

The Implementation of SIAKBA in Recruiting Ad Hoc Bodies for the Medan City General Election Commission: An Islamic Meritocracy Perspective on the Challenges of Electoral Democracy

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Abstract : *The recruitment of ad hoc election management bodies constitutes a critical stage in ensuring the quality and integrity of democratic elections. Although the General Election Commission (KPU) has implemented the KPU and Ad Hoc Membership Information System (SIAKBA) as a digital platform to enhance efficiency, objectivity, and accountability in the recruitment process, its implementation continues to face challenges, particularly the low level of public trust in the transparency of selection outcomes and the perception that personal connections may influence recruitment decisions. This study aims to analyze the implementation of SIAKBA in the recruitment of ad hoc election officials for the 2024 Medan City Election from the perspective of Islamic meritocracy while identifying mitigation strategies to strengthen recruitment governance. This study employed a qualitative approach using observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving election management officials in Medan City. The findings reveal that the implementation of SIAKBA has complied with the procedural requirements stipulated by Indonesian electoral laws and KPU regulations, reflecting the principles of Islamic meritocracy through the application of al-kafū'ah, al-amānah, al-'adālah, ihtiyāt, al-raqābah, al-musāwah and collaborative governance. Nevertheless, the system has not yet fully succeeded in fostering public trust due to the limited transparency of participants' assessment results. This study highlights the need to strengthen transparency mechanisms by providing measurable, objective, and publicly accessible final selection results in order to enhance the legitimacy of the recruitment process and reinforce public confidence in future electoral administration.*

Keywords : *SIAKBA; Islamic Meritocracy; Ad Hoc Election Recruitment; Public Trust.*

Abstrak : Rekrutmen penyelenggara Pemilu badan Ad Hoc merupakan tahapan yang menentukan kualitas penyelenggaraan pemilu demokratis. Meskipun KPU telah mengimplementasikan Sistem Informasi Anggota KPU dan Badan Ad Hoc (SIAKBA) sebagai instrumen digital untuk meningkatkan efisiensi, objektivitas, dan akuntabilitas seleksi, penerapannya masih menghadapi tantangan berupa rendahnya kepercayaan publik terhadap transparansi hasil seleksi serta munculnya persepsi mengenai adanya relasi personal yang memengaruhi kelulusan peserta. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi SIAKBA dalam rekrutmen anggota Badan Ad Hoc Pemilu Kota Medan Tahun 2024 perspektif meritokrasi Islam untuk mengevaluasi tata kelola rekrutmen. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi terhadap penyelenggara pemilu di Kota Medan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi SIAKBA telah memenuhi aspek prosedural sesuai regulasi Undang-Undang dan KPU RI yang mencerminkan prinsip meritokrasi Islam melalui

penerapan *al-kafā'ah*, *al-amānah*, *al-'adālah*, *iḥtiyāt*, *al-raqābah*, *al-musāwah* secara kolaboratif. Namun demikian, sistem tersebut belum sepenuhnya mampu membangun kepercayaan publik terhadap hasil penilaian peserta. Penelitian ini mengimplikasikan perlunya penguatan mekanisme transparansi melalui penyediaan akses publik terhadap hasil akhir seleksi yang terukur, objektif, dan terbuka sebagai upaya memperkuat legitimasi rekrutmen serta meningkatkan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap penyelenggaraan pemilu pada masa mendatang.

Kata kunci : SIAKBA; Meritokrasi Islam; Rekrutmen Badan Ad Hoc; Kepercayaan Publik.

INTRODUCTION

The integrity of electoral governance is a fundamental prerequisite for sustaining a healthy democratic system, as the circulation of political power should ultimately promote *maslahah* (the public good) and serve the interests of society (Butt & Siregar, 2021). In Indonesia, Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections authorizes Regency and Municipal General Election Commissions (KPU) to establish ad hoc electoral bodies, including the District Election Committees (PPK), Village Election Committees (PPS), and Polling Station Working Committees (KPPS). These bodies play a pivotal role in administering elections at the grassroots level. Consequently, deficiencies in recruiting election administrators may undermine every stage of the electoral process, from planning and implementation to vote counting and certification of results (Djidar et al., 2025). Therefore, the quality of democratic elections is fundamentally dependent upon a recruitment system that is transparent, accountable, and merit-based (Halimatusa'diyah & Jannah, 2025).

The recruitment of ad hoc election administrators has become an increasingly important issue in Indonesia's electoral governance due to persistent concerns over transparency, accountability, and the objectivity of selection procedures (Dede Nuryayi Taufik, 2023; Nugraha et al., 2025). To improve administrative efficiency, the General Election Commission introduced the Information System for KPU Members and Ad Hoc Bodies (SIAKBA) as a digital recruitment platform. Nevertheless, public confidence in the recruitment process remains limited. Allegations of political patronage, personal connections, and the influence of influential insiders continue to shape public perceptions, despite the digitalization of recruitment procedures. Moreover, limited transparency in assessment mechanisms and insufficient disclosure of evaluation results have reinforced skepticism regarding the fairness of the selection process (Nang et al., 2025; Nurfajila & Hurriyah, 2024). These conditions reveal a paradox in electoral governance: although SIAKBA was designed to institutionalize transparency and merit-based recruitment, it has not fully succeeded in strengthening public trust.

Against this backdrop, Islamic meritocracy provides a relevant ethical framework for evaluating the recruitment of ad hoc electoral bodies (Asy-syakir, 2024). Unlike conventional merit systems that primarily emphasize administrative efficiency and regulatory compliance, Islamic meritocracy integrates the principles of *al-'adālah* (justice), *al-amānah* (trustworthiness), and *al-kafā'ah* (competence) into public appointments. These principles require that recruitment decisions be based on qualifications, integrity, and professional capability while remaining free from favoritism, political intervention, and other forms of illegitimate influence (Rahimi et al., 2025). Consequently, evaluating SIAKBA through the perspective of Islamic meritocracy provides a more comprehensive understanding of whether digital recruitment systems promote not only procedural efficiency but also ethical governance.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that the quality of election administrators depends on transparent recruitment procedures, professional governance, institutional accountability, and effective regulatory frameworks (Widhiasthini et al., 2024; Rahmawanti et al., 2026). Other studies argue that merit-based recruitment should extend beyond administrative compliance to ensure

substantive fairness and objective competence throughout the selection process (Ruyudha *et al.*, 2026). Likewise, scholars emphasize that electoral recruitment should be supported by robust institutional design and effective checks and balances to safeguard electoral integrity (Fitriani & Supianti, 2024). However, these studies predominantly conceptualize meritocracy from the perspective of public administration and have paid limited attention to its ethical and religious dimensions.

Accordingly, this study addresses this analytical gap by examining whether the implementation of SIAKBA in the recruitment of ad hoc electoral bodies by the Medan City General Election Commission reflects the principles of Islamic meritocracy. It further investigates the institutional challenges associated with implementing these principles within a digital recruitment system and explores their implications for strengthening electoral governance and public trust. By integrating Islamic meritocracy into the analysis of digital electoral recruitment, this study extends the existing literature beyond procedural and administrative effectiveness toward an ethically grounded framework for evaluating the integrity of public recruitment.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative field research design to examine the implementation of the recruitment process for ad hoc electoral bodies by the Medan City General Election Commission (KPU) during the 2024 General Election through the Information System for KPU Members and Ad Hoc Bodies (SIAKBA). The study focused on the recruitment of the Village Election Committees (PPS) and Polling Station Working Committees (KPPS), as these bodies play a central role in administering elections at the grassroots level.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through direct observation, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews with purposively selected key informants who were directly involved in the recruitment process. These informants included the Chairperson of the Medan City General Election Commission, commissioners responsible for the recruitment process, as well as selected members of the PPS and KPPS who were successfully recruited and served during the 2024 General Election. Secondary data were derived from relevant scholarly literature, electoral regulations, official documents, and previous studies concerning electoral governance, digital recruitment systems, and Islamic meritocracy.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview recordings were first transcribed verbatim, followed by systematic coding to identify relevant statements and recurring patterns. The coded data were subsequently organized into thematic categories corresponding to the research objectives. Finally, the findings were interpreted through the analytical framework of Islamic meritocracy to evaluate the implementation of SIAKBA in the recruitment of ad hoc electoral bodies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Recruitment of Ad Hoc Electoral Body Candidates through SIAKBA

The Medan City General Election Commission (KPU) adopted a collaborative and multidimensional public communication strategy to disseminate information regarding the recruitment of ad hoc electoral body members for the 2024 General Election. Recruitment outreach was conducted not only through face-to-face public engagement but also through various social media platforms, enabling information to reach a broader audience more efficiently. This strategy was further strengthened by involving fifty civil society organizations (CSOs) across Medan,

representing diverse strategic groups, including youth organizations, university students, women's organizations, religious organizations, and disability communities (Nurfadilla & Nurdin, 2024).

In addition, the involvement of both print and electronic mass media further expanded the dissemination of recruitment information beyond the formal communication channels of the election management body. Through this collaborative approach, the Medan City General Election Commission sought to establish an inclusive information dissemination mechanism that ensured all segments of society had relatively equal access to information regarding the recruitment process for ad hoc electoral bodies.

The recruitment outreach was planned in accordance with KPU regulations, which stipulate that the establishment of ad hoc electoral bodies must commence no later than six months before Election Day and conclude no later than two months after voting. The Medan City General Election Commission publicly announced the recruitment of PPK and PPS candidates through its official social media accounts while simultaneously introducing the Information System for KPU Members and Ad Hoc Bodies (SIKBA) via its official website and digital platform. This early dissemination of information enabled prospective applicants to understand the recruitment procedures and prepare the required administrative documents before the registration period commenced.

Recruitment procedures, schedules, and eligibility requirements were publicly disclosed from the issuance of the official recruitment decree. Online media served as the primary channel for disseminating administrative information, thereby enhancing public access to recruitment information and providing prospective applicants with sufficient time to complete the registration requirements. This approach reflects the Medan City General Election Commission's commitment to utilizing digital media as a strategic instrument for promoting a more open, transparent, and accountable recruitment process.

SIKBA functioned as a digital administrative platform designed to facilitate broader public participation in the recruitment of ad hoc electoral bodies. The Medan City General Election Commission actively encouraged participation from all segments of society without discrimination based on social background, while also ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to apply, provided they met the established eligibility requirements. Accordingly, the recruitment process was designed to foster inclusive public participation and uphold the principle of equal opportunity in the selection of election administrators.

The implementation of SIKBA was based on General Election Commission (KPU) Decree No. 438 of 2022, which designated SIKBA as the official information system for managing data, information, and the recruitment of KPU members and ad hoc electoral bodies. This regulatory framework establishes digital recruitment as the administrative foundation of institutional governance, aiming to standardize recruitment procedures across Indonesia. Through SIKBA, applicant data are automatically integrated into a centralized database, making the registration process more efficient, well-documented, and accessible to the public. Consequently, the system reduces administrative and geographical barriers that may otherwise limit participation in the recruitment process (Ali Husain et al., 2024).

The adoption of SIKBA also enhanced the effectiveness of recruitment outreach in Medan City. Recruitment announcements disseminated through the official KPU social media platforms enabled information on schedules, eligibility requirements, registration procedures, and selection stages to be delivered more rapidly and reach a wider audience than conventional dissemination methods. Moreover, prospective applicants were able to monitor the registration process in real time. From the perspective of Islamic meritocracy, this approach reflects the principle of *al-*

musāwah (equal opportunity), as it provides all eligible citizens with equal access to recruitment information and participation in the selection process for ad hoc electoral bodies.

SIAKBA and Collaborative Institutional Governance

The successful implementation of SIAKBA depends not only on technological readiness but also on the capacity of stakeholders to understand and operate a digital recruitment system. Accordingly, the General Election Commission (KPU) adopted a collaborative governance approach by engaging multiple institutions with strategic roles in electoral administration rather than relying solely on internal organizational capacity (Yuri et al., 2025). This approach was necessary because the field implementation of SIAKBA revealed technical challenges, including system errors and operational constraints, which required adequate digital competence and institutional preparedness.

Collaborative synergy was strengthened through coordination meetings involving the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) across North Sumatra, focusing specifically on the implementation of SIAKBA in the recruitment of PPK and PPS members. These meetings also involved the Indonesian Democracy Network (JaDI) of North Sumatra and the North Sumatra National Unity and Politics Agency (*Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik*), representing key stakeholders in strengthening democratic governance (Suhartono, 2024). Furthermore, system simulations were conducted to evaluate potential operational weaknesses, establish a shared understanding of standard operating procedures, and minimize implementation errors across regional election offices.

Collaborative governance was further reinforced through simulation exercises on the use of SIAKBA. These simulations served as an institutional learning mechanism to develop a shared understanding of the system's operational procedures through inter-agency coordination and capacity building. From the perspective of Islamic meritocracy, this collaborative approach reflects the principle of *al-amānah* (trustworthiness), as it demonstrates the collective responsibility of electoral institutions to ensure that the recruitment process is implemented consistently, transparently, and in support of democratic elections.

The recruitment of ad hoc electoral bodies was also supported by field-based coordination to identify potential operational challenges during the selection process. The Medan City General Election Commission coordinated with district heads (*cama*) and village heads (*lurah*) from 21 districts and 151 urban villages, while also involving the Regional Leadership Coordination Forum (*Forkopimda*). The participation of local government institutions enabled recruitment strategies to be adapted to local conditions and facilitated the identification of prospective ad hoc election administrators. This coordination also strengthened the dissemination of recruitment information at the community level, reducing information disparities and promoting more equitable access to recruitment opportunities (Suhartono, 2024).

The collaborative governance initiative involved approximately 200 participants representing the General Election Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), local government institutions, and various civil society organizations. This broad institutional engagement demonstrates that the implementation of SIAKBA was supported by systematic planning and collaborative governance. The participation of multiple stakeholders was strategically important, as these institutions served as intermediaries in disseminating recruitment information and explaining the recruitment mechanism to communities within their respective jurisdictions. Consequently, the governance approach expanded the outreach and effectiveness of recruitment

efforts beyond what could have been achieved through the KPU's institutional capacity alone (Nasution, 2024).

From the perspective of Islamic meritocracy, this collaborative governance model reflects the principle of *al-ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), which emphasizes collective responsibility in advancing the public interest. Accordingly, the implementation of SIAKBA through an institutional network strengthened a recruitment process that was more inclusive, transparent, and consistent with the principles of a merit-based electoral system.

SIAKBA Implementation from the Perspective of Islamic Meritocracy

The recruitment process for the District Election Committees (PPK) and Village Election Committees (PPS) in Medan City represents a strategic instrument for determining the quality of democratic elections (Prayogo, 2022). As ad hoc electoral bodies, PPK and PPS are responsible for implementing various stages of the electoral process, including supporting vote counting procedures at polling stations. Therefore, their recruitment must be conducted based on principles that ensure the objectivity, integrity, and professionalism of prospective ad hoc electoral officials.

The Medan City General Election Commission (KPU) implemented the recruitment of PPK and PPS through SIAKBA as an effort to establish an open, fair, transparent, and accountable selection mechanism in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Indonesian General Election Commission. These assessment elements are essential in determining the success of electoral administration, as the quality of elections is not solely measured by the procedural completion of electoral stages but also by the quality of human resources selected through an accountable recruitment system. Accordingly, the recruitment of ad hoc electoral bodies serves as the initial foundation for strengthening the legitimacy of democratic elections, as the integrity and performance of election administrators are closely associated with the quality of the selection process applied (Sarwin, 2024).

The recruitment mechanism for ad hoc electoral bodies has a broader normative dimension beyond mere administrative compliance. Appointment to ad hoc positions represents a form of public responsibility that should be entrusted to individuals who possess competence (*al-kafā'ah*), integrity (*al-amānah*), and a commitment to uphold justice (*al-'adālah*). These three principles constitute the fundamental foundations of Islamic meritocracy, which emphasizes individual qualifications and capacity as the primary basis for public appointments rather than personal relationships, political affiliations, or group interests. Therefore, an open and objective recruitment process reflects the implementation of a merit-based system within modern public administration. The substantive alignment between recruitment practices and Islamic meritocracy places ethical values as an essential consideration in determining the suitability of individuals appointed to public positions.

Article 19 of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections grants Regency and Municipal General Election Commissions (KPU) the authority to establish District Election Committees (PPK), Village Election Committees (PPS), and Polling Station Working Committees (KPPS) within their respective jurisdictions. The findings indicate that the Medan City General Election Commission conducted the recruitment process through several stages, including administrative screening, written examinations, and interviews, beginning with the establishment of PPK and subsequently followed by PPS recruitment. The need to recruit election administrators across 21 districts and 151 urban villages in Medan demonstrates the complexity of electoral governance and the extensive public attention surrounding the process (Suhartono, 2024). Therefore, evaluating recruitment cannot be limited to administrative procedures alone but must also consider how the Medan City General

Election Commission implements merit-based principles throughout the selection process. Public expectations require consistency in applying a merit system at every stage of recruitment to ensure the quality and integrity of election administrators across all regions.

Transparency

Transparency constitutes one of the fundamental foundations in the recruitment process of ad hoc electoral body members in Medan City. All selection stages were conducted in accordance with applicable electoral regulations and procedures established by the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU RI). The recruitment process was organized through an open and structured selection mechanism, ensuring that all applicants had equal opportunities to participate in each stage based on their qualifications and evaluation results.

The findings indicate that no form of intervention was identified during the selection process, as all recruitment decisions were determined based on established assessment mechanisms. Furthermore, the quality of election administrators was strengthened through the implementation of various selection instruments, including written examinations and national insight assessments, which aimed to ensure that prospective ad hoc electoral officials possessed adequate competence, integrity, and civic understanding (Siregar, 2024). From the perspective of Islamic meritocracy, this mechanism reflects the principles of *al-'adālah* (justice) and *al-amānah* (trustworthiness), which emphasize that public positions should be assigned based on competence and eligibility rather than personal relationships or particular interests (M. Irsyad Muhyiddin Abdul Haq et al., 2026).

The implementation of transparency principles was further strengthened through the utilization of SIAKBA as the primary platform for the recruitment administration process. Each applicant was authorized to independently create an account and password, enabling them to monitor their registration status, administrative verification results, and subsequent selection stages directly through the system. This mechanism facilitated applicants by allowing recruitment-related information to be accessed online without requiring repeated visits to the Medan City General Election Commission office. Thus, SIAKBA improved administrative service efficiency while strengthening information transparency by providing all applicants with equal access to updates regarding the recruitment process.

Although the administrative process was digitalized through SIAKBA, the Medan City General Election Commission continued to implement physical document verification as a measure to strengthen administrative validity. SIAKBA operators encouraged applicants to submit original documents to the KPU office even though all required documents had already been uploaded through the system. These physical documents were required as supporting evidence during the interview stage for applicants who successfully passed the written examination. Therefore, digital recruitment did not completely replace conventional administrative procedures but was implemented through a hybrid mechanism that combined digital processing with direct document verification. This approach reflects the principle of *ḥtiyāt* (prudence) in maintaining institutional trust (*al-amānah*), ensuring that recruitment decisions are based on valid, accountable, and verifiable data while minimizing the risk of document misuse and administrative manipulation (Yuzril Mahendra & Hamidullah Mahmud, 2025).

Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness in the recruitment process of ad hoc electoral body members in Medan City is reflected in the diverse participation of applicants from various ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds in the PPS selection process. The findings indicate that members of the Chinese

Indonesian community residing in Pasar Baru Urban Village and individuals of Arab descent living in Pandau Hulu Urban Village participated as prospective PPS members. This cross-group participation demonstrates that the recruitment outreach conducted by the Medan City General Election Commission was able to reach diverse segments of society without discrimination based on ethnic identity or social background (Siregar, 2024).

The opportunity to become election administrators was open to all citizens who fulfilled the established requirements, ensuring that the recruitment process was not dominated by particular groups. From the perspective of Islamic meritocracy, this approach reflects the principle of *al-musāwah* (equal opportunity), which guarantees every individual the same right to compete for public positions based on competence and eligibility rather than identity, lineage, or social affiliation.

The achievement of an inclusive recruitment process is also reflected in the interview stage, where the assessment team did not rely solely on information available through the SIAKBA platform but also utilized applicants' physical documents, particularly curricula vitae, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their educational background, organizational experience, and professional records as prospective ad hoc electoral officials.

These physical documents served as supporting materials during the interview process and were maintained as official archives to anticipate potential objections or disputes regarding recruitment outcomes. The selection committee sought to establish an administrative mechanism that ensured the traceability of every process and decision made throughout the recruitment procedure. This approach reflects the principle that appointments to public positions must be supported by accountable administrative evidence, both legally and ethically (Sarwin, 2024).

The awareness that electoral dynamics may generate objections or disputes encouraged election administrators to strengthen documentation and administrative procedures as a form of institutional risk mitigation. This practice demonstrates that inclusiveness is not solely measured by equal access to participate in the selection process but also by the ability of institutions to maintain public trust through accountable and verifiable procedures when disputes arise. Such efforts are consistent with the principle of *maslahah* (public interest), which emphasizes the protection of collective welfare through a recruitment process that provides equal opportunities while ensuring that every decision is transparent, fair, and accountable.

Competence-Based Recruitment

A competence-based approach characterized the recruitment process of ad hoc electoral body members in Medan City. All selection stages were designed to identify applicants' capacity, integrity, and readiness to perform their responsibilities as election administrators. The findings indicate that the selection process was not merely aimed at fulfilling institutional administrative requirements but also at ensuring that selected individuals possessed the capability to maintain the quality of electoral administration and anticipate potential violations that could undermine democratic processes. From the perspective of Islamic meritocracy, public appointments should be based on the principles of *al-kafā'ah* (competence) and *al-amānah* (integrity), where individuals are selected based on professional capacity and moral responsibility rather than personal relationships, political affiliations, or particular group interests. Therefore, competence becomes a fundamental prerequisite for establishing election administrators who are capable of carrying out public responsibilities professionally and fairly (Ulfa, 2024).

The implementation of this principle began at the administrative screening stage through SIAKBA as the official recruitment platform. Although administrative requirements generally

consisted of standard documents commonly required in recruitment processes, particular emphasis was placed on fulfilling health requirements through medical certificates accompanied by examinations of blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

A total of 565 applicants were declared to have fulfilled the administrative requirements, consisting of 362 males and 203 females from 21 districts across Medan City. Applicants who passed the administrative screening subsequently participated in a written examination designed to assess their academic abilities, understanding of electoral procedures, national awareness, and analytical capacity required to perform their duties as election administrators. Prior to the examination, the Medan City General Election Commission, through its Division of Socialization, Voter Education, Public Participation, and Human Resources, conducted an online orientation session explaining the examination mechanism, location, schedule, and requirements that applicants needed to fulfill (Siregar, 2024).

The written examination served as an instrument for assessing applicants' competence and was designed to select candidates with the highest scores before proceeding to the interview stage. Based on information provided during the orientation session, applicants eligible for interviews were determined at twice the number of required positions in each selection area. This mechanism was applied equally to all applicants and maintained the principle that final selection decisions were based on competence and eligibility. Therefore, the competence-based principle was implemented through a multi-stage selection process that positioned individual capability as the primary consideration in public appointment decisions.

Transparent and accountable electoral administration constitutes an essential element in establishing a healthy democratic system. The General Election Commission (KPU) is responsible for organizing elections, including the recruitment process of ad hoc electoral personnel such as PPK and PPS members. Previously, this recruitment process was conducted manually, which often generated several challenges, including limited access to information, insufficient transparency, and a higher risk of human error (Suhartono, 2024).

The implementation of SIAKBA has also encouraged greater public participation in the recruitment process. Through an open and transparent registration system, all eligible citizens have equal opportunities to apply as ad hoc electoral personnel without relying on manual procedures that are vulnerable to administrative errors and nepotistic practices. This approach aligns with the KPU's objective of establishing a more inclusive and accountable recruitment system while supporting democratic principles that emphasize public participation in electoral processes (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021).

Challenges in the Recruitment of Ad Hoc Electoral Bodies

Challenges in the implementation of ad hoc electoral body recruitment emerged during the announcement stage of written examination results. The findings indicate that all Regency and Municipal General Election Commissions (KPU) announced fifteen applicants who were eligible to proceed to the interview stage based on the highest examination scores. This decision generated various public perceptions because, during the initial recruitment orientation, it had been communicated that the number of applicants advancing to the interview stage would be twice the required number of positions. Nevertheless, the consistent application of this policy across all Regency and Municipal KPUs indicates that the mechanism was centrally determined by the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU RI). From a recruitment governance perspective, differences between initial information and implementation may influence public perceptions of selection transparency, even though the policy was uniformly applied across regions (Rahmawanti *et al.*, 2026).

The mechanism for determining candidates after the interview stage was designed to ensure the continuity of electoral administration at the sub-district level. From the fifteen applicants who participated in interviews, ten candidates with the highest assessment results were appointed as prospective PPK members (Sarwin, 2024). Applicants ranked first to fifth were appointed as primary PPK members, while those ranked sixth to tenth were designated as reserve candidates to replace PPK members who might become unable to perform their duties in the future. The determination of replacement candidates based on the ranking of selection results reflects the principle of *al-kafā'ah* (competence), as public appointments remain grounded in objective evaluation results without requiring a new selection process that could potentially weaken consistency in implementing a merit-based system.

The subsequent recruitment process involved the selection of Village Election Committee (PPS) members. In general, the recruitment mechanism followed the same procedures as the PPK selection, with the main difference occurring at the interview stage. Since PPS functions as an ad hoc electoral body at the village level, the interview process was conducted under the supervision of the Medan City General Election Commission, with district-level PPK members serving as interview assessors. In this process, the role of the Medan City KPU was to supervise implementation across districts by establishing several supervisory teams to monitor recruitment activities throughout Medan City. This decentralized interview model provided advantages in terms of selection efficiency, as interviewers possessed a better understanding of local characteristics and community conditions. However, this mechanism also presented challenges in maintaining consistent assessment standards across districts to ensure that interview results reflected the principles of objectivity and equal treatment for all applicants (Ali, 2024).

The supervisory role performed by the Medan City KPU served as an important instrument in maintaining the quality of merit-based recruitment for PPS members. Direct supervision was conducted to ensure that all interview teams applied the assessment guidelines and indicators consistently, thereby preventing variations in evaluation standards that could influence selection outcomes. This supervisory mechanism reflects the principle of *al-raqābah* (oversight) within Islamic governance, emphasizing institutional responsibility in safeguarding trust and ensuring that recruitment decisions remain based on applicants' competence, integrity, and eligibility.

The large number of local-level electoral personnel required also presents challenges in maintaining public trust in the recruitment process. Following the announcement of PPS selection results, perceptions emerged among some community members that the PPS recruitment process was more vulnerable to personal connections with district-level election administrators or other parties involved in the selection process.

Some members of the public developed assumptions regarding selection outcomes without directly seeking clarification through the mechanisms provided by the Medan City General Election Commission, including applicant assistance services. Transparency cannot be achieved merely through the provision of procedures and information channels; it also requires responsive public communication capable of explaining institutional decisions openly to prevent speculation and unfounded perceptions. Therefore, strengthening institutional communication represents an integral component of building a recruitment system that is transparent, accountable, and capable of gaining legitimacy from the public as the holder of sovereignty in democratic processes (Simatupang & Christiani, 2026).

Applicants who were declared successful were predominantly individuals with previous experience as PPS members in earlier elections or those affiliated with local administrative institutions at the urban village level. This condition generated perceptions that prior electoral

experience had become a more dominant consideration in determining selection outcomes compared to other assessment factors.

One factor contributing to applicant dissatisfaction was the discrepancy between written examination scores and final interview results. Some applicants who achieved relatively high written examination scores were not selected, while others with lower scores successfully advanced or were appointed at the final selection stage. This difference generated various interpretations regarding the interview assessment mechanism, particularly because applicants did not receive sufficient information regarding the weighting system, evaluation indicators, or considerations applied by the interview panel.

The accumulation of these perceptions contributed to expressions of disappointment in public spaces, particularly through social media platforms. The findings indicate that some community members conveyed criticism regarding the selection results through the official social media accounts of the Medan City General Election Commission, while others submitted their concerns to the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU RI) with the expectation of further evaluation of the regional recruitment process. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has become a space for public participation in monitoring electoral administration while also reflecting the level of public trust in the recruitment process.

The emergence of various perceptions regarding the recruitment process of ad hoc electoral bodies has affected public trust in election administrators. Based on the interview findings, several informants stated that the emergence of comments on social media and differing views regarding selection outcomes had reduced the enthusiasm of some community members to participate in subsequent recruitment processes. This condition indicates that public perceptions of selection objectivity significantly influence institutional legitimacy (Dede Nuryayi Taufik, 2023).

Social media plays an important role in shaping public opinion regarding the transparency of the 2024 ad hoc electoral body recruitment process. Therefore, social media functions not only as a channel for disseminating information but also as a space for constructing public perceptions that may either strengthen or weaken public confidence in election administrators.

The decline in public trust has implications for reduced attention and participation in electoral processes, including future ad hoc recruitment stages. Allegations regarding the influence of personal connections in determining selection outcomes continue to shape public perceptions of recruitment procedures. Previous studies indicate that challenges in ad hoc electoral recruitment are closely related to the selection mechanisms and the implementation of recruitment processes (Ruyudha *et al.*, 2026). Several factors, including limited public understanding of selection stages, restricted socialization periods, short recruitment timelines, and insufficient knowledge regarding interview assessment mechanisms, contribute to the emergence of assumptions regarding selection outcomes (Nang *et al.*, 2025).

Therefore, the relationship between recruitment procedures and public perceptions of the selection process requires continuous evaluation to ensure the realization of a fair recruitment system based on meritocratic principles. In addition to applying transparency, competence, and integrity, election administrators must strengthen effective public communication strategies so that every stage of recruitment can obtain social legitimacy and maintain public trust.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the SIAKBA in the recruitment process of ad hoc electoral body members in Medan City demonstrates that the selection process was conducted in accordance with established procedures, including socialization, registration, administrative screening, competency assessment, and the determination of successful candidates. Compliance with these procedures

reflects the application of Islamic meritocracy principles, particularly in terms of justice, objectivity, accountability, and professionalism, as mandated by the regulations of the General Election Commission and relevant electoral laws. Furthermore, the strengthening of recruitment governance was achieved through collaboration with various stakeholders as part of efforts to establish democratic and integrity-based electoral governance.

This study identifies that the implementation of SIAKBA has not yet fully succeeded in strengthening public trust in the recruitment process. Public perceptions remain influenced by concerns that the selection process has not achieved sufficient transparency, particularly regarding the disclosure of assessment results and the basis for determining successful candidates. These conditions have generated assumptions regarding the possible influence of personal relationships or practices that do not fully reflect professional competence. Therefore, this study emphasizes that strengthening Islamic meritocracy through SIAKBA must be accompanied by improved transparency mechanisms in selection outcomes that are measurable, objective, and accessible to the public. Such efforts are essential to enhance the legitimacy of the recruitment process, strengthen public confidence, and ensure that the appointment of ad hoc electoral body members is genuinely based on competence, integrity, and professionalism.

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