

Electoral Integrity and Democratic Governance in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Electoral integrity is a fundamental element in democratic governance because it plays a role in building government legitimacy, strengthening accountability, increasing transparency, and encouraging public political participation. This study aims to analyze the relationship between electoral integrity and democratic governance in Indonesia through a normative-juridical approach by examining various laws and regulations, legal doctrines, and relevant scientific literature. The analysis focuses on Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as the main legal frameworks governing the implementation of elections and the protection of citizens' political rights. The results show that electoral integrity contributes significantly to strengthening democratic governance through the implementation of free, fair, transparent, and accountable elections, thereby increasing public trust in democratic institutions. However, various challenges, such as digital disinformation, cybersecurity threats, political polarization, the practice of money politics, and election result disputes, continue to affect the effectiveness of election administration. Therefore, strengthening the legal framework, institutional capacity of election organizers, independent oversight, and public political literacy are strategic steps to maintain the legitimacy, quality, and resilience of democracy in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Democratic Governance, Elections, Electoral Accountability, Electoral Integrity, Political Participation.*

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1. | INTRODUCTION

Democratic governance depends on electoral processes that are free, fair, transparent, and capable of reflecting the will of the people. Elections serve as one of the primary mechanisms through which citizens exercise political sovereignty, select political representatives, and hold governments accountable. Consequently, the quality of democratic governance is closely connected to the integrity of electoral processes. Electoral systems that uphold fairness, transparency, and accountability contribute to democratic legitimacy, whereas weaknesses in electoral administration may undermine public trust and weaken democratic institutions.

Electoral integrity has emerged as a central concept in contemporary democratic governance. The concept refers to the extent to which elections are conducted in accordance with democratic principles, legal standards, and internationally recognized norms. Electoral integrity encompasses various dimensions, including equal suffrage, political participation, transparency, accountability, impartial administration, and protection against electoral manipulation. Garnett and James (2021) argue that electoral integrity serves as an important indicator of democratic quality because it reflects the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes. Similarly, González et al. (2024) emphasize that perceptions of electoral fairness significantly influence public confidence in democratic institutions and support for democratic governance.

The relationship between electoral integrity and democratic governance is particularly important because elections provide the foundation for political legitimacy. Democratic governments derive authority from electoral processes that enable citizens to participate in public affairs and influence political outcomes. Mauk (2022) argues that electoral integrity affects public trust in political institutions because citizens are more likely to accept election results when electoral procedures are perceived as fair and transparent. Likewise, Mochtak et al. (2021) emphasize that confidence in elections contributes to democratic stability by strengthening acceptance of electoral outcomes among both winners and losers.

Political participation constitutes another fundamental dimension of democratic governance. Elections provide citizens with opportunities to exercise political rights, express political preferences, and contribute to public decision-making. Participation through voting remains one of the most visible manifestations of democratic citizenship. Oser, Grinson et al. (2022) argue that political participation strengthens democratic legitimacy because it creates direct connections between citizens and governance institutions. Consequently, electoral systems must ensure equal opportunities for participation and protect citizens' political rights.

International human rights law recognizes political participation as a fundamental democratic right. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly Article 25, guarantees the right of citizens to participate in public affairs, vote and be elected in genuine periodic elections, and access public service without unreasonable restrictions. These provisions establish international standards for

electoral governance and democratic participation. Butt (2024) emphasizes that the ICCPR remains one of the most important international instruments supporting democratic elections and political rights. Through these standards, the covenant provides normative guidance for states seeking to strengthen democratic governance and electoral accountability.

Indonesia has incorporated democratic electoral principles within its constitutional and legal framework. The 1945 Constitution recognizes popular sovereignty as a foundational principle of governance and establishes elections as an important mechanism for democratic representation. Electoral administration is primarily regulated through Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, which governs electoral institutions, electoral procedures, voter rights, political competition, and election oversight. The law seeks to promote democratic elections by establishing legal standards designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability throughout the electoral process.

Law No. 7 of 2017 represents a significant legal framework for maintaining electoral integrity in Indonesia. The law regulates the responsibilities of electoral management bodies, procedures for voter registration, campaign activities, vote counting, dispute resolution, and election supervision. These provisions aim to strengthen public confidence in elections and ensure that electoral outcomes reflect democratic principles. Risky et al. (2023) argue that electoral law plays an important role in shaping democratic governance because electoral systems influence representation, accountability, and political legitimacy.

Recent electoral developments have highlighted the continuing importance of electoral integrity within Indonesia's democratic system. Elections increasingly occur within complex political and technological environments characterized by digital communication, social media influence, misinformation, and cybersecurity risks. Garnett and James (2020) argue that technological developments create both opportunities and challenges for electoral governance. While digital technologies may improve voter access and information dissemination, they may also introduce new risks that affect transparency, security, and public trust.

Transparency and accountability remain essential principles within electoral governance. Democratic elections require institutions capable of administering electoral processes openly and responsibly. Papadopoulos (2023) emphasizes that accountability strengthens democratic governance by ensuring that public institutions remain answerable to citizens and operate according to established legal standards. Similarly, Androniceanu (2021) argues that transparency contributes to governance quality by promoting public trust and reducing opportunities for institutional misconduct. These principles are particularly important within electoral administration because election outcomes directly affect democratic legitimacy.

The literature also highlights the growing importance of democratic resilience in electoral governance. Democratic systems increasingly face challenges associated with

misinformation, declining public trust, political polarization, and election-related disputes. Volacu and Aligica (2023) argue that democratic resilience refers to the capacity of democratic institutions to respond effectively to political and governance challenges while preserving democratic principles. Electoral integrity contributes to democratic resilience by strengthening public confidence in electoral processes and supporting peaceful political competition.

Despite substantial legal and institutional reforms, challenges continue to affect electoral governance in many democratic systems, including Indonesia. Concerns regarding electoral fairness, electoral disputes, misinformation, voter participation, and institutional effectiveness demonstrate that maintaining electoral integrity requires continuous governance improvements. These challenges highlight the need to examine how legal frameworks contribute to democratic governance and electoral accountability.

Although previous studies have explored electoral systems, political participation, and democratic governance, many focus on specific electoral events or institutional reforms. There remains a need for comprehensive research examining electoral integrity through the combined perspectives of Indonesian electoral law and international democratic standards. Such analysis is particularly important because Indonesia's electoral governance framework operates within both national constitutional principles and international human rights obligations.

In response to this gap, this study employs a normative juridical method to examine electoral integrity and democratic governance in Indonesia. The analysis focuses on Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as the principal legal frameworks supporting electoral rights, political participation, transparency, and accountability. By synthesizing contemporary scholarship concerning electoral integrity, democratic governance, political participation, and democratic resilience, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how electoral governance contributes to democratic legitimacy and accountability in Indonesia. The research questions in this study are: (RQ1) How does electoral integrity contribute to democratic legitimacy, political trust, and political participation in Indonesia? and (RQ2) How do the national electoral legal framework and international human rights standards support electoral accountability and address challenges to 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 according to legal standards, democratic principles, and accepted international norms. Democratic systems derive legitimacy from electoral processes that enable citizens to choose political representatives freely and fairly. Consequently, the credibility of democratic

institutions depends significantly on the integrity of electoral administration and the public perception that elections are conducted transparently and impartially.

The concept of electoral integrity encompasses multiple dimensions, including transparency, accountability, fairness, inclusiveness, and respect for political rights. Elections are considered to possess integrity when they are administered consistently with legal frameworks and democratic principles throughout all stages of the electoral process. Garnett and James (2021) argue that electoral integrity provides an important measure of democratic quality because it reflects the effectiveness and legitimacy of electoral institutions. Similarly, González et al. (2024) emphasize that perceptions of electoral fairness significantly influence public attitudes toward democracy and institutional trust.

Democratic governance relies upon electoral processes as mechanisms for representation and accountability. Elections enable citizens to evaluate political leaders and influence public policy through democratic participation. Consequently, electoral integrity contributes directly to democratic legitimacy by ensuring that electoral outcomes accurately reflect the preferences of voters. Mauk (2022) argues that electoral integrity strengthens political trust because citizens are more likely to accept election outcomes when electoral procedures are perceived as fair and transparent. These findings suggest that electoral integrity serves as a critical foundation for democratic stability.

The literature further demonstrates that electoral integrity contributes to accountability within democratic systems. Elections provide opportunities for citizens to reward or sanction political leaders based on governmental performance. Through this process, electoral institutions strengthen democratic accountability by linking political authority to citizen preferences. Papadopoulos (2023) emphasizes that accountability remains a central feature of democratic governance because it ensures that public officials remain answerable to the electorate. Electoral integrity therefore supports democratic accountability by preserving the credibility of electoral mechanisms.

Transparency represents another important dimension of electoral governance. Citizens must possess confidence that electoral procedures are conducted openly and according to established rules. Transparent electoral processes enable public oversight and reduce opportunities for electoral misconduct. Androniceanu (2021) argues that transparency contributes to governance quality by strengthening public trust and institutional legitimacy. Within electoral systems, transparency helps ensure that electoral outcomes are perceived as legitimate and consistent with democratic principles.

The literature also highlights the growing importance of electoral resilience. Contemporary electoral systems face challenges associated with technological change, misinformation, political polarization, and cybersecurity risks. Garnett and James (2020) argue that digital technologies create both opportunities and vulnerabilities

within electoral governance. As a result, maintaining electoral integrity increasingly requires institutions capable of adapting to emerging threats while preserving democratic standards. Electoral integrity therefore functions not only as a legal requirement but also as a mechanism for protecting democratic resilience.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that electoral integrity is closely connected to democratic governance through its contributions to legitimacy, accountability, transparency, political trust, and democratic stability. These relationships illustrate why electoral integrity remains a central concern within contemporary democratic systems.

Indonesian Electoral Law Framework

Indonesia has established a comprehensive legal framework governing elections and democratic representation. The constitutional basis for electoral governance is found within the 1945 Constitution, which recognizes popular sovereignty as a fundamental principle of the Indonesian state. Elections serve as the primary mechanism through which citizens exercise political rights and participate in democratic governance. Consequently, electoral administration occupies a central position within Indonesia's constitutional and democratic system.

The principal statutory framework regulating elections is Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections. The law consolidates regulations concerning electoral institutions, electoral administration, voter registration, campaign activities, vote counting, election supervision, and dispute resolution. Through these provisions, the law seeks to ensure that elections are conducted fairly, transparently, and accountably. The framework also establishes responsibilities for electoral management bodies and oversight institutions responsible for safeguarding electoral integrity.

Law No. 7 of 2017 emphasizes several democratic principles, including direct participation, equality, fairness, transparency, and accountability. These principles are intended to promote public confidence in electoral processes and strengthen democratic legitimacy. Electoral institutions are expected to administer elections impartially while ensuring that all eligible citizens possess equal opportunities to participate in political processes. Consequently, the law provides important safeguards supporting electoral rights and democratic representation.

The literature highlights the significance of electoral law in shaping democratic governance. Risky et al. (2023) argue that electoral system regulation influences political representation, institutional accountability, and democratic development. Similarly, Arifin et al. (2025) emphasize that electoral reforms remain important for strengthening democratic governance and improving electoral effectiveness. These findings indicate that electoral law functions as an essential mechanism for promoting democratic stability and political legitimacy.

Electoral institutions constitute another important component of Indonesia's electoral framework. The General Election Commission (KPU), Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), and other electoral bodies play critical roles in administering and supervising elections. These institutions are responsible for implementing legal

standards, ensuring procedural fairness, and resolving electoral disputes. Effective electoral governance therefore depends not only on legal frameworks but also on the capacity and credibility of electoral institutions.

The literature further demonstrates that institutional resilience contributes to electoral integrity. Kristiyanto, Arinanto, and Ghafur (2023) argue that institutional development strengthens democratic governance by improving the ability of political and electoral systems to respond to challenges. Electoral institutions that operate transparently and effectively are more likely to maintain public confidence and support democratic legitimacy. Consequently, institutional quality remains a key factor influencing electoral governance outcomes.

The Indonesian electoral framework also reflects broader commitments to democratic participation and constitutional governance. Elections are intended to provide citizens with meaningful opportunities to influence political decision-making and hold public officials accountable. Through legal safeguards and institutional mechanisms, electoral law seeks to ensure that democratic participation occurs within transparent and accountable governance structures.

Overall, Indonesia's electoral law framework provides important legal and institutional foundations for democratic governance. Through constitutional principles, electoral legislation, and electoral management institutions, the framework seeks to protect political rights, strengthen accountability, and maintain electoral integrity. These components collectively support democratic legitimacy and effective electoral governance.

Political Participation and Electoral Rights

Political participation is a fundamental element of democratic governance because it enables citizens to influence public affairs, contribute to political decision-making, and hold governments accountable. Democratic systems depend upon active citizen involvement to maintain legitimacy and ensure that political institutions remain responsive to public interests. Elections provide one of the most important mechanisms through which citizens exercise political rights and participate in governance processes. Consequently, political participation is closely connected to democratic representation, accountability, and legitimacy.

Electoral rights constitute the legal foundation supporting political participation. These rights include the ability to vote, seek public office, participate in political activities, and engage in public affairs without unreasonable restrictions. International human rights law recognizes political participation as an essential democratic right because it enables citizens to influence governmental authority through lawful and peaceful means. Electoral rights therefore function as safeguards that protect democratic governance and political equality.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides one of the most important international frameworks governing electoral rights and democratic

participation. Article 25 of the ICCPR recognizes the right of citizens to take part in public affairs, vote and be elected in genuine periodic elections, and access public service on equal terms. These provisions establish international standards designed to promote democratic governance and protect political participation. Butt (2024) emphasizes that Article 25 remains a cornerstone of international democratic norms because it links political participation with democratic legitimacy and representative government.

The literature consistently highlights the importance of political participation for democratic stability. Citizens who participate in electoral processes are more likely to perceive political institutions as legitimate and representative. Oser, Grinson, Boulianne, and Halperin (2022) argue that political efficacy significantly influences participation because individuals are more likely to engage politically when they believe their actions can affect public outcomes. These findings suggest that electoral systems should promote both accessibility and confidence in democratic institutions.

Political participation has also evolved alongside technological developments. Social media platforms and digital communication tools have expanded opportunities for political engagement by enabling citizens to access information, discuss political issues, and mobilize collective action. Theocharis, Boulianne, Koc-Michalska, and Bimber (2023) argue that digital platforms increasingly shape patterns of political participation by influencing how citizens interact with political processes. While digital participation may strengthen democratic engagement, it also creates challenges associated with misinformation and unequal access to information.

Within Indonesia, electoral rights are protected through constitutional provisions and electoral legislation. The 1945 Constitution guarantees political participation through democratic elections, while Law No. 7 of 2017 establishes procedures designed to ensure equal voting opportunities and fair electoral competition. These legal protections aim to ensure that all eligible citizens can participate in political processes without discrimination. Consequently, electoral rights function as an important mechanism for realizing democratic governance and popular sovereignty.

The principle of equal suffrage represents another important dimension of electoral rights. Democratic governance requires that citizens possess equal opportunities to influence electoral outcomes regardless of social, economic, ethnic, or political backgrounds. The ICCPR reinforces this principle by requiring states to ensure universal and equal suffrage in genuine elections. These standards contribute to democratic legitimacy because electoral outcomes are considered more representative when participation opportunities are distributed equally among citizens.

The literature further demonstrates that political participation strengthens democratic accountability. Elections provide opportunities for citizens to evaluate governmental performance and influence future political direction. Through voting and other forms of political engagement, citizens can reward effective governance or express dissatisfaction with political leaders. This relationship between participation

and accountability reinforces democratic governance by ensuring that public officials remain responsive to voter preferences and public interests.

However, several challenges continue to affect political participation. Political disengagement, declining trust in institutions, misinformation, and unequal access to political information may reduce participation levels and weaken democratic legitimacy. Electoral governance frameworks therefore play an important role in creating conditions that encourage meaningful participation and protect political rights. Democratic systems require continuous efforts to ensure that citizens remain able and willing to participate in public affairs.

The literature demonstrates that political participation and electoral rights constitute essential foundations of democratic governance. Through constitutional protections, international human rights standards, and electoral institutions, democratic systems seek to ensure that citizens can participate effectively in political processes. These rights strengthen legitimacy, accountability, representation, and public trust, thereby contributing significantly to democratic governance.

Transparency and Accountability in Elections

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles of electoral governance because they strengthen public confidence in democratic processes and ensure the legitimacy of electoral outcomes. Democratic elections require institutions that operate openly, provide accurate information, and remain answerable for their actions. Without transparency and accountability, public trust in elections may decline, potentially undermining democratic legitimacy and political stability.

Transparency refers to the openness of electoral processes and the accessibility of information concerning election administration. Transparent elections enable citizens, political parties, observers, and civil society organizations to monitor electoral activities and evaluate whether electoral procedures comply with legal standards. Transparency therefore contributes to electoral integrity by reducing opportunities for misconduct and increasing public confidence in election administration.

Papadopoulos (2023) argues that accountability is a central characteristic of democratic governance because it ensures that institutions remain answerable to citizens and subject to oversight mechanisms. Within electoral systems, accountability requires electoral authorities to justify decisions, comply with legal obligations, and respond appropriately to public concerns. These mechanisms help ensure that electoral administration remains impartial and consistent with democratic principles.

The literature consistently identifies transparency as a key determinant of electoral legitimacy. Androniceanu (2021) emphasizes that transparency strengthens governance quality by improving institutional credibility and reducing uncertainty regarding governmental actions. Applied to elections, transparency enables stakeholders to observe electoral procedures, verify results, and assess the fairness of electoral

administration. Consequently, transparent electoral processes contribute to public trust and democratic stability.

Electoral accountability is closely connected to oversight institutions. Electoral management bodies, supervisory agencies, and dispute-resolution mechanisms provide institutional safeguards designed to monitor electoral conduct and address violations of electoral rules. Law No. 7 of 2017 establishes a framework for electoral oversight in Indonesia through institutions such as the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu). These institutions play essential roles in maintaining electoral integrity and ensuring compliance with democratic standards.

The literature further demonstrates that accountability contributes to public trust. Citizens are more likely to accept electoral outcomes when electoral institutions are perceived as independent, transparent, and accountable. Ahmad (2025) argues that transparency and accountability strengthen institutional trust by ensuring that public authorities remain responsive to citizen expectations. Similarly, Saldanha, Dias, and Guillaumon (2022) emphasize that transparent governance practices improve legitimacy by facilitating public oversight and institutional responsiveness.

Technological developments have introduced new opportunities and challenges for transparency and accountability in elections. Digital platforms can improve information dissemination and increase access to electoral information. However, technological environments may also facilitate misinformation, disinformation, and manipulation of political communication. Electoral governance frameworks must therefore adapt to these developments while preserving transparency and accountability principles.

Overall, transparency and accountability remain essential components of electoral integrity and democratic governance. By promoting openness, oversight, institutional responsibility, and public trust, these principles contribute significantly to the legitimacy and effectiveness of electoral systems.

Challenges to Electoral Integrity

Despite the importance of electoral integrity for democratic governance, contemporary electoral systems face numerous challenges that may affect the credibility, fairness, and legitimacy of elections. Democratic elections require institutions capable of ensuring transparency, accountability, political participation, and equal treatment of voters. However, technological developments, political polarization, misinformation, and institutional weaknesses continue to create risks for electoral governance. These challenges demonstrate that maintaining electoral integrity requires continuous adaptation and institutional resilience.

One of the most significant challenges concerns the growing influence of digital technologies on electoral processes. Digital communication platforms provide opportunities to improve voter engagement and information dissemination, yet they also create vulnerabilities related to misinformation, disinformation, and cyber threats. Garnett and James (2020) argue that cyber elections present both opportunities and risks because technological innovations may improve electoral administration while

simultaneously increasing exposure to digital manipulation. These developments suggest that electoral governance frameworks must evolve to address emerging technological threats.

Misinformation and disinformation have become major concerns within democratic systems. False or misleading information can influence voter perceptions, distort political debates, and reduce public confidence in electoral institutions. The rapid spread of information through social media platforms has increased the complexity of maintaining electoral integrity. Theocharis et al. (2023) emphasize that digital platforms significantly influence political engagement and information consumption, making them important factors in contemporary electoral governance. Consequently, democratic institutions must develop strategies that protect electoral integrity while respecting freedom of expression.

Electoral trust represents another important challenge. Public confidence in electoral processes is essential for democratic legitimacy because citizens are more likely to accept electoral outcomes when elections are perceived as fair and credible. Mauk (2022) argues that electoral integrity directly influences political trust, particularly among individuals whose preferred candidates or parties do not achieve electoral success. Likewise, González et al. (2024) demonstrate that perceptions of electoral fairness significantly affect attitudes toward democracy and political institutions. These findings suggest that maintaining public trust remains a critical objective of electoral governance.

Political polarization also presents challenges for electoral integrity. Highly polarized political environments may increase disputes regarding electoral outcomes and reduce confidence in democratic institutions. Electoral systems must therefore provide transparent procedures and effective dispute-resolution mechanisms capable of maintaining public confidence during periods of political competition. The credibility of electoral institutions becomes particularly important when elections produce contested outcomes or intense political disagreements.

Electoral disputes constitute another significant governance challenge. Disagreements concerning election administration, vote counting, candidate eligibility, or electoral procedures may undermine public trust if they are not resolved effectively. Democratic governance requires institutions capable of addressing electoral disputes impartially and transparently. Law No. 7 of 2017 provides mechanisms for electoral supervision and dispute resolution in Indonesia, reflecting the importance of institutional safeguards for maintaining electoral legitimacy.

The literature further identifies institutional capacity as an important determinant of electoral integrity. Electoral management bodies must possess adequate resources, professional expertise, and operational independence to administer elections effectively. Kristiyanto, Arinanto, and Ghafur (2023) argue that institutional resilience contributes significantly to democratic governance because strong institutions are better equipped to respond to political and administrative challenges. Consequently,

strengthening electoral institutions remains essential for protecting democratic legitimacy.

Democratic resilience has emerged as an increasingly important concept in discussions concerning electoral governance. Volacu and Aligica (2023) define democratic resilience as the capacity of democratic systems to withstand challenges while preserving democratic principles and institutional stability. Electoral integrity contributes directly to democratic resilience because credible elections reinforce public trust, political accountability, and peaceful political competition. These relationships indicate that electoral governance should be viewed not only as an administrative process but also as a mechanism for safeguarding democracy itself.

Citizen oversight represents another important factor supporting electoral integrity. Garbiras-Díaz and Montenegro (2022) argue that public monitoring and electoral observation can improve electoral accountability by increasing transparency and discouraging misconduct. Citizen participation in electoral oversight therefore strengthens democratic governance by promoting accountability and public confidence in electoral institutions.

Another challenge concerns declining political participation in some democratic systems. Reduced voter turnout and political disengagement may weaken democratic legitimacy because electoral outcomes become less representative of the broader population. Electoral governance frameworks should therefore encourage participation through accessible voting procedures, voter education initiatives, and transparent electoral administration. Political participation remains essential for ensuring that elections continue to function as effective mechanisms of democratic representation.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that electoral integrity faces challenges associated with misinformation, cyber threats, political polarization, electoral disputes, institutional capacity, and declining public trust. These challenges highlight the importance of strong electoral institutions, effective accountability mechanisms, transparent procedures, and democratic resilience. Addressing these issues is essential for maintaining electoral legitimacy and strengthening democratic governance in Indonesia and other democratic systems.

3. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a normative juridical method to examine the relationship between electoral integrity and democratic governance in Indonesia. The analysis focuses on how electoral law frameworks contribute to political participation, transparency, accountability, electoral legitimacy, and democratic resilience. Particular attention is given to Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), especially Article 25 concerning political participation and electoral rights.

The study applies a normative juridical approach to analyze relevant legal norms, statutory provisions, legal principles, and international human rights standards. The

legal analysis focuses on examining the applicable legal frameworks and relevant scholarly literature concerning electoral integrity and democratic governance.

Relevant legal materials and literature were collected from Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Hein Online, Taylor & Francis Online, and other governance and legal research databases. Searches were conducted using combinations of keywords including electoral integrity, democratic governance, elections, electoral accountability, political participation, electoral transparency, voting rights, democratic legitimacy, electoral resilience, ICCPR Article 25, and Indonesia elections. Additional searches focused on Indonesian electoral governance and comparative electoral law studies.

The primary legal materials consist of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly Article 25. Secondary legal materials include peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference papers, legal studies, governance research, and policy reports published primarily between 2020 and 2025. Legal materials were selected based on their relevance to electoral integrity, electoral governance, political participation, democratic accountability, electoral rights, democratic resilience, and election administration. Materials unrelated to the research objectives were excluded from the analysis.

The selected legal materials and literature were analyzed using a qualitative juridical analysis. The analysis was organized into five thematic categories: electoral integrity and democratic governance, Indonesian electoral law framework, political participation and electoral rights, transparency and accountability in elections, and challenges to electoral integrity. These themes were selected because they represent the principal dimensions through which elections contribute to democratic governance and institutional legitimacy.

The analytical framework conceptualizes electoral integrity as a democratic governance mechanism that strengthens political participation, accountability, transparency, public trust, and democratic legitimacy. Law No. 7 of 2017 is examined as the principal domestic framework governing elections in Indonesia, while the ICCPR serves as the primary international standard supporting electoral rights and democratic participation. Through the application of a normative juridical method and comparative legal analysis, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how electoral integrity contributes to democratic governance in Indonesia.

4. | RESULTS

Electoral Integrity, Democratic Legitimacy, and Political Participation

The findings of this study demonstrate that electoral integrity plays a critical role in strengthening democratic governance in Indonesia. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that credible elections contribute to political legitimacy, accountability, transparency, public trust, and democratic stability. Electoral governance frameworks established through Law No. 7 of 2017 and supported by

international standards contained in the ICCPR provide important legal foundations for protecting electoral rights and ensuring democratic participation. The findings further reveal that electoral integrity functions not only as an electoral principle but also as a governance mechanism that supports democratic accountability and institutional resilience.

One of the principal findings concerns the relationship between electoral integrity and democratic legitimacy. Democratic governments derive authority from elections that are perceived as fair, transparent, and inclusive. The literature consistently demonstrates that electoral integrity strengthens public confidence in democratic institutions because citizens are more likely to accept electoral outcomes when electoral procedures comply with legal and democratic standards. Garnett and James (2021) argue that electoral integrity serves as an important indicator of democratic quality because it reflects the effectiveness and credibility of electoral administration. Similarly, González et al. (2024) emphasize that perceptions of electoral fairness significantly influence public support for democratic institutions. These findings indicate that electoral integrity contributes directly to democratic legitimacy.

The findings further demonstrate that electoral integrity strengthens political trust. Citizens who perceive elections as fair and transparent are more likely to trust political institutions and accept electoral outcomes. Mauk (2022) argues that electoral integrity influences levels of political trust, particularly among individuals whose preferred political candidates do not win elections. Likewise, Mochtak, Lesschaeve, and Glaudić (2021) emphasize that confidence in electoral processes contributes to democratic stability because both electoral winners and losers are more likely to accept election results. These findings suggest that electoral integrity functions as an important mechanism for maintaining political stability and democratic governance.

Political participation emerged as another significant finding. Elections provide citizens with opportunities to exercise political rights and influence governmental authority. The reviewed literature indicates that participation strengthens democratic governance because it connects citizens directly to political decision-making processes. Oser et al. (2022) argue that political efficacy encourages participation by increasing citizens' confidence that their actions can affect political outcomes. These findings indicate that electoral systems should facilitate broad and inclusive participation to strengthen democratic legitimacy.

The study also highlights the importance of electoral rights as recognized within the ICCPR. Article 25 establishes international standards concerning political participation, voting rights, equal suffrage, and democratic representation. The findings indicate that these provisions provide an important normative framework supporting democratic governance and electoral accountability. Butt (2024) emphasizes that the ICCPR remains one of the most influential international instruments governing democratic participation. Consequently, electoral governance in Indonesia operates within both national legal frameworks and international human rights obligations.

Legal Framework, Electoral Accountability, and Democratic Challenge

Another important finding concerns Indonesia's electoral law framework. Law No. 7 of 2017 establishes comprehensive regulations governing electoral administration, electoral institutions, voter registration, campaign activities, electoral supervision, and dispute resolution. The literature demonstrates that the law provides important safeguards supporting electoral integrity and democratic governance. Risky et al. (2023) argue that electoral system regulation significantly influences democratic representation and accountability. Similarly, Arifin et al. (2025) emphasize that electoral reforms remain important for strengthening democratic institutions and improving electoral effectiveness.

The findings further reveal that transparency and accountability constitute essential dimensions of electoral governance. Transparent electoral procedures allow citizens, political parties, and civil society organizations to monitor elections and evaluate compliance with democratic standards. Accountability mechanisms ensure that electoral institutions remain answerable for their actions and decisions. Papadopoulos (2023) argues that accountability is fundamental to democratic governance because it links public authority to citizen oversight. Likewise, Androniceanu (2021) emphasizes that transparency contributes to governance quality by strengthening institutional legitimacy and public trust.

Table 1. Comparison of Electoral Governance Principles

Electoral Principle	Law No. 7 of 2017	ICCPR
Political Participation	Yes	Yes
Voting Rights	Yes	Yes
Equal Suffrage	Yes	Yes
Electoral Transparency	Yes	Yes
Electoral Accountability	Yes	Yes
Democratic Legitimacy	Yes	Yes
Public Representation	Yes	Yes
Electoral Oversight	Strong	Limited

Source: Authors' compilation based on Law No. 7 of 2017 and ICCPR Article 25.

The comparison demonstrates that both legal frameworks support core democratic principles associated with electoral governance. Law No. 7 of 2017 provides detailed institutional and procedural regulations for elections in Indonesia, while the ICCPR establishes broader international standards concerning electoral rights and democratic participation.

The findings also indicate that electoral oversight institutions play an important role in maintaining electoral integrity. Institutions such as the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) contribute to accountability by supervising electoral activities and addressing electoral disputes. Effective electoral oversight improves public confidence by ensuring that elections are administered

according to legal standards. Consequently, institutional effectiveness remains a significant determinant of electoral legitimacy.

Another major finding concerns emerging challenges affecting electoral integrity. The literature identifies misinformation, cyber threats, political polarization, electoral disputes, and institutional limitations as important risks to democratic governance. Garnett and James (2020) argue that digital technologies create new vulnerabilities within electoral systems by increasing exposure to cyber risks and information manipulation. Similarly, Theocharis et al. (2023) emphasize that social media platforms influence political engagement and information consumption, creating both opportunities and challenges for electoral governance.

Table 2. Challenges to Electoral Integrity

Challenge	Impact on Elections	Governance Implication
Misinformation	Distorts voter information	Reduces public trust
Cyber Threats	Disrupts electoral processes	Weakens accountability
Political Polarization	Increases electoral conflict	Challenges legitimacy
Electoral Disputes	Delays acceptance of results	Reduces confidence
Institutional Weaknesses	Limits effective oversight	Weakens governance
Low Political Participation	Reduces representation	Creates democratic deficits

Source: Authors' synthesis based on the reviewed literature.

The findings indicate that these challenges affect not only election administration but also broader democratic governance. Electoral integrity therefore depends upon institutional resilience and the ability of electoral systems to adapt to evolving political and technological environments.

Democratic resilience emerged as another important theme within the literature. Volacu and Aligica (2023) argue that democratic resilience refers to the capacity of democratic institutions to withstand challenges while preserving democratic principles. Electoral integrity contributes to resilience by strengthening legitimacy, accountability, and public trust. Likewise, Alihodžić (2023) emphasizes that risk management and crisis preparedness are increasingly important components of contemporary electoral governance. These findings suggest that protecting electoral integrity is essential for maintaining democratic stability.

The evidence reviewed in this study demonstrates that electoral integrity contributes significantly to democratic governance in Indonesia. Through political participation, accountability, transparency, electoral rights protection, and institutional oversight, electoral governance strengthens democratic legitimacy and public trust. Although challenges associated with misinformation, cyber threats, political polarization, and institutional capacity remain significant, both Law No. 7 of 2017 and the ICCPR provide important legal foundations supporting democratic elections and accountable governance.

5. | DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that electoral integrity constitutes a fundamental component of democratic governance in Indonesia. Democratic systems depend upon elections that are transparent, accountable, inclusive, and capable of reflecting the will of citizens. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that electoral integrity strengthens democratic legitimacy by ensuring that electoral outcomes are accepted as credible and lawful. These findings support the argument that electoral governance is not merely an administrative process but a central mechanism through which democratic authority is established and maintained.

One of the most important findings concerns the relationship between electoral integrity and democratic legitimacy. Elections function as the primary means through which citizens authorize political leadership and participate in public decision-making. When electoral processes are conducted fairly and transparently, citizens are more likely to trust political institutions and accept electoral outcomes. The findings therefore suggest that electoral integrity serves as a critical foundation for democratic legitimacy because it reinforces confidence in representative government and electoral institutions.

The study also highlights the significance of political participation within democratic governance. Elections provide citizens with opportunities to exercise political rights and influence governmental authority. The findings indicate that participation strengthens democratic accountability by creating direct connections between citizens and political institutions. These observations are consistent with Article 25 of the ICCPR, which recognizes participation in public affairs and genuine elections as fundamental democratic rights. Consequently, political participation should be understood not only as a procedural activity but also as an essential component of democratic citizenship.

Another important implication concerns the role of electoral law in safeguarding democratic governance. Law No. 7 of 2017 establishes comprehensive rules governing electoral administration, electoral oversight, voter registration, and dispute resolution. The findings demonstrate that these legal provisions contribute to electoral integrity by promoting transparency, accountability, and procedural fairness. Through legal safeguards and institutional mechanisms, electoral law strengthens public confidence and supports democratic legitimacy.

The comparative analysis further reveals significant alignment between Law No. 7 of 2017 and the ICCPR. Both frameworks emphasize political participation, voting rights, equal suffrage, transparency, and democratic accountability. While the ICCPR provides broad international standards concerning electoral rights, Indonesian electoral law translates these principles into detailed institutional and procedural regulations. This relationship demonstrates how international human rights standards can reinforce domestic democratic governance frameworks.

Transparency emerged as another significant dimension of electoral integrity. Democratic elections require electoral institutions that operate openly and provide citizens with access to relevant information. The findings indicate that transparency improves electoral legitimacy because citizens are more likely to trust electoral outcomes when electoral procedures can be observed and evaluated. Furthermore, transparency facilitates public oversight and reduces opportunities for electoral misconduct. Consequently, transparency remains an essential requirement for maintaining public confidence in electoral governance.

The findings also demonstrate the importance of accountability within electoral systems. Electoral institutions are expected to administer elections impartially and remain answerable for their decisions. Accountability mechanisms enable citizens, political parties, and oversight bodies to evaluate institutional performance and challenge irregularities when necessary. Effective accountability therefore contributes to democratic governance by ensuring that electoral authority remains subject to legal and public scrutiny.

Despite these positive contributions, the study identifies several challenges affecting electoral integrity. Misinformation and disinformation have become increasingly significant concerns within contemporary elections. Digital communication technologies facilitate rapid information exchange, but they also create opportunities for manipulation and the dissemination of inaccurate information. The findings suggest that misinformation may reduce public trust and complicate efforts to maintain transparent and informed electoral processes.

Cybersecurity risks present another challenge for electoral governance. Electoral administration increasingly relies upon digital technologies for voter registration, information management, and communication. While technological innovations may improve efficiency, they also expose electoral systems to cyber threats and security vulnerabilities. Consequently, protecting electoral integrity requires governance frameworks capable of addressing emerging technological risks while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Political polarization and electoral disputes also affect democratic governance. Intense political competition may increase tensions surrounding electoral outcomes and reduce public confidence in democratic institutions. The findings indicate that strong electoral oversight mechanisms and effective dispute-resolution procedures are essential for maintaining electoral legitimacy during periods of political contestation. Electoral institutions therefore play a critical role in preserving democratic stability and public trust.

The concept of democratic resilience provides an important perspective for understanding electoral governance. Democratic resilience refers to the capacity of democratic institutions to respond effectively to political, technological, and social challenges while preserving democratic principles. The findings demonstrate that electoral integrity contributes directly to democratic resilience because credible

elections strengthen legitimacy, accountability, and citizen confidence. Electoral governance should therefore be viewed as a long-term institutional investment in democratic stability.

Overall, the study demonstrates that electoral integrity contributes significantly to democratic governance in Indonesia through its effects on legitimacy, participation, accountability, transparency, and public trust. The comparative analysis of Law No. 7 of 2017 and the ICCPR further indicates that domestic and international legal frameworks share common commitments to democratic elections and political rights. However, challenges associated with misinformation, cyber threats, polarization, and institutional capacity require continued attention. Strengthening electoral integrity therefore remains essential for promoting democratic governance and ensuring the continued legitimacy of Indonesia's electoral system.

5. | CONCLUSION

This study examined electoral integrity and democratic governance in Indonesia through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The analysis focused on Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as the principal legal frameworks governing electoral rights, political participation, transparency, and accountability. The findings demonstrate that electoral integrity plays a significant role in strengthening democratic governance by promoting political participation, democratic legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and public trust. Elections serve as the primary mechanism through which citizens exercise political rights and hold governments accountable. Both Law No. 7 of 2017 and the ICCPR provide important legal safeguards supporting fair elections and democratic participation. The study also found that transparency and accountability are essential for maintaining confidence in electoral institutions, while electoral oversight mechanisms contribute to procedural fairness and democratic legitimacy. Nevertheless, challenges related to misinformation, cyber threats, political polarization, electoral disputes, and institutional capacity continue to affect electoral governance. The study concludes that electoral integrity remains a cornerstone of democratic governance in Indonesia. Strengthening electoral accountability, protecting electoral rights, enhancing transparency, and improving institutional resilience are essential strategies for maintaining democratic legitimacy and ensuring that elections continue to function as effective mechanisms of representative government.

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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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