INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE OF A GENERAL ELECTION COMMISSION: EVIDENCE FROM THE BANGGAI REGENCY GENERAL ELECTION COMMISSION IN INDONESIA'S 2024 REGIONAL HEAD ELECTION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the institutional performance of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission as a local electoral management body in Indonesia's 2024 regional head election. Using Poister's (2003) organizational performance framework, this research evaluates performance across seven dimensions: output, efficiency, productivity, service quality, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and stakeholder satisfaction. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and institutional records, particularly focusing on the occurrence of court-mandated re-voting (Pemungutan Suara Ulang) in two sub-districts. The findings reveal that procedural and administrative weaknesses significantly undermined institutional efficiency and effectiveness, leading to electoral disputes and re-voting decisions by the Constitutional Court. This study contributes to electoral governance literature by demonstrating how performance failures at the local level directly affect democratic legitimacy and public trust. The findings suggest that strengthening institutional capacity, administrative consistency, and internal supervision mechanisms is essential for improving electoral management performance in decentralized democratic systems.

Keywords: General Election Commission; Organizational Performance; Local Elections; Public Administration; Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Regional head elections constitute a critical mechanism for democratic consolidation in decentralized political systems. In Indonesia, the post-authoritarian reform era institutionalized direct regional head elections (Pilkada) as a means of strengthening political legitimacy, accountability, and citizen participation at the subnational level. Since the introduction of simultaneous local elections, the role of electoral

institutions has become increasingly central in determining the quality and credibility of democratic governance.

The General Election Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum—KPU), as an independent constitutional body, is entrusted with administering elections in accordance with principles of legality, transparency, impartiality, and administrative integrity. At the local level, the performance of Regional General Election Commissions (GECs) is particularly consequential, as administrative errors and procedural violations may directly lead to electoral disputes, court interventions, and declining public trust.

Indonesia's 2024 simultaneous regional head election represented one of the largest subnational electoral events globally, involving elections across 37 provinces, 415 regencies, and 93 municipalities. Despite comprehensive regulatory frameworks, the election was marked by widespread administrative disputes. The Constitutional Court mandated re-voting (Pemungutan Suara Ulang—PSU) in 24 regions, primarily due to procedural and administrative deficiencies. These outcomes indicate that formal compliance with electoral regulations does not necessarily guarantee effective institutional performance.

Banggai Regency emerged as one of the regions required to conduct PSU in two sub-districts. This case offers a valuable empirical context to examine how organizational performance failures within a Regional General Election Commission translate into legal disputes and electoral re-runs. Rather than treating PSU as a technical anomaly, this study conceptualizes re-voting as an indicator of systemic institutional performance weaknesses.

This article aims to evaluate the institutional performance of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission in administering the 2024 regional head election using Poister's (2003) organizational performance framework. By applying this framework, the study contributes to international scholarship on electoral governance and public sector performance, particularly in decentralized democracies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

General Election Commissions and Democratic Governance

General Election Commissions play a central role in ensuring electoral integrity and democratic legitimacy. Norris (2014) argues that the credibility of elections depends

not only on legal frameworks but also on the administrative capacity and professionalism of electoral institutions. Similarly, López-Pintor (2000) emphasizes that electoral management quality significantly influences voter trust and political stability.

Comparative studies demonstrate that weak electoral administration often leads to disputes, litigation, and declining confidence in democratic institutions (Elklit & Reynolds, 2005). While national-level electoral bodies receive considerable scholarly attention, subnational General Election Commissions remain underexplored, despite their critical role in decentralized systems.

Organizational Performance in Public Sector Institutions

Organizational performance theory has evolved from efficiency-oriented models toward multidimensional frameworks that incorporate outcomes, service quality, and stakeholder satisfaction (Boyne, 2002). Poister (2003) proposes a comprehensive performance measurement framework encompassing output, efficiency, productivity, service quality, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

This framework has been widely applied in public service organizations, including health services, education, and local government administration (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2008). However, its application to electoral institutions remains limited, particularly in the context of electoral disputes.

Empirical Studies on KPU Performance in Indonesia

Prior research on KPU performance demonstrates recurring challenges related to administrative accuracy, organizational commitment, and coordination among ad hoc electoral bodies. Studies such as Waris (2011) highlight that organizational commitment is a prerequisite for achieving performance across multiple dimensions. Other research in public service institutions underscores the influence of leadership capacity, organizational culture, and internal control mechanisms on institutional effectiveness.

However, these studies predominantly examine either national elections or routine administrative services. There is a notable absence of empirical research that evaluates local KPU performance using an established organizational performance framework within the context of electoral disputes and re-voting mandates.

Research Gap and Contribution

This study addresses three significant gaps. First, it extends organizational performance theory into the domain of electoral governance by applying Poister's framework to a Regional General Election Commission. Second, it provides empirical evidence from a subnational electoral institution operating under conditions of legal dispute and court-mandated re-voting. Third, it reconceptualizes PSU as an indicator of institutional performance failure rather than a purely legal outcome. By doing so, the study contributes to broader debates on democratic governance, institutional capacity, and public sector performance in decentralized political systems.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Poister's (2003) organizational performance framework as its primary analytical lens. Poister conceptualizes organizational performance as a multidimensional construct that goes beyond output measurement, emphasizing efficiency, effectiveness, service quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. This framework is particularly relevant for public sector organizations whose success cannot be assessed solely through financial indicators.

Poister identifies seven core dimensions of performance: output, efficiency, productivity, service quality, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and customer (stakeholder) satisfaction. Together, these dimensions enable a comprehensive evaluation of both internal organizational processes and external outcomes experienced by service recipients.

In the context of electoral management bodies, these dimensions can be operationalized as follows. *Output* refers to the successful completion of electoral stages, including voter registration, candidate verification, vote counting, and result certification. *Efficiency* and *productivity* relate to the use of resources—human, financial, and temporal—in administering elections. *Service quality* reflects procedural clarity, administrative accuracy, and responsiveness to electoral stakeholders. *Effectiveness* concerns the extent to which electoral objectives are achieved without legal disputes or procedural failures. *Cost-effectiveness* evaluates whether electoral outcomes are achieved without excessive financial or administrative burdens, particularly in relation to re-voting processes. Finally, *stakeholder satisfaction* encompasses public trust, political actors' acceptance of results, and perceptions of institutional credibility.

By applying Poister's framework, this study positions re-voting (*Pemungutan Suara Ulang*) not merely as a legal outcome, but as a measurable indicator of institutional performance failure—particularly in efficiency, effectiveness, and service quality. This theoretical approach allows for a systematic and analytically rigorous evaluation of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission as a local electoral management body.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to examine the institutional performance of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission during the 2024 regional head election. A case study design is appropriate given the study's focus on in-depth institutional analysis within a specific socio-political and administrative context.

Data Collection

Data were collected through multiple sources to ensure analytical rigor, credibility, and triangulation. Primary data were obtained through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants selected using purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was employed to identify individuals who possessed direct institutional experience, authoritative knowledge, and practical involvement in the administration and supervision of the 2024 Regional Head Election in Banggai Regency.

The selected informants included: (1) members of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission (KPU) responsible for electoral planning and implementation; (2) ad hoc electoral officers at the sub-district and village levels (PPK and PPS) who were directly involved in operational execution; (3) officials from the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) responsible for oversight and enforcement; and (4) community representatives and voters who experienced the electoral process firsthand. This multi-level selection of informants enabled the study to capture institutional perspectives, operational realities, supervisory assessments, and public perceptions of electoral performance.

The use of purposive sampling aligns with qualitative research principles that emphasize information-rich cases rather than statistical representativeness (Patton,

2015). Informants were selected based on predefined criteria, including formal roles in election administration, length of involvement, direct exposure to the re-voting (Pemungutan Suara Ulang) process, and capacity to provide reflective insights into institutional performance. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, indicated by the recurrence of patterns and the absence of substantively new information (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Secondary data were collected to complement and triangulate interview findings. These included official election documents, Constitutional Court rulings related to electoral disputes, General Election Commission regulations, supervisory reports, and publicly available government and media publications concerning the 2024 election and the subsequent re-voting process. The integration of primary and secondary data enhanced the analytical robustness of the study and reduced the risk of single-source bias (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The seven dimensions of Poister's performance framework were used as analytical categories, enabling systematic coding and thematic interpretation of the data.

Trustworthiness

To enhance credibility and dependability, the study employed triangulation of data sources, member checking, and prolonged engagement with the research context. Transferability was supported through rich contextual description, allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to similar electoral settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study is based on in-depth interviews with key actors involved in the administration and oversight of the 2024 Regional Head Election in Banggai Regency, including the Chair of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission (KPU), sub-district and village-level election committees (PPK and PPS), election supervisors (Bawaslu), and community representatives as voters. These actors represent multiple

institutional levels within the electoral governance system and provide a comprehensive perspective on organizational performance in both administrative and substantive dimensions.

To ensure analytical rigor, interview data were systematically synthesized using Poister's (2003) organizational performance framework, which consists of seven dimensions: output, productivity, efficiency, service quality, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and customer satisfaction. The first table presents a consolidated summary of empirical findings across these dimensions, while the second table translates the findings into analytical codes that form the basis for interpretation and discussion.

Table 1. Summary of Interview Findings

No.	Performance Dimension (Poister, 2003)	General Election Commission (KPU)	District Election Committees (PPK & PPS)	Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu)	Community Representatives
1	Output	Electoral stages were completed according to the national schedule; however, Constitutional Court rulings mandated re-voting (PSU) in two sub-districts due to administrative and procedural violations.	Most electoral stages were implemented on time, but administrative errors at several polling stations became the basis for PSU.	Majority of polling stations complied with procedures; minor administrative issues were identified and reported.	Voting procedures were orderly and facilities met standards at most polling stations.
2	Productivity	Staff productivity improved through target-based work systems and digital tools, yet field supervision gaps remained.	High workload and limited personnel increased fatigue and reduced accuracy in administrative tasks.	Supervisory productivity was enhanced through staff rotation and digital reporting mechanisms.	Election officers were perceived as efficient and responsive during voting.
3	Efficiency	Budget management was efficient, with unspent funds returned to the local government;	Geographic constraints and PSU logistics reduced time and cost efficiency.	Resources were allocated efficiently to ensure coverage of all polling stations.	Distribution of logistics was considered adequate and timely at polling stations.

		PSU generated unplanned additional costs.			
4	**Service Quality**	Public information services were accessible, but neutrality violations by some actors undermined service integrity.	Service delivery was generally adequate, though some voter confusion occurred in remote areas.	Complaints were addressed promptly through coordination with election organizers.	Voters reported courteous and transparent service from polling staff.
5	**Effectiveness**	Voter turnout increased compared to previous elections, yet substantive effectiveness was weakened by PSU.	Participation was high, but administrative weaknesses reduced overall effectiveness.	Re-voting was implemented to restore electoral fairness.	Elections were viewed as fair and secure despite temporary disruptions.
6	**Cost-Effectiveness**	Regular stages were cost-efficient; PSU reduced overall cost-effectiveness.	Additional transport and logistics costs during PSU reduced efficiency.	Monitoring costs were controlled through effective scheduling and reporting.	Election facilities were considered proportional to outcomes.
7	**Stakeholder Satisfaction**	Public satisfaction was generally high but declined temporarily in PSU-affected areas.	Trust decreased in PSU locations, requiring further public communication efforts.	Public trust in supervisory functions remained relatively strong.	Overall satisfaction was positive, though PSU caused short-term disappointment.

Source: Compiled from in-depth interviews.

The synthesis presented in Table 1 demonstrates that the performance of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission (GEC) exhibited a dual character: strong formal compliance with electoral timelines and procedures, alongside substantive weaknesses in administrative accuracy and internal control. From an organizational performance perspective, the output and productivity dimensions were largely achieved, as evidenced by the timely completion of electoral stages and improved use of digital systems. However, the occurrence of court-mandated re-voting (PSU) reveals that output attainment alone does not equate to institutional success when procedural integrity is compromised.

Moreover, the table highlights a structural gap between efficiency and effectiveness. While budget absorption and routine resource management were conducted

efficiently—reflected in returned funds and controlled expenditures—the necessity of PSU significantly reduced overall cost-effectiveness and eroded stakeholder confidence. This finding reinforces Poister's (2003) argument that performance dimensions must be assessed holistically, as efficiency gains can be negated by failures in effectiveness and service quality. In the context of electoral governance, even limited administrative errors can generate systemic consequences that undermine democratic legitimacy.

While Table 1 provides a consolidated overview of performance outcomes, it does not fully explain *why* such outcomes emerged. To address this limitation, Table 2 presents an analytical coding of interview data, linking empirical observations to causal mechanisms such as organizational capacity, supervision gaps, external political pressure, and infrastructural constraints. This coding process allows for deeper interpretation of how and why performance varied across dimensions.

Table 2. Coding Matrix of Interview Findings Based on Organizational Performance Dimensions

No.	Performance Dimension	Key Codes	Empirical Indicators from Interviews
1.	Output	Timely implementation; Procedural compliance; Administrative error	Completion of election stages on schedule; PSU due to procedural violations
2.	Productivity	Workload intensity; Digital assistance; Human error	Long working hours; Use of SIREKAP and SIDALIH; Fatigue-induced mistakes
3.	Efficiency	Budget control; Geographic constraint; Logistical burden	Returned budget funds; Difficult terrain; Re-distribution of logistics
4.	Service Quality	Information accessibility; Professional conduct; Neutrality	Public information channels; Courteous service; ASN neutrality violations
5.	Effectiveness	Voter participation; Regulatory compliance; Electoral dispute	Increased turnout; Constitutional Court rulings; Re-voting outcomes

6.	Cost-Effectiveness	Planned expenditure; Unplanned costs; Risk management	Efficient routine spending; Additional PSU costs; Weak preventive controls
7.	Stakeholder Satisfaction	Public trust; Perceived fairness; Institutional credibility	High satisfaction rates; Temporary decline in trust after PSU

Table 2 translates qualitative interview data into an analytical coding structure aligned with Poister's organizational performance framework. The coding process reveals that most performance deficiencies were not rooted in resource scarcity, but rather in governance and control mechanisms—particularly supervision, risk management, and administrative discipline. Codes such as *administrative error*, *fatigue-induced mistakes*, and *neutrality violations* indicate that performance breakdowns occurred primarily at the implementation level, especially within ad hoc election bodies operating under high pressure and geographic constraints.

Furthermore, the coding matrix illustrates the causal linkage between dimensions. Weaknesses in productivity and service quality directly contributed to reduced effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, culminating in the need for PSU. This interdependence confirms that electoral performance cannot be evaluated through isolated indicators. Instead, it requires an integrated assessment of organizational processes, human resources, and institutional accountability. For electoral institutions such as General Election Commissions, strengthening preventive supervision and administrative accuracy emerges as a more cost-effective strategy than post hoc legal correction through re-voting.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the overall performance of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission reflects a paradox commonly observed in decentralized electoral administration: procedural compliance and operational completion coexist with substantive weaknesses in administrative integrity and institutional control. From a performance perspective, the election was formally successful in terms of schedule adherence, voter turnout, and logistical execution. However, the occurrence of court-mandated re-voting indicates that institutional performance cannot be assessed solely through output-oriented indicators, but must also account for procedural accuracy, governance quality, and risk management capacity.

Consistent with Poister's (2003) multidimensional performance framework, the evidence suggests that high output and productivity levels do not necessarily translate into effectiveness and cost-effectiveness when administrative errors undermine legal validity. This finding aligns with broader public administration literature emphasizing that performance in public sector organizations is inherently multidimensional and cannot be reduced to efficiency metrics alone (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). In the context of electoral governance, procedural accuracy and compliance function as critical performance thresholds, where even minor administrative lapses may trigger disproportionate institutional consequences, including legal disputes and loss of public trust.

From an organizational perspective, the performance of the General Election Commission demonstrates notable strengths in operational coordination and technological utilization. The adoption of digital systems such as voter databases and electronic recapitulation platforms contributed to improved administrative productivity and transparency. Similar findings have been reported in comparative electoral studies, which highlight the role of digitalization in enhancing administrative capacity and data accuracy within electoral institutions (Norris, 2015; Alvarez, Hall, & Hyde, 2012). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such technologies remains contingent upon infrastructure reliability and human resource discipline, particularly in geographically challenging regions.

At the same time, the study reveals persistent structural vulnerabilities related to internal supervision, workload distribution, and administrative consistency across hierarchical levels of election management. These weaknesses echo findings from prior studies on Indonesian electoral administration, which emphasize that decentralized electoral systems often face coordination gaps between central guidelines and local implementation (Waris, 2011; Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). The reliance on ad hoc personnel with limited institutional experience further amplifies the risk of procedural deviations, particularly under high-pressure conditions on election day.

In terms of service quality and stakeholder satisfaction, the findings indicate generally positive public perceptions regarding accessibility, transparency, and frontline professionalism. However, these perceptions were partially eroded in areas affected by re-voting, underscoring the fragile nature of public trust in electoral outcomes. This supports Norris's (2014) argument that electoral legitimacy is cumulative and highly sensitive to perceptions of fairness and procedural integrity, rather than merely participation rates or service responsiveness.

Cost-effectiveness emerges as one of the most critical dimensions affected by administrative failure. While regular electoral operations were managed efficiently, the necessity of re-voting generated unplanned expenditures and resource duplication, thereby reducing overall value for money. This finding reinforces the argument advanced by Hood (1991) and later scholars that public sector efficiency must be evaluated in relation to outcomes and institutional reliability, not simply budget absorption or cost savings. In electoral governance, preventive administrative rigor is substantially more cost-effective than corrective legal remedies.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the performance of General Election Commissions in decentralized democracies is best understood as an interaction between operational capacity, governance discipline, and institutional learning. Electoral performance failures should therefore be interpreted not merely as technical errors, but as indicators of deeper organizational and governance challenges requiring systemic intervention.

The findings of this study offer several policy-relevant implications for strengthening the performance of General Election Commissions at the local level.

First, institutional performance improvement should prioritize preventive administrative governance rather than corrective legal mechanisms. Strengthening internal supervision systems, implementing layered verification procedures, and institutionalizing risk-based management approaches are essential to minimizing procedural errors that may escalate into electoral disputes. Comparative studies indicate that robust internal controls significantly reduce the likelihood of post-election litigation (James & Alihodzic, 2020).

Second, the management of human resources—particularly ad hoc electoral personnel—requires greater professionalization and workload rationalization. Enhanced training, realistic task allocation, and structured accountability mechanisms are necessary to ensure that productivity does not compromise accuracy. This aligns with international best practices emphasizing capacity-building as a cornerstone of electoral integrity (IDEA, 2014; Norris, 2015).

Third, while digital technologies contribute positively to administrative productivity and transparency, they must be complemented by investments in infrastructure resilience and procedural discipline. Technology should be viewed as an enabling tool rather than a substitute for institutional rigor. Policymakers should therefore integrate digital transformation strategies with governance reforms to ensure consistent performance outcomes.

Finally, restoring and sustaining public trust following electoral disputes requires proactive communication strategies and transparent accountability processes. Public engagement, timely disclosure of corrective measures, and demonstrable institutional learning are critical for reinforcing democratic legitimacy in post-election contexts.

In sum, improving the performance of General Election Commissions in decentralized electoral systems demands an integrated approach that combines operational efficiency, governance quality, and institutional accountability. The insights generated by this study contribute to broader debates on electoral governance reform and offer empirically grounded guidance for strengthening democratic institutions in emerging democracies.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the institutional performance of the Banggai Regency General Election Commission in the administration of Indonesia's 2024 regional head election through the lens of organizational performance theory. The findings reveal that while the election achieved formal objectives related to implementation and participation, substantive performance weaknesses persisted in administrative accuracy, internal supervision, and procedural compliance. These weaknesses ultimately culminated in court-mandated re-voting, illustrating the high institutional costs of even localized performance failures.

By applying Poister's multidimensional performance framework, this research demonstrates that electoral performance cannot be adequately assessed through output and efficiency indicators alone. Effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and stakeholder trust emerge as decisive dimensions that determine the legitimacy and sustainability of electoral governance. The study thus reinforces the importance of holistic performance evaluation approaches in the analysis of public sector institutions, particularly those entrusted with democratic processes.

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