



# Agile Governance

## Indonesian General Election Commission's Response Towards 2020 Election During Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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**Abstract.** Nowadays, the global society is currently faced with the VUCA situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This condition becomes a serious challenge in the 2020 Election in Indonesia. KPU as the organizer is required to act fast, twist and adaptable to manage the Election notwithstanding the safety aspects. To analyze the KPU Indonesia's response towards the VUCA situation through the agile governance perspective in 2020 Election during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This article utilizes the data resources from literature review that is conducted through elaborating and analyzing relevant documents such as books, journals, research, regulations, and internet. Other information includes audiovisual material from social media and KPU's website. KPU's response facing VUCA in the Election was seen from the agile response such as *Good enough governance*, as seen from the change of paradigm of the election governance from the conventional situation to become new normal, *Business-driven*, when KPU postponed the election phases with the purposes of safety, *Human focused* illustrated from the community involvement in policy formulation, *Based on quick wins*, reflected from the KPU's willingness to learn from other countries' success, *Systematic and adaptive approach*, seen from the existing policy adjustment by including health protocol, and *Simple design and continuous refinement*, seen from the KPU's ability of information and technology to support the election phases and to minimize creating crowds.

**Keywords:** Agile Governance · Election · Pandemic · VUCA

## 1 Background

Currently, the world is at a situation of *Volatility* (unstable conditions), *Uncertainty*, *Complexity*, and *Ambiguity* or widely known as VUCA. VUCA illustrates the fluctuating condition and unstable in the public sphere affairs caused by a drastic and fundamental change [1].

This condition illustrates that the world has entered the 4.0 industrial revolution where every living constellation is related to the digitalization process through *doing by data*, as

well as concept and correlation actualization *society 5.0* that emphasizes every living aspect based on the based-on utility of *Internet of Things, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence*, etc. [2]. The effect as quoted from World Economic Forum, throughout 2015–2020 it was estimated that job opportunities would decline and be replaced by machines, robot, artificial intelligence, as well as other computerized tools. This is worsened by the fact that the COVID-19 wave is currently hitting many countries, including Indonesia.

Quickly and drastically the Indonesian people experienced significant changes in many sectors. Unstable changes and followed by complex issues, lack of information and uncertainties of how long this pandemic would take place making the government having a difficult time to make the most appropriate decision to handle this crisis. The Indonesian Government stated that the issue of people's health relating to COVID-19 is a national non-environmental catastrophe and will always be conducted towards the policies that have been implemented [3].

Whereas the Covid-19 pandemic effects have been experienced in the political side especially on the level of diplomacy where Indonesian Government postponed the Election process that was supposed to be held on 23 September 2020. There are obviously pros and cons relating to this Decision to encourage the public debate (hergianasari:2020). On the one hand, the government must consider the effects on public safety if the Election was held during pandemic. On the other hand, the postponement of the Election would cause the vacuum of power in the regional offices in several place. A definitive regional leadership is prominent to ensure acceleration of the management in the rural places [4].

Through mutual agreement, the Government decided to postpone the scheduled election and rescheduled the phases and released the Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) Number 2 of 2020 (Maria:2020). Where the simultaneous election was held in December 2020 to vote for Governors and Vice Governors, Regent and Vice Regen and/or Mayor and Vice Mayor in 270 regions that consist of 9 provinces and 261 regencies/cities [5]. This decision became the response and brought legal certainty for KPU, the Election Candidates or the public. The Election phases were resumed through the enactment of health protocol.

The General Election Committee is an institution which is given the authority to become the Election's organizer is required to act quickly, swiftly and to be able to adjust in managing the Election phase during Covid-19 era. Indeed, KPU is required not only to hold the Election phases in accordance with the existing regulations, but also must guarantee the public safety. Two choices of dilemma namely the fulfillment of social contract between the government and the people and the increasing Covid-19 positive cases due to the mass crowds gathering to participate in the Regional Election [6].

There is still limited research discussing on Holding Elections in Covid-19 Pandemic Era as reviewed from the agile governance perspective. Maria Puput Ristyastuti and Muhammad Sya'roni Roffi researched from the analytical aspect of holding the Regional Election during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The research outcome indicated that holding 2020 Regional Election is the best option as it is urgent to have the Regional Head-elect to be able to manage this crisis through strategic policies and could accelerate the regional economy.

Other research by Farhan Rahmawan Halim, Feni Astuti and Khaerul Umam discussed on the implementation of the Agile Governance principle in the Covid-19 pandemic era, but did not focus on the Election process and was more emphasizing on the West Javanese Regional Government's response in overcoming critical health situations through It-based application called Pikobar. This application allows people to get access about the latest news on Covid-19 pandemic through smart phone or website.

In contrast with the previous research this article focused on the 2020 election in Indonesia from KPU's point of view as the organizing institution. The main focus is to how KPU's response could adjust and be agile with the changes of VUCA due to Covid 19 pandemic towards achieving their objectives, namely to hold a safe Election and emphasized on public safety. For this, there has to be proper approach to align with such objective. The Agile Governance approach becomes an alternative that could be chosen by KPU to encourage the resilient, developing and improving planning, as well as fast and flexible response towards the Election during the Pandemic.

Luna, Kruchten, and Moura [7] defined *agile governance* as follows Agile government is Agile government is the ability of human societies to sense, adapt, and respond quickly and sustainably to changes in their environment, through a coordinated combination of agile and learning skills with governance capabilities, to deliver value faster, better and cheaper to their core businesses. Furthermore, they outlined six principles of *agile governance*, among others [7]:

1. *Good enough governance*, the level of governance must always be adapted to the organizational context.
2. *Business-driven*, the business should be the reason for every decision and action.
3. *Human focused*, People should feel valued and incentivized to participate creatively.
4. *Based on quick wins*, the quick wins should be celebrated and used to get more impulse and results.
5. *Systematic and adaptive approach*, the teams must develop an intrinsic ability to deal with change in a systematically way.
6. *Simple design and continuous refinement*, the teams must deliver fast, and must always improve.

The 2020 simultaneous regional government election will become a very monumental election. As this is the first an election was held during the pandemic situation. Based on such background, this article serves to analyze the KPU's response in overcoming the VUCA situation due to Covid-19 Pandemic in the 2020 Election in Indonesia with the *agile governance* principle which is stated by Luna [7] namely *Good enough governance, Business-driven, Human focused, Based on quick wins, Systematic and adaptive approach, dan Simple design and continuous refinement*.

## 2 Methods

This study utilizes qualitative method with the case study approach, where according to Robert K. Yin (2008), case study is used as a group, organization, program, or public situation being observed, reviewed and analyzed concretely [8]. The case study also has

the meaning relating to the thorough research about someone or a social unit in certain time period. In this qualitative research method with the case study approach, it is used to describe KPU's response as the organizing institution for Election in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic phenomenon.

The data gathering and information in the case study according to Creswell [8] could be done through interviews with informants, direct field observation, as well as several documents, existing reports as well as audiovisual materials [8]. This article utilizes the data source from the document review and audiovisual material. The document review utilizes the data resources from literature review that is conducted through elaborating and analyzing relevant documents such as: books, journal articles, research reports, regulations, and Internet. The audiovisual information relating to 2020 Election in Indonesia was obtained through social media and KPU's official website.

### 3 Results and Discussions

The 2020 Simultaneous Election becomes the first experiences for Indonesia to hold an Election during the Covid-19 pandemic era. The process was not easy as it was very risky in terms of security and safety for the organizers, candidates, voters or the parties involved. For this context, this pandemic affects most of the phase implementation Election which was very common by gathering many people.

The quick response and the strategic steps prepared as KPU's concrete measures to overcome the Election during the time of certainty of VUCA due to Covid-19 pandemic that is yet to and in the foreseeable future. For this, the Election governance which is agile is an innovation by KPU to prepare flexible policies through several approaches namely *Good enough governance, Business-driven, Human focused, Based on quick wins, Systematic and adaptive approach, Simple design and continuous refinement.*

#### 3.1 Good Enough Governance

This principle means the Election governance must be in line with the organization's context. This approach will adjust the upfront planning to be incremental planning by identifying and overcoming several technical risks occurring due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2020 Simultaneous Election that was initially to be held in accordance with the phase, schedule and program that has been set out as outlined in PKPU Number 15 of 2019, there must be an alignment in order to place a safety principle for the organizers, candidate or the voters.

The regulation must be prepared to accommodate with all of the Election that is divided into two big phases namely the preparation phase and organizing phase. Not only that, the scope of the regulating must add the substance on safety for all parties in new normal with the purpose of alleviating the pandemic risk or prevent the rise of new clusters in the Simultaneous Election.

It is recorded that at the very least KPU has released three KPU regulations as response since the beginning of the pandemic, namely PKPU No. 6 of 2020, PKPU No. 10 of 2020, and finally PKPU No. 13 of 2020, where in the PKPU it regulates the health protocol in every phase of 2020 Simultaneous Election, as well as rules and

punishments towards the violation of health protocol. In addition, KPU also remains to conduct outreach and coordination to ensure the health protocol is well-implemented.

### 3.2 Business-Driven

In every decision, that still must be consideration is business. In the context of democracy and government, *Business-driven* occurs from the decision by KPU to prevent the election phase as a response for the statement by WHO that stated COVID-19 as a global pandemic, official statement from President of the Republic of Indonesia that stated the spread of COVID-19 as National Response (Non-Natural Catastrophe) is a big consideration that places the public safety as the main purpose. Through the Decision of KPU Number 179/PL.02-Kpt/01/KPU/III/2020 several phases that have been postponed, among others the inauguration of Vote Casting Committee (PPS), supplement requirement verification for Individual Candidate, and update and processing of vote registry.

The other business-driven principles also reflect when the Government, KPU and Stakeholder make a Joint decision in May 2020 to resume Election phase. This policy was taken by considering the main values and goals that have to be achieved among others to avoid the vacancy of the regional heads in several areas. The Regional Head elected from the upcoming 2020 Election are required for economic growth acceleration and COVID-19 management.

### 3.3 Human Focused

The agile bureaucracy requires room in the governance for public participation and definitely must appreciate every feedback given. The principle of *Human focused* is line with what has been carried out by KPU in policy formulation with public participation. In the process of preparation, KPU conducted public test of the KPU regulation conducted with the purpose of receiving feedbacks from several communities so the Election could be held during pandemic which is line with the regulation and upholds the Covid-19 health protocol. This activity is crucial to be done with the hope of through the public test mechanism, several feedbacks and critics as KPU's efforts to produce policies that could accommodate the public interest.

Moreover, in every phase, KPU always involves the public through feedback and response towards the ongoing election process. For example, in the process of establishment of organizing body, all phases are announced to receive public response relating to the candidates that are currently undergoing selection process. The other phase occurs at the voter data enhancement, the public is actively required to oversee the process and results. The people are encouraged to participate if acknowledged or family members have not been listed in the voter's list or have undergone some changes in their citizenship data. On the candidate phase, the public participation towards document supervision of the candidacy becomes one of the active efforts being taken by KPU as a measure to know the Leader's candidate and their track records.

### 3.4 Based on Quick Wins

The success of organization that have been reached quickly must become motivation to obtain greater purposes. *Based on quick wins* seen from KPU's efforts to learn from other countries' success in holding the Election during Covid-19 pandemic era. Such principle was utilized to formulate policy innovations to realize 2020 election that is safe and do not create new clutters of covid-19. The South Korean experience, the southern side of Bavaria and France have Voting during Covid-19 Pandemic have become attention for many countries around the world including Indonesia. Several extraordinary measures to minimize risks of infecting virus in General Election by those countries become the motivation of Government, KPU and Stakeholders to be optimistic to continue the Election with several adjustments.

South Korea encourages early vote casting of doing at home, ensuring sound environment to choose and carried out campaign method adaptation. The experience of the southern of Bavaria, the General Election officials wore protective gloves and votes were allowed to bring their pens. Meanwhile, France has released a guideline of casting votes through health protocol. According to Nanang [9] Other countries' experience could be a policy innovation, but not all can be adopted as there is a difference of culture, regulation, situation, and condition as well as the ability of different budget [9].

### 3.5 Systematic and Adaptive Approach

For quick and unpredictable changes, there must be systematic and adaptable approaches to development organizational capabilities. The *Systematic and adaptive approach* ability shown KPU by reviewing their policies set in their operative regulations of the Election that have been previously provided. Next, they make adjustment on the regulations that could potentially COVID-19 transmission.

Several phases of activities include: (a) physical activities is direct such as outreach, voter's data update, individual fact verification, campaign, and vote casting; (b) activities that could gather many people in an open plenary meeting, adhoc body inauguration, candidate registration, coordination meeting, technical counsel and logistical management; (c) activities that could enable physical contact in conveying certain document or equipment's such as delivering individual requirements document, candidacy document, outreach material, campaign supporting material and logistical distribution.

Several adjustments that have been carried include: (a) regulate health protocol at every phase, regulate health protocol for every stakeholder involved of organizers, voters and candidates, carried out adjustment so long it does not violate the law, for instance the number of voters at the ballot have decreased from 800 voters to 500 voters per ballot, reset of method and number of campaign candidates [10].

### 3.6 Simple Design and Continuous Refinement

The ability of KPU in creating simple design and provided and quick and continued achievements that must be realized. The *Simple design and continuous refinement* principle is reflected from KPU's steps in utilizing the information and technology in all election phase. This is inseparable from the development of Internet of Things (IOTs) technology and the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic which has brought major changes in

the implementation of the 2020 Elections. Several information systems are developed at the election phase include Voter Data Updating Information System (Sidalih), Nomination System (Silon), Campaign Fund Information System (Sidakam) and Recapitulation Information System (Sirekap). The use of information system is seen as more effective and efficient, especially during the social activity restrictions era during the pandemic. This principle could very well be achieved through KPU's efforts in preparing skilled and experienced human resource's ability as well as the integrated use of technology.

What is interesting to be analyzed is the use of Sirekap. An innovation by KPU to present effective and efficient recapitulation namely to accelerate the recapitulation process, to improve accuracy, transparency, and accountability of vote recapitulation. Through the vote publication from this SIREKAP, all stakeholders, from voters, candidates, witnesses, supervisors and observers could easily access the vote results enclosed in the C model form. The KWK result from every ballot (TPS). The use of paper that has been utilized is relatively big, will significantly be reduced. In addition, what is more important is that the use of Sirekap will suppress the crowds that have often been the recapitulation process. The public could directly access the recapitulation result in every phase through the website <https://pilkada2020.kpu.go.id/>. The success of sirekap would not be possible for it to be basis of using E-Voting in the future voting process.

## 4 Conclusion

In the perspective of agile governance, the organization is required to adapt and respond quickly towards the changing environment. The KPU's response is needed to deal with the VUCA situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic through adaptive policy adjustments at every stage of the election. The KPU's swift response in 2020 Election reveals the principle of *Good enough governance, Business-driven, Human focused, Based on quick wins, Systematic and adaptive approach, Simple design and continuous refinement* in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic threat.

First, *Good enough governance* is seen from the KPU's efforts to adjust the governance of the election administration from normal or conventional conditions to election governance in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. The scope of policy with the addition of substance about safety for and reduce the risks of pandemic.

Second, *Business-driven* is shown by the KPU's quick attitude to delay the election stage when WHO declared Covid-19 a Global Pandemic. Additionally, it was shown by the KPU by immediately resuming the phases after the government rescheduled because the Regional Leaders from the election were immediately needed to accelerate the economy and overcome the pandemic.

Third, *Human focused* is indicated by the involvement of the community in the preparation of KPU Regulations through a Public Examination so that they can capture what the public needs. Other efforts are reflected in the input and responses of the public at each stage of the election as a form of a climate of openness and active participation of the community in overseeing the course of the election stages.

Fourth, *based on quick wins* is shown by the KPU's willingness to reflect on other countries that have successfully held elections in the COVID-19 pandemic era. This principle is important as a reference for KPU in formulating innovative policies. Policies

that have been implemented by other countries that could be modeled and be aligned with the needs and situation occurring in Indonesia.

Fifth, the systematic and adaptive approach is shown by reviewing existing policies by making adjustments and creating new policies and programs in the implementation of the 2020 Election. Adjustments are made so that policies could be implemented constitutionally without compromising on quality but still paying attention to safety and health aspects.

Sixth, Simple design and continuous refinement is seen from the KPU's ability to utilize information technology at every phase of the election. The use of Sirekap in organizing elections is considered more effective, efficient, paperless and reduces the risk of crowds.

Agile Governance in electoral governance is very essential for the KPU in dealing with pandemic so that there is no new cluster in its implementation. Agile Governance principles will continue to be needed to address other challenges and situations of VUCA in the future. The next challenge would be how to prepare the design for election governance, infrastructure and human resources in the face of the 2024 General Election. The 2024 election would combine general elections and elections by electing the president and his vice president, members of parliament and regional heads simultaneously.

Mastering Information Technology would be very relevant with such condition, given the concept actualization and correlation of 5.0 *society* that emphasizes all living aspects based on utility *Internet of Things, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence*. It is not impossible to develop Sirekap into E-voting and turn it into the main instrument that will be taken by the KPU to solve the future situation.

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