
Realizing Participatory Democracy through Student Presidential Election at Institute Technology Muhammadiyah Sumatera as a Reflection of Indonesian Democracy Values

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ABSTRACT

The election of the Student President (Presma) and Student Vice President (Vice President) at the Institute Technology Muhammadiyah Sumatera (ITMS) reflects the practice of participatory democracy that is in line with Indonesian democratic values. This study aims to analyze the essence, implementation, and praxis of democracy in the context of the election of Presma and Vice President as a miniature of national democracy. The research method applied is a qualitative study with an analytical descriptive approach, involving field data analysis, interviews, and literature studies. The results of the study show that this election not only strengthens student involvement in the decision-making process, but also becomes a forum for learning democracy that reflects active participation, transparency, and accountability. This study recommends improving the electoral system to further strengthen the practice of participatory democracy in the university (campus) environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy in Indonesia does not only take place at the national level, but is also reflected in various activities in the local environment, including universities (campuses) [1]. Campuses are often thought of as miniature democracies, where students are given space to develop active participation, learn about collective decision-making, and understand democratic values. One of the real practices of democracy in the campus environment is the moment of election of student presidents and student

vice presidents (presma and vice presidents) [2].

Participatory democracy is a model of democracy that emphasizes the importance of active community involvement in the political decision-making process [3]. This democracy not only involves the right to vote, but also encourages direct participation of the community in designing and overseeing policies. As explained by [4], participatory democracy aims to improve the quality of political decisions through wider community inclusion and strengthen accountability and transparency in government.

The Institute Technology Muhammadiyah Sumatra (ITMS) is one of the institutions that consistently holds elections for student president and student vice president as part of the dynamics of student organizations [5]. This election reflects the implementation of democratic values such as freedom, participation, and accountability. This study aims to review how the elections for the student president and vice president at ITMS reflect participatory democracy and how this can illustrate the values of democracy in Indonesia [6].

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to provide an in-depth description of how the election of the Student President (Presma) and Student Vice President (Wapresma) at the Institute Technology Muhammadiyah Sumatera (ITMS) reflects the values of Indonesian democracy [7]. According to [8], qualitative research with a descriptive-analytical approach enables researchers to identify specific patterns in the data, offer a richer explanation of a phenomenon, and connect it to relevant social theories or contexts. This research focuses on data collection, analysis, and in-depth interpretation of the election process as well as student involvement in creating participatory democracy within the campus environment [9].

This research utilizes two main data sources, namely the first Primary Data: Obtained through direct observation of the Presma and Vice President election processes at ITMS, in-depth interviews with the election committee, candidates, and student voters. Second, Secondary Data: Derived from official documents such as student organization regulations, activity reports, and literature related to participatory democracy and campus election regulations.

The data collection techniques used include several things, namely first, Field Observation: Directly observing each stage of the election, starting from campaigning,

voting, to announcing the election results. Second In-Depth Interview: Engage various parties involved in the election process, including committees, candidates, and students, to gain insights into the implementation and impact of participatory democracy. Third, Literature Studies: Review the scientific literature and supporting documents to strengthen the theoretical and contextual analysis of this research. The collected data is analyzed with an analytical descriptive approach, which includes the following steps:

- 1) Data Reduction: Summarize and simplify the data obtained to focus on aspects relevant to the research.
- 2) Data Presentation: Arrange data in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate analysis and interpretation.
- 3) Drawing Conclusions: Identify the main patterns, relationships, and findings to explain how the election of the Presma and Vice President in ITMS reflects the values of Indonesian democracy.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses a triangulation technique, namely comparing the results of observations, interviews, and literature studies to ensure the consistency and validity of the information obtained. This research focuses on three main aspects, namely first, the essence of participatory democracy which is reflected in the election of Presma and Vice President at ITMS. Second, the implementation of democratic values such as transparency, accountability, and active participation in the election process. Third, challenges and opportunities in improving the quality of participatory democracy in the campus environment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The election of Presma and Vice President at ITMS is designed to reflect a healthy democratic process. Some important aspects of the implementation of this election include [10]:

- 1) Campaign Process: Students are given the freedom to campaign, convey their vision

- and mission, and invite voters to participate either directly through campaign class forums or campaigning using social media. This campaign process lasts for 7 days, starting from December 19, 2024 to December 25, 2024.
- 2) Voting Process: Elections are carried out directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly, and fairly (LUBER JURDIL). In the implementation of this voting, it was carried out directly and voting, which was carried out on Saturday to coincide with December 28, 2024 starting from 09.30 WIB to 12.00 WIB.
 - 3) Student Participation: The level of student participation in the election process is quite high, showing interest and awareness of the importance of involvement in the democratic process. The list of active student voters includes 3 study programs at ITMS (Entrepreneurship, Digital Business and Bioengineering). The number of active students as a permanent voter list consists of 252 students. The details of the voting votes are for the number of votes of candidate 01 = 160, the number of votes of candidate 02 = 78, and the number of invalid votes = 14 votes.
 - 4) Supervision and Transparency: There is supervision from an independent internal campus institution formed under the name of the Student Consultative Assembly (MPM) through the Campus Bawaslu to ensure that the election process takes place honestly and transparently. As well as preparing competent witnesses for the implementation of an open and transparent vote count.

The election of Presma and Vice President is not only a campus political event, but also a means of political education for students. The praxis of democracy on campus involves the following aspects [11]:

- 1) Democracy Learning: Students learn about the importance of participation in the election process, understand the rights and responsibilities as voters, and appreciate the diversity of opinions

through the Candidate Debate process for the pairs of candidates for the pre-high school and vice president of ITMS.

- 2) Leadership and Accountability: Selected candidates are expected to demonstrate responsible leadership and be able to carry out their vision and mission.
- 3) Increased Social Awareness: The selection process encourages students to be more sensitive to social issues and common interests both academically and non-academically.

Although the election of Presma at ITMS has gone well, there are several challenges that need to be overcome, including:

- a) Lack of Political Education: Not all students have an adequate understanding of participatory democracy. It is proven by the existence of invalid votes and golput which amounted to 14 votes.
- b) Infrastructure Limitations: Several technical obstacles, such as the voting system and polling venues, still need improvement.
- c) Polarity and Polarization: Campus political dynamics sometimes reflect polarization that can disrupt harmony.

However, there is a significant opportunity to enhance the quality of campus democracy through the improvement of student political education programs, the development of a technology-based voting system to increase efficiency and transparency, and the strengthening of a culture of dialogue or deliberation to address differences of opinion [12].

4. CONCLUSION

The election of Presma and Vice President at ITMS is a real reflection of participatory democracy that is in line with Indonesian democratic values. This process not only strengthens student involvement in decision-making, but also becomes an important forum for learning democracy. To improve the quality of campus democracy, efforts are needed to improve political

education, improve electoral infrastructure, and promote constructive dialogue.

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