

IMPLEMENTATION OF E-VOTING: INCREASING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR QUALITY ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

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General elections are a pillar of democracy that determines the representation of the people in government. This research aims to explore the potential for implementing E-Voting as an innovative solution to increase public participation in general elections, with a focus on improving the quality of the election process. The research method involved literature analysis, interviews with information technology experts, and community surveys to gain a comprehensive understanding of the potential and barriers to implementing E-Voting. The research results show that the implementation of Electronic Voting (E-Voting) has a positive impact in increasing voter participation, efficiency and transparency in general elections. E-Voting overcomes traditional barriers such as long queues and time constraints by providing easier access and a more flexible voting experience. However, challenges such as system security, legal compliance, and technology engagement across all levels of society need to be addressed to ensure successful implementation. In conclusion, E-Voting has great potential to be an effective tool in realizing more inclusive and modern general elections, as long as these challenges can be overcome with appropriate and measurable solutions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy, as the foundation of a government system, places general elections as one of its main pillars (Rokhim, 2011). Elections are not only a time to determine people's representatives, but also a test of the sustainability of democracy itself (Novaldi & Adnan, 2021). However, the main challenge faced by the general election process is low public participation. Increasing public participation is essential to ensure more accurate and fair representation. In efforts to improve the quality of elections, information technology has made a major contribution (Simanjuntak, 2017).

Modern governments are increasingly realizing that the development of information technology is not just a tool, but the foundation for realizing demands for efficiency, transparency and equality in the administration of good government (Setiawan, 2019). In an effort to achieve this goal, the government took strategic steps by utilizing information technology, and this phenomenon reached its peak in the form of E-Government (Silcock, 2001). The concept of E-Government has become the center of government attention as a means of improving the quality of public services and improving service infrastructure to the community (Irawan, 2017).

One concrete implementation of E-Government is the application of Electronic Voting (E-Voting) in the general election process. In this context, the government not only sees information technology as an administrative tool, but also as a catalyst for increasing public participation in elections (Wijaya et al, 2019). With e-voting, it can reduce the problems that exist when carrying out conventional elections (based on paper ballots) (Hardjaloka & Simarmata, 2011). Apart from that, e-voting can also reduce costs during the general election process. In implementing e-voting, ballot papers are no longer used by all voters. The steps used in the e-voting process are to determine the choice by touching the screen or clicking on the electronic screen provided (Priyono & Dihan, 2015).

Electronic Voting (E-Voting) is an innovation in the implementation of general elections, where electronic technology is at the core of the entire process, from voter registration, voting, to vote counting (Karmanis, 2021). The main objective of implementing E-Voting is not only limited to accelerating the general election process, but also focuses on critical aspects such as the originality of voters' votes,

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election security and confidentiality, as well as the accuracy of vote counting (Dreheim, 2016). By combining the efficiency of electronic technology and the fulfillment of democratic principles, E-Voting aims to create general elections that are not only fast and effective, but also prioritize integrity and public trust (Cahyaningsih et al, 2019).

The success of implementing E-Voting is not only determined by technology alone, but also by a number of critical aspects that are interrelated (Purwati, 2015). These aspects include: (1) Technology, which involves the development and reliability of information technology systems; (2) Law, which concerns the regulatory and policy framework that supports the legal and fair implementation of E-Voting; (3) Social, which includes public acceptance of this technology and active participation in the election process; and (4) Operational Procedures, which determine how the E-Voting system is integrated into the general election stages as a whole (Shalahuddin, 2009). Involving and ensuring the success of these four aspects is the main key in creating an E-Voting system that is reliable and widely accepted by the public, maintaining democratic integrity in the general election process (Habibi, 2018).

The implementation of E-Voting is expected not only as an effort to increase the efficiency of general elections, but also as a strategic step to improve the overall quality of the election process through increasing public participation (Anistiawati, 2014). Low levels of political participation can be an indicator of poor democratic practices in a country. This symptom is reflected in people's attitudes that are less or completely indifferent to election issues and other state problems. Indicators of voter political participation, such as taking part in political discussions, participating in campaigns, and exercising voting rights, can influence the quality of a country's democracy (Kusmanto, 2013).

The significant impact of the application of information technology, including Electronic Voting (E-Voting), on voter participation levels is highly dependent on functions that facilitate connectivity between voters, the number of votes, and the level of participation of social groups (Abdul Razak & Aziz, 2011). The use of electronic or digital voting can make the election process easier for those who are familiar with politics and have a good understanding of election participants. Education and high levels of income are known to be the two factors that most strongly correlate with political participation, being key factors influencing participation levels in general elections.

2. METHOD

This article adopts qualitative research methods, as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (Moleong, 2014), which is a type of research that focuses on in-depth understanding of natural phenomena with the aim of explaining events that occur. This research method involves a variety of data collection techniques, with an emphasis on in-depth exploration and explanation of phenomena. Data collection techniques used in this qualitative research include interviews and documentation analysis. Data sources consist of primary data obtained through interviews and secondary data in the form of literature and documents relevant to the research topic.

This research specifically applies qualitative methods with descriptive research strategies, as explained by Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2016). Descriptive research was chosen with the consideration that data descriptions can be conveyed through the data itself, while theory is communicated through concepts illustrated by the data. This decision is based on two main considerations. First, descriptive data can provide in-depth details, allowing a realistic picture of actual events and cannot be expressed through numerical figures. Second, the descriptive approach provides the freedom to describe the context and complexity of a phenomenon, offering a rich and contextual understanding of the reality being studied.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Electronic Voting (E-Voting) has a significant role in increasing voter participation in general elections. Following are some of the key roles of E-Voting in increasing voter participation:

a) Ease of Access

Electronic Voting (E-Voting) plays an important role in overcoming the accessibility challenges faced by voters in remote areas. For people in hard-to-reach or remote locations, the traditional election process can be a serious obstacle. E-Voting, by allowing voters to vote via an electronic platform, offers a solution to overcome physical barriers such as long distances and transportation limitations. In this way, citizens living in remote areas are no longer limited by geographical challenges when they want to participate in the election process. This option not only stimulates voter participation in hard-to-reach

areas, but also helps create a more inclusive government by ensuring representation from various levels of society.

E-Voting not only provides easy access, but also effectively reduces physical barriers that might hinder voter participation. Traditionally, long queues and long journeys to polling places are often limiting factors for some people. By utilizing E-Voting, voters can vote without having to drive far or spend hours at the polling place. This initiative not only minimizes practical physical barriers, but also creates a more inclusive voting environment, motivating more individuals to feel involved in the democratic process. As a result, E-Voting makes a real contribution to realizing general elections that are more democratic and accessible to all citizens

b) Time Flexibility

Electronic Voting (E-Voting) offers extraordinary time flexibility in the election process, giving voters the freedom to cast their vote at any time during the election period. This advantage is very important because it does not limit voter participation to certain working hours or times. In a geographically diverse and occupational environment, E-Voting's time flexibility is key to increasing voter participation. Voters are no longer bound by restrictions on polling place opening hours, so they can choose the time that best fits their daily schedule. In this way, E-Voting bridges the gap between daily work requirements and active engagement in the democratic process, creating opportunities for more people to vote without sacrificing other obligations.

The time flexibility offered by E-Voting also plays a role in overcoming busy schedules, which is often a major obstacle for most voters. In the context of a fast-paced and busy modern society, many individuals may find it difficult to find time to participate in traditional elections. By enabling voters to cast ballots from the comfort of their home or workplace, E-Voting responds to the need for greater time flexibility. This creates a situation where voters do not have to choose between work responsibilities and democratic engagement, as they can vote easily without sacrificing other obligations. Thus, E-Voting not only simplifies the election process, but also minimizes schedule obstacles that can hinder active voter participation in democracy.

c) Increasing Digital Generation Engagement.

The current generation growing up in the era of digital technology has special characteristics, where technological skills and online habits dominate aspects of their daily lives. In this context, Electronic Voting (E-Voting) emerges as an adequate solution that fits the technological preferences of this generation. Voters who are accustomed to digital devices, online platforms, and interactions via social media tend to be more open to E-Voting as an alternative to voting in general elections. E-Voting offers easier accessibility and a voting experience that is familiar to the online habits of the digital generation. By providing a platform that can be accessed via electronic devices such as smartphones or computers, E-Voting creates a participation channel that is more suited to digital lifestyles. Through a user-friendly interface and efficient process, E-Voting provides an experience that is not only effective, but also engaging for a generation growing up in the digital era.

The importance of adapting to this generation's technological preferences is that E-Voting can overcome potential non-participation caused by a lack of interest in traditional election methods. By providing solutions that are suited to the digital world, E-Voting opens the door to increasing engagement and active participation from a generation that may feel less interested or hindered by conventional voting processes. Therefore, E-Voting not only reflects technological developments, but also acts as a tool to encourage wider democratic participation among generations growing up in the digital era.

d) Reduction of Physical and Psychological Barriers.

Electronic Voting (E-Voting) has opened up new opportunities to reduce physical barriers that may hinder voter participation in general elections. Long queues and travel to polling places can be serious obstacles that prevent some voters from actively participating. With the implementation of E-Voting, such physical barriers can be significantly minimized. Voters no longer have to endure long queues or travel long distances to polling places, as they can vote from the comfort of home or any other location deemed most practical. This creates a situation where physical barriers are no longer a barrier to participation, allowing more individuals to engage in the electoral process without practical barriers.

Apart from overcoming physical barriers, E-Voting can also help overcome psychological barriers that some voters may experience. Some individuals may feel uncomfortable or even fearful of the traditional election process that involves in-person interactions at the polls. E-Voting creates a more convenient alternative by providing a platform that can be accessed via personal electronic devices. In a

more controlled and private environment, voters can cast ballots without the social pressure or discomfort they may feel in the traditional process. In this way, E-Voting not only reduces physical barriers, but also opens up opportunities to create a more inclusive and supportive voting environment, especially for those who may feel hampered by psychological factors in their participation in democracy .

e) Transparency and Trust .

A well-planned implementation of Electronic Voting (E-Voting) has the potential to increase the level of transparency in the implementation of general elections. Carefully designed systems can ensure that every stage of the election process, from voter registration to vote counting, can be tracked accurately. The use of technology in E-Voting allows detailed recording of every action, thereby minimizing the risk of fraud or manipulation. This transparent information is accessible to voters and interested parties, increasing their understanding of the integrity of the entire process. Thus, E-Voting not only provides a means to vote efficiently, but also increases transparency, which is a critical aspect in building public trust in the democratic process.

Security and vote integrity are key elements in E-Voting design that can build voter confidence. Systems equipped with strong security measures, such as data encryption and network security, can provide assurance that voters' votes will be counted accurately and cannot be manipulated by unauthorized parties. By affirming that every vote has equal value and will be respected, E-Voting creates an environment where voters feel confident that their participation has a real impact on the democratic process. Solid security and guaranteed integrity pave the way for increased voter motivation to participate, as they trust that their votes are truly respected and contribute to fair and accurate results. As a result, E-Voting is not only a tool for efficiency, but also a strong foundation for increasing public trust and voter engagement in the democratic arena.

Although Electronic Voting (E-Voting) promises many benefits in increasing voter participation and general election efficiency, there are several challenges that need to be overcome for its implementation to be successful. Following are some of the main challenges faced in adopting E-Voting:

- 1) System Security: Security is one of the main challenges in implementing E-Voting. E-Voting systems must have high protection against cyber threats, such as hacking attacks and data manipulation attempts. Maintaining vote integrity and protecting voter privacy are critical aspects that must be addressed to ensure public trust.
- 2) Legal and Regulatory Compliance: Adoption of E-Voting often requires changes and adjustments in election regulations and laws. This process can be complex and time-consuming, as governments and relevant agencies must ensure that existing legal frameworks cover new aspects that arise with the application of this technology.
- 3) Engagement of Technology Across Society: Although the younger generation tends to be familiar with technology, challenges arise when trying to integrate E-Voting into an electoral system that covers all levels of society. Not all individuals have equal access to technology or are comfortable with the use of electronic devices, which can create gaps in participation.
- 4) Privacy and Security Issues of Personal Data: The use of voters' personal data in E-Voting raises significant privacy issues. Strict measures are required to protect voters' personal data and ensure that the information is not misused or falls into unauthorized hands.
- 5) Reliance on Technology: Reliance on technology carries the risk of system failure or other technical glitches that could impact the continuity of the election. It is important to have emergency solutions and effective recovery strategies to overcome possible technical glitches.
- 6) Psychological Challenges and Public Perception: Some voters may lack confidence in the safety or effectiveness of E-Voting. Building positive perceptions and public confidence will be important, and this may involve intensive communications efforts to educate the public about the advantages and steps taken to maintain election integrity.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion from all the explanations above shows that Electronic Voting (E-Voting) has great potential to increase voter participation, efficiency and transparency in general elections. The implementation of E-Voting is expected to overcome some traditional barriers, such as long queues, time constraints, and psychological discomfort, by opening the door to easier access and a more flexible voting experience. Nonetheless, significant challenges need to be overcome to realize the full potential of E-Voting. System security, legal compliance, involvement of technology across all levels of society, data

privacy, dependency on technology, and psychological challenges are some of the aspects that require special attention. Careful and measurable solutions must be implemented to ensure public confidence in election integrity and safeguard voters' privacy rights. By solving these challenges, E-Voting can become an effective tool for increasing transparency, trust and participation in the democratic process. Technological advances must be balanced with efforts to adjust regulations and a careful communication approach to ensure that E-Voting can be widely accepted and adopted by society. Thus, the implementation of E-Voting can be an important milestone in realizing more inclusive, modern and efficient general elections in this digital era.

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