept election outcomes and support democratic institutions when they perceive electoral processes as fair, transparent, and credible. Trust serves as a foundation for democratic stability because it encourages compliance with electoral outcomes and strengthens confidence in political institutions. Grant, Flores, Pedersen, Sherman, and Van Boven (2021) report that perceptions of election legitimacy significantly influence public acceptance of election results, particularly within politically polarized environments. These findings suggest that electoral accountability contributes directly to maintaining democratic legitimacy and political stability.

The literature further highlights the role of political communication in shaping public trust. Electoral campaigns, political messaging, and public discourse influence how citizens perceive electoral processes and democratic institutions. Susila, Dean, Yusof, Setyawan, and Wajdi (2020) demonstrate that symbolic political communication significantly affects trust among young voters during Indonesian presidential elections. Effective political communication can strengthen democratic engagement, whereas misleading or manipulative communication may undermine confidence in electoral processes. These findings indicate that public trust is influenced not only by institutional performance but also by the quality of political interactions within democratic systems.

Another important factor affecting electoral accountability is institutional oversight. Electoral management bodies, supervisory institutions, and judicial mechanisms contribute to accountability by monitoring compliance with electoral regulations and resolving electoral disputes. Effective oversight helps ensure that electoral processes remain transparent and consistent with legal requirements. Partheymüller et al. (2022) emphasize that participation in election administration positively influences perceptions of electoral integrity and accountability. These findings suggest that strong oversight institutions contribute to greater public confidence in elections and democratic governance.

Within the Indonesian context, accountability remains a central concern in electoral governance. Democratic reforms have expanded opportunities for participation while increasing expectations regarding institutional transparency and electoral fairness. The legal frameworks established through Law Number 7 of 2017 and Law Number 10 of 2016 provide important mechanisms for monitoring electoral conduct, resolving disputes, and promoting accountability among political actors. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on institutional capacity, legal enforcement, and public trust in electoral institutions. Consequently, strengthening electoral accountability remains an ongoing priority for Indonesia's democratic development.

Contemporary Challenges in Democratic Elections

Democratic elections are increasingly shaped by technological innovation, changing political behavior, and evolving communication environments. While electoral reforms have strengthened democratic institutions and expanded opportunities for participation, contemporary elections face new challenges that may affect electoral integrity, democratic legitimacy, and public trust. These challenges require electoral governance frameworks that are capable of responding to both traditional electoral concerns and emerging risks associated with digital technologies and political polarization.

One of the most significant challenges confronting modern democracies is the growing influence of digital information environments. Social media platforms, online communication channels, and digital campaigns have transformed how political information is distributed and consumed. These technologies create new opportunities

for political engagement and voter mobilization, but they also increase the risk of misinformation and disinformation. Judge and Korhani (2020) argue that disinformation can undermine electoral integrity by distorting public understanding and creating unequal information environments. Similarly, Garnett and James (2020) emphasize that digital technologies present both opportunities and threats for democratic elections, requiring electoral institutions to adapt to rapidly changing communication landscapes.

The spread of misinformation has become a particularly important concern within contemporary elections. False or misleading information may influence voter perceptions, weaken confidence in electoral institutions, and contribute to political polarization. Gustrinanda and Tanjung (2023) report that hoax news negatively affects public trust in elections in Indonesia. Likewise, Grant et al. (2021) demonstrate that polarized information environments can influence perceptions of election legitimacy and increase political division. These findings indicate that protecting electoral integrity requires effective strategies for addressing misinformation while preserving democratic freedoms.

Technological innovation has also introduced new opportunities for democratic participation. Digital platforms can improve citizen engagement by facilitating political communication, voter education, and public discussion. Aichholzer and Rose (2019) demonstrate that digital participation tools can strengthen democratic involvement when implemented effectively and inclusively. These findings suggest that technology should not be viewed solely as a source of risk but also as a potential instrument for enhancing democratic participation and electoral engagement.

Another challenge concerns the broader stability of democratic institutions. Warburton and Aspinall (2019) argue that democratic regression remains a concern in Indonesia due to political developments that may weaken democratic norms and institutional effectiveness. Similarly, Heryani, Sembiring, Fatmawati, Muhammadiyah, and Syakhrani (2022) discuss debates surrounding election postponement and presidential term extension as issues affecting democratic legitimacy and constitutional governance. These findings indicate that democratic resilience depends upon strong institutions capable of maintaining electoral integrity and adherence to democratic principles.

Electoral disputes and contested election outcomes also pose challenges for democratic governance. Elections that fail to gain broad public acceptance may weaken institutional trust and increase political instability. Obiagu, Udeji-Okpalaku, and Udeh (2021) demonstrate that unresolved electoral disputes can undermine democratic consolidation and weaken confidence in democratic institutions. These findings highlight the importance of effective dispute-resolution mechanisms and transparent electoral procedures in maintaining democratic legitimacy.

The literature further emphasizes the importance of strengthening electoral institutions in response to contemporary challenges. Electoral management bodies,

supervisory agencies, and legal institutions play critical roles in protecting electoral integrity and ensuring compliance with democratic standards. James et al. (2019) argue that organizational effectiveness within electoral management institutions significantly influences perceptions of electoral integrity. Consequently, institutional reform and capacity development remain essential components of democratic election governance.

Overall, contemporary elections operate within increasingly complex political and technological environments. While digital innovation has expanded opportunities for participation and communication, it has also introduced new risks related to misinformation, polarization, and institutional trust. These challenges highlight the continuing importance of electoral integrity, effective governance, and democratic accountability. As democratic systems evolve, election governance frameworks must adapt to emerging conditions while preserving the fundamental principles of fairness, participation, legitimacy, and public trust.

3. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine electoral integrity and democratic participation within Indonesia's election governance framework. The SLR approach was selected because the concepts of electoral integrity, democratic participation, election governance, electoral accountability, and democratic legitimacy have been widely discussed across legal studies, political science, governance research, and electoral management literature. Although numerous studies have investigated elections from legal, political, and institutional perspectives, the existing body of knowledge remains fragmented, particularly regarding the relationship between Indonesia's election laws and broader democratic governance objectives. A systematic review enables the integration of diverse perspectives and facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how legal frameworks support democratic elections and citizen participation.

The study adopts the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure transparency, consistency, and methodological rigor throughout the review process. According to Page et al. (2021), PRISMA provides a structured procedure for identifying, screening, assessing, and selecting relevant literature. The review process consisted of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. This approach was used to ensure that only studies directly relevant to electoral integrity, democratic participation, election governance, electoral accountability, and Indonesian election law were included in the analysis.

Literature was collected from major academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, Emerald Insight, and various legal and governance repositories. The search process utilized combinations of keywords such as electoral integrity, democratic participation, election governance, electoral accountability, democratic legitimacy, election administration, voter participation, political participation, election oversight, democratic elections, electoral justice, and electoral management. Additional searches specifically incorporated

references to Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections. These keywords were selected to capture both international discussions of electoral governance and studies examining Indonesia's electoral framework.

The inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, conference proceedings, legal studies, governance analyses, and policy publications published between 2018 and 2024. Eligible studies were required to address at least one of the following themes: electoral integrity, democratic participation, election governance, election administration, electoral accountability, democratic legitimacy, voter engagement, election law, or democratic institutions. Particular emphasis was placed on literature examining Indonesia's electoral system and legal frameworks. Studies unrelated to elections, democratic governance, or electoral institutions were excluded. Duplicate records and publications lacking direct relevance to the research objectives were also removed during the screening process.

In addition to reviewing academic literature, this study incorporates doctrinal legal analysis of two key Indonesian legal instruments: Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections. The doctrinal approach examines legal norms, institutional responsibilities, electoral principles, participation rights, oversight mechanisms, and accountability provisions contained within these laws. Through this analysis, the study evaluates how Indonesian election laws support electoral integrity and democratic participation within contemporary democratic governance.

The selected literature was analyzed using thematic synthesis. This analytical method enables findings from diverse disciplinary perspectives to be organized into coherent themes that reflect the major dimensions of election governance. The reviewed studies were categorized into five thematic areas: electoral integrity and democratic governance, legal framework of election governance in Indonesia, democratic participation and voter engagement, electoral accountability and public trust, and contemporary challenges in democratic elections. These themes represent the primary dimensions through which election laws and governance mechanisms influence democratic outcomes.

The analytical framework adopted in this study views electoral integrity and democratic participation as interconnected foundations of democratic governance. Electoral integrity is examined through legal compliance, fairness, accountability, institutional effectiveness, and public trust, while democratic participation is analyzed through voter engagement, political inclusion, representation, and civic involvement. By integrating systematic literature review methods with doctrinal legal analysis, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how Indonesia's electoral laws contribute to democratic legitimacy, election governance, and the development of democratic institutions.

4. | RESULTS

The reviewed literature demonstrates that electoral integrity and democratic participation are fundamental components of democratic governance. Elections function not only as mechanisms for selecting political leaders but also as institutions that establish democratic legitimacy, strengthen accountability, and facilitate citizen representation. The findings indicate that the quality of electoral processes significantly influences public confidence in democratic institutions and affects the overall effectiveness of democratic governance. Across various political contexts, electoral integrity and citizen participation emerge as closely interconnected factors that shape democratic outcomes.

One of the most prominent findings concerns the importance of electoral integrity in maintaining democratic legitimacy. Electoral integrity refers to the extent to which elections are conducted according to legal standards, democratic principles, and established procedures. The reviewed studies consistently indicate that fair and credible elections contribute positively to public confidence in democratic institutions. James, Garnett, Loeber, and Van Ham (2019) argue that the effectiveness of electoral management bodies significantly influences perceptions of electoral integrity. Similarly, Partheymüller, Müller, Rabitsch, Lidauer, and Grohma (2022) report that participation in election administration positively affects public perceptions of election fairness and legitimacy. These findings suggest that institutional performance plays a crucial role in maintaining confidence in electoral processes.

The literature further demonstrates that electoral integrity is increasingly influenced by technological developments and digital information environments. Judge and Korhani (2020) emphasize that disinformation and unequal access to political information can undermine electoral integrity by distorting voter perceptions and weakening informed decision-making. Likewise, Garnett and James (2020) highlight the growing challenges posed by cyber threats, misinformation, and technological vulnerabilities within contemporary electoral systems. These findings indicate that electoral integrity requires continuous adaptation to evolving technological conditions and information environments.

Another major finding concerns the role of election governance frameworks in supporting democratic elections. Effective election governance requires legal certainty, institutional coordination, and transparent administration. The reviewed studies indicate that legal frameworks contribute significantly to electoral integrity by establishing standards governing political competition, electoral administration, dispute resolution, and institutional accountability. Sarah and Suatmiati (2022) explain that Law Number 7 of 2017 provides a comprehensive legal basis for organizing democratic elections in Indonesia. Similarly, Rannie (2020) highlights the importance of electoral legal reforms in improving election administration and democratic governance. These findings suggest that legal frameworks play an essential role in ensuring fair and credible elections.

The literature also reveals the importance of institutional oversight within election governance. Electoral management institutions such as the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) contribute to electoral integrity through supervision, monitoring, and enforcement activities. Abiyasa (2019) emphasizes the significance of Bawaslu's authority in maintaining electoral compliance and accountability. Likewise, Wijaya (2020) argues that legal certainty within electoral regulations is essential for supporting effective election administration. These findings indicate that strong institutions contribute to the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes.

The reviewed studies further demonstrate the importance of democratic participation in strengthening democratic governance. Participation enables citizens to exercise political rights, influence governance outcomes, and contribute to public decision-making. High levels of electoral participation are generally associated with stronger democratic legitimacy because they reflect broader representation of societal interests. Lindgren, Oskarsson, and Persson (2019) argue that participation promotes democratic equality by reducing barriers to political engagement. Similarly, Djuyandi and Herdiansah (2018) demonstrate that youth participation contributes positively to democratic development and civic engagement. These findings indicate that democratic participation serves as an important indicator of democratic vitality.

Evidence from Indonesia further highlights the significance of voter engagement within both national and local elections. Fossati (2018) reports that electoral accountability is strengthened when citizens actively participate in local political processes. Likewise, Ulum (2020) emphasizes the continuing importance of political parties and democratic institutions in encouraging electoral participation after Indonesia's democratic reforms. These findings suggest that participation contributes not only to electoral outcomes but also to broader democratic consolidation.

Another important finding concerns the role of Law Number 10 of 2016 in supporting democratic participation through direct regional head elections. The reviewed studies indicate that direct local elections provide citizens with opportunities to influence governance at regional levels while strengthening democratic decentralization. Hindiawati (2019) argues that reforms to regional election systems contribute to improved democratic representation and local governance. Similarly, Bs and Fadhlillah (2023) note that post-Reformasi electoral developments have expanded opportunities for citizen participation within regional political processes. These findings demonstrate the importance of legal frameworks in facilitating local democratic engagement.

The literature also reveals a strong relationship between electoral accountability and public trust. Democratic elections require mechanisms that enable citizens to evaluate political actors and hold them accountable for their actions. Said, Minan, and Huda (2021) emphasize that accountability mechanisms strengthen democratic governance by ensuring responsiveness and responsibility among elected officials.

Similarly, Garbiras-Díaz and Montenegro (2022) demonstrate that citizen oversight initiatives can improve accountability and increase confidence in electoral outcomes. These findings suggest that accountability contributes directly to electoral legitimacy and democratic stability.

Public trust emerges as another critical factor influencing electoral governance. Citizens are more likely to accept election outcomes and support democratic institutions when electoral processes are perceived as fair and credible. Grant, Flores, Pedersen, Sherman, and Van Boven (2021) report that perceptions of election legitimacy significantly influence public acceptance of electoral outcomes. Likewise, Susila, Dean, Yusof, Setyawan, and Wajdi (2020) demonstrate that political communication affects trust among voters and shapes perceptions of electoral credibility. These findings indicate that trust is closely linked to electoral integrity, accountability, and democratic participation.

The reviewed studies further identify several contemporary challenges affecting democratic elections. Digital misinformation, political polarization, declining institutional trust, and technological vulnerabilities have become increasingly significant concerns within electoral governance. Gustrinanda and Tanjung (2023) report that hoax news negatively influences public trust in elections in Indonesia. Similarly, Warburton and Aspinall (2019) argue that democratic challenges and political developments may affect democratic consolidation and institutional effectiveness. These findings suggest that electoral integrity requires continuous institutional adaptation and governance reform.

Another important challenge concerns debates regarding democratic stability and constitutional governance. Heryani, Sembiring, Fatmawati, Muhammadiyah, and Syakhrani (2022) discuss political debates surrounding election postponement and presidential term extension as issues affecting democratic legitimacy. Likewise, Obiagu, Udeji-Okpalaku, and Udeh (2021) demonstrate that electoral disputes and contested outcomes can weaken democratic consolidation if not effectively managed. These findings indicate that democratic resilience depends upon strong legal frameworks, effective institutions, and public confidence in electoral processes.

Overall, the evidence reviewed in this study demonstrates that electoral integrity and democratic participation are essential foundations of democratic governance. The findings indicate that legal frameworks, electoral institutions, citizen participation, accountability mechanisms, and public trust collectively influence the quality of democratic elections. Through the implementation of Law Number 7 of 2017 and Law Number 10 of 2016, Indonesia has established important legal foundations for supporting democratic elections, although continuing challenges require ongoing institutional development and governance reform.

5. | DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that electoral integrity and democratic participation are closely interconnected foundations of democratic governance.

Democratic elections derive legitimacy not only from legal compliance but also from public confidence that electoral processes are fair, inclusive, and accountable. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that effective election governance depends upon the interaction of legal frameworks, electoral institutions, citizen participation, and public trust. Within the Indonesian context, Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections provide important legal foundations for strengthening democratic governance through credible electoral processes.

One of the most significant findings concerns the central role of electoral integrity in sustaining democratic legitimacy. Electoral integrity ensures that elections are conducted according to democratic principles, legal standards, and institutional procedures. The literature suggests that electoral integrity extends beyond technical election administration and encompasses broader concerns related to fairness, transparency, inclusiveness, and public confidence. Elections that are perceived as fair and credible contribute positively to democratic stability because citizens are more likely to accept election outcomes and trust democratic institutions. Consequently, electoral integrity should be viewed as a fundamental condition for democratic governance rather than merely an administrative objective.

The findings further reveal that effective election governance requires strong legal frameworks and institutional capacity. Law Number 7 of 2017 establishes a comprehensive legal structure governing electoral administration, supervision, dispute resolution, and political competition. The reviewed studies indicate that legal certainty contributes significantly to electoral integrity because clear rules reduce ambiguity and improve consistency in election management. Furthermore, institutions such as the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) play critical roles in ensuring compliance with electoral regulations and maintaining public confidence in electoral processes. These findings suggest that legal frameworks and institutional effectiveness are mutually reinforcing elements of election governance.

Another important implication concerns the contribution of democratic participation to democratic legitimacy. The literature consistently demonstrates that participation enables citizens to exercise political rights, influence governance outcomes, and strengthen representative democracy. High levels of electoral participation indicate broader political inclusion and enhance the legitimacy of elected governments. The findings further suggest that participation is not limited to voting behavior but also includes civic engagement, political discussion, election monitoring, and involvement in democratic processes. Therefore, democratic participation should be understood as a multidimensional component of democratic governance that extends beyond election day activities.

The discussion also highlights the importance of Law Number 10 of 2016 in supporting democratic participation at the local level. Direct regional head elections

provide citizens with opportunities to influence local governance and strengthen democratic accountability within decentralized political systems. The reviewed studies indicate that local elections contribute to democratic representation by allowing citizens to participate directly in leadership selection and policy direction. These findings support the argument that democratic decentralization can enhance democratic governance when supported by effective legal frameworks and accountable institutions.

The findings further demonstrate that electoral accountability functions as a critical mechanism linking elections and democratic governance. Accountability enables citizens to evaluate elected officials and influence future political outcomes through electoral processes. Elections serve as instruments through which political leaders are rewarded or sanctioned based on their performance and responsiveness to public interests. This relationship reinforces democratic responsibility by encouraging political actors to remain attentive to citizen concerns. Consequently, electoral accountability contributes not only to governance quality but also to the long-term sustainability of democratic institutions.

Public trust emerges as another key theme within the findings. Democratic systems depend upon public confidence in electoral institutions, election outcomes, and governance processes. Citizens are more likely to participate in elections and accept electoral results when they perceive electoral institutions as impartial, competent, and accountable. The literature suggests that trust is influenced by perceptions of fairness, transparency, institutional effectiveness, and political legitimacy. Therefore, maintaining public trust should be regarded as a strategic objective of election governance because declining confidence may weaken democratic participation and institutional legitimacy.

An additional insight concerns the growing influence of digital technologies on electoral processes. Technological developments have transformed political communication, voter engagement, and election administration. Digital platforms provide new opportunities for voter education, public participation, and political interaction. However, the findings also indicate that technological developments create new risks for electoral integrity. Misinformation, disinformation, cyber threats, and digital polarization may influence voter behavior and undermine confidence in electoral processes. These challenges demonstrate that electoral governance must adapt to technological change while preserving democratic values and legal protections.

The findings also reveal broader challenges facing democratic elections in contemporary political environments. Political polarization, declining trust in institutions, contested election outcomes, and concerns regarding democratic regression may affect electoral legitimacy and democratic stability. These challenges suggest that democratic governance cannot rely solely on legal regulations but must also strengthen institutional resilience and democratic culture. Effective democratic

systems require continuous efforts to protect electoral integrity, encourage participation, and maintain public confidence in democratic institutions.

From a governance perspective, the findings reinforce the importance of integrating electoral integrity, democratic participation, accountability, and institutional effectiveness within election governance frameworks. Elections function most effectively when legal rules are supported by capable institutions, active citizen participation, and public trust. Consequently, election governance reforms should focus not only on procedural compliance but also on improving institutional performance, strengthening electoral oversight, expanding civic engagement, and addressing emerging technological challenges.

Overall, the evidence reviewed in this study demonstrates that electoral integrity and democratic participation remain essential pillars of democratic governance. Through the implementation of Law Number 7 of 2017 and Law Number 10 of 2016, Indonesia has established important legal foundations for promoting democratic elections and citizen participation. Nevertheless, continuing efforts are required to strengthen electoral institutions, enhance accountability mechanisms, address digital challenges, and maintain public confidence in democratic processes. By reinforcing these elements, democratic governance can become more inclusive, legitimate, and resilient in the face of contemporary political challenges.

5. | CONCLUSION

This study examined electoral integrity and democratic participation in Indonesia through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and doctrinal analysis of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections. The findings demonstrate that electoral integrity and democratic participation are essential foundations of democratic governance because they contribute to democratic legitimacy, institutional accountability, public trust, and citizen representation. Effective elections enable citizens to exercise political rights while ensuring that political authority is obtained through fair and legally regulated democratic processes.

The review indicates that electoral integrity plays a crucial role in maintaining the credibility of democratic institutions. Fair election administration, effective oversight mechanisms, legal certainty, and institutional accountability contribute significantly to public confidence in electoral outcomes. Law Number 7 of 2017 provides a comprehensive legal framework governing election administration, electoral supervision, and dispute resolution, thereby supporting the implementation of democratic elections in Indonesia. The findings suggest that strong legal and institutional frameworks are necessary to ensure that electoral processes remain transparent, accountable, and consistent with democratic principles.

The study further demonstrates that democratic participation strengthens democratic legitimacy by enabling citizens to engage directly in political decision-

making. Electoral participation contributes to representative governance by ensuring that diverse societal interests are reflected within democratic institutions. The findings indicate that voter engagement, civic participation, and political involvement enhance democratic accountability and reinforce the relationship between citizens and public institutions. Through Law Number 10 of 2016, Indonesia has expanded opportunities for democratic participation at the regional level by supporting direct elections for local leaders and strengthening democratic decentralization.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between electoral accountability and public trust. Democratic elections function effectively when citizens perceive electoral institutions as impartial, competent, and accountable. Accountability mechanisms enable voters to evaluate political performance and influence future governance outcomes through electoral processes. The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that public trust is strengthened when elections are conducted fairly and electoral institutions operate transparently and responsibly. Consequently, electoral accountability contributes not only to electoral integrity but also to broader democratic stability and legitimacy.

The findings also highlight the growing influence of digital technologies on electoral governance. Digital platforms have expanded opportunities for political communication, voter engagement, and information dissemination. However, technological developments have also introduced challenges related to misinformation, disinformation, cyber threats, and political polarization. These challenges may affect electoral integrity and public confidence if not addressed through appropriate legal, institutional, and regulatory responses. As electoral environments continue to evolve, governance frameworks must adapt to technological change while protecting democratic values and electoral fairness.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that strengthening democratic governance requires continuous efforts to improve election administration, institutional oversight, voter education, and public engagement. Policymakers and electoral institutions should prioritize measures that enhance transparency, accountability, and public confidence in electoral processes. Institutional capacity building, effective supervision, and inclusive participation strategies remain important for maintaining the quality and legitimacy of democratic elections.

Future research may examine the impact of digital political communication on voter behavior, the effectiveness of electoral oversight mechanisms, and comparative approaches to election governance across different democratic systems. Additional studies may also explore the role of emerging technologies in shaping electoral participation and democratic legitimacy. By integrating contemporary electoral literature with Indonesian legal frameworks, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how electoral integrity and democratic participation support democratic governance and democratic consolidation in Indonesia

Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of individuals who supported the completion of this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval and Originality Statement

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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