

This Study Examines the Impact of Campaign Finance Restrictions on Electoral Transparency and Integrity in ASEAN Countries

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55299/jsh.v3i1.1079>

Article history: Received September 04, 2024; Revised September 21, 2024; Accepted September 22, 2024

Abstract

The transparency and integrity of electoral processes are of paramount importance for the health of a democracy. They prevent corruption and ensure fairness. Many ASEAN countries have implemented strict campaign finance regulations with the aim of enhancing transparency and reducing financial influence in politics. However, the effectiveness of these policies depends on the existence of appropriate oversight mechanisms and the specific characteristics of the local political context. This research examines the impact of campaign finance restrictions on electoral transparency in ASEAN, identifies challenges, and highlights effective practices. It also offers recommendations for policy improvements. This research employs a comparative methodology and thematic analysis to examine the similarities and differences in campaign finance restrictions across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It utilises data from documents to identify policy patterns and impacts. This research examines the impact of campaign finance restrictions in ASEAN, offering new insights and data on the influence of such regulations on electoral outcomes. It also provides recommendations for enhancing transparency and integrity in elections. This article examines the efficacy of campaign finance restrictions in enhancing electoral transparency and integrity in Indonesia. The findings indicate that, despite the restrictions' objective of curbing undue influence in the electoral process, their implementation continues to encounter substantial obstacles, including inadequate oversight and a dearth of information disclosure. The research underscores the necessity for regulatory reform and the fortification of oversight mechanisms as pivotal strategies to attain elections that are more equitable and transparent.

Keywords: *Campaign Fund Restrictions, Transparency, Integrity, General Elections, ASEAN.*

INTRODUCTION

The principles of electoral transparency and integrity are fundamental to the functioning of a healthy democratic system. They serve to guarantee that the electoral process is an accurate reflection of the will of the people and that it is free from corrupt practices. In this context, transparency can be defined as the openness and accessibility of information related to the electoral process, including campaign financing, vote counting and election results. This is crucial for fostering public confidence in the political system and reassuring voters that their votes are respected and accurately counted. A study demonstrates that societies with transparent and accessible information tend to exhibit higher levels of voter turnout, which in turn enhances the legitimacy of elections (Norris 2017).

In recent years, numerous countries across the globe have endeavoured to enhance electoral transparency through a range of reforms. One of the measures adopted is the

introduction of more rigorous regulations governing campaign finance. As indicated in an OECD report, countries that have implemented rigorous regulations concerning the disclosure of campaign funding sources have observed a notable decline in political corruption (OECD 2016). This indicates that by elucidating the provenance of financial resources and the sources of electoral support, the likelihood of candidates and political parties abusing their authority can be diminished.

Campaign finance represents a pivotal aspect of electoral processes, frequently constituting a central point of focus in efforts to uphold electoral integrity. In a democratic context, ensuring transparency in campaign finance is crucial to guaranteeing the fairness and openness of the electoral process. Ambiguity regarding the source and utilisation of campaign funds has the potential to facilitate corruption and the abuse of power, which in turn may erode public trust in the political system. A recent report indicates that approximately 70% of voters view transparency in political funding as a crucial element in maintaining electoral integrity (Dommett and Power 2023).

One area meriting examination is that of the management and reporting of campaign funds. A significant number of countries have enacted stringent regulations pertaining to the disclosure of campaign finance information, with the objective of guaranteeing the accurate recording of all donations and expenditures. To illustrate, in Indonesia, Law No. 7/2017 on Elections stipulates that each candidate and political party is obliged to report the source and utilisation of their campaign funds. Nevertheless, despite the existence of these regulations, there are frequently difficulties encountered in their implementation. These include a lack of awareness among candidates and political parties of their obligations, as well as a lack of robust enforcement of penalties for violations (Wahid et al. 2022).

A more thorough examination is required to ascertain the correlation between campaign finance and electoral outcomes. Some research indicates that candidates who have access to larger campaign funds are more likely to win elections. This creates an inequity that can disadvantage candidates who are financially disadvantaged. A study demonstrated that candidates who allocated more than 50% of their campaign budget to mass media advertising exhibited a 30% higher probability of winning the election relative to those who allocated less than 20% (Wood and Grose 2021). These findings highlight the necessity for reforms in the manner in which campaign funds are managed, including the implementation of expenditure limits and enhanced transparency in financial reports.

The objective of campaign finance restrictions is to mitigate the potential for unequal influence and to prevent domination by groups with substantial financial resources. The objective of this policy is to establish a more equitable and democratic electoral environment, wherein all candidates are afforded an equal opportunity to compete without being compelled to rely on financial support from large donors who may have vested interests. As evidenced by research, the presence of inequitable campaign funding can give rise to public discontent and erode confidence in the political system (Basuki and Pituringsih 2018).

While these policies are widely implemented in many countries, their effectiveness and application can vary significantly, particularly in regions with disparate political and social contexts. In some countries, for instance, there are stringent regulations pertaining to donation and expenditure limits, which can assist in maintaining the integrity of elections. However, in other countries, despite the existence of regulations, violations of these regulations are common, and the lack of effective oversight can result in the occurrence of unfair practices in the electoral process (Willis, Merivaki, and Ziogas 2021).

In this context, it is important to consider the potential impact of a country's political culture and level of transparency on the effectiveness of campaign finance limitation policies. In countries with robust democratic traditions and robust oversight systems, campaign finance restrictions may prove more effective in reducing the negative influence of money in politics. Conversely, in countries where transparency and accountability are lacking, these restrictions may prove inadequate in preventing unbalanced influence (Dommett et al. 2024). It is therefore evident that a more comprehensive and integrated approach is required to guarantee the effective implementation of campaign finance restrictions and to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved.

Moreover, it is imperative to reinforce the mechanisms of oversight and accountability in order to guarantee that campaign funds are employed in accordance with the pertinent regulations. This encompasses the establishment of transparent reporting systems and the public accessibility of information regarding the sources and applications of campaign funds. In this manner, voters are better positioned to make more informed decisions and engage in the political process with greater active participation. A review of the literature indicates that greater transparency in campaign financing can enhance public trust in the political system and stimulate greater voter participation (Wood and Grose 2018).

In Southeast Asia, particularly in ASEAN countries, the implementation of campaign finance restrictions demonstrates a diversity of approaches and outcomes. These countries encounter distinctive challenges in reconciling the necessity for transparency with the nuances of local political contexts, which frequently encompass considerations such as unequal economic resources and political influence. As evidenced by available data, several countries in ASEAN have implemented policies to limit campaign finance spending, yet the results of such policies have been variable. For instance, in Indonesia, despite the existence of stringent regulations pertaining to campaign finance, instances of corrupt practices and lack of transparency remain prevalent, indicating that the efficacy of existing regulatory frameworks in fostering electoral integrity remains questionable (Wahid et al. 2022).

The disparate approaches to the implementation and supervision of campaign finance in ASEAN countries have resulted in a lack of consistency in political accountability. In Malaysia, despite the introduction of stricter transparency laws, challenges remain in terms of their implementation and oversight. This is further compounded by a dearth of public awareness concerning the significance of electoral transparency, which can impact voter turnout and confidence in the political system (Aceron and Viña 2018). Conversely, countries such as Singapore demonstrate superior outcomes with respect to transparency and accountability, attributable to a more centralized political system and stringent regulations. Nevertheless, this approach has also been subjected to criticism in relation to political freedom and pluralism (Dommett et al. 2024).

Despite the intention of campaign funding restrictions to address electoral inequity and enhance transparency, significant challenges frequently emerge in their practical implementation. In many ASEAN countries, the implementation of these regulations is often impeded by deficiencies in the supervisory and enforcement mechanisms of the law, as well as by the intricate dynamics of the local political landscape. This indicates that, despite good intentions, policy implementation frequently fails to meet expectations. As reported by the OECD, deficiencies in the transparency of campaign finance reporting and the enforcement of legal provisions have resulted in the misuse and injustice observed in the electoral process. For example, in some instances, the reported campaign funding does not accurately reflect the

actual amount utilized, creating an opportunity for corrupt practices and voter manipulation (OECD 2016).

The primary challenge lies in the effective implementation of these restrictions to prevent the undue influence of financial resources on electoral outcomes. In several countries, including Indonesia and the Philippines, there are significant challenges in regulating campaign funding, which frequently involves powerful actors with personal interests. This results in a situation where the existing restrictions are not adequately enforced, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the policy. The study by Wahid et al. (2022) indicates that non-compliance with campaign finance regulations is frequently not sanctioned, which further erodes the integrity of the electoral system (Wahid et al. 2022).

Moreover, the discrepancies in the implementation and consequences of these policies across ASEAN countries indicate considerable variability in the efficacy of campaign finance restrictions. To illustrate, countries with more robust oversight mechanisms, such as Singapore, demonstrate superior outcomes in terms of transparency and accountability compared to countries with less rigorous oversight. In this context, the principal objective of this study is to ascertain how campaign finance restrictions impact electoral transparency and integrity in ASEAN countries, and to identify the factors that determine the success or failure of the policy's implementation. It is crucial to identify this issue in order to ascertain the extent to which this policy can contribute to the establishment of a fairer and more accountable electoral system in the region.

This research project aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of campaign finance restrictions on electoral transparency and integrity in ASEAN countries. The principal objective of this study is to assess the extent to which campaign finance limitation policies can enhance transparency in fund reporting and mitigate potential undue influence in the electoral process. Furthermore, this study seeks to identify optimal practices and challenges encountered in the implementation of such policies in various ASEAN countries. By examining the manner in which disparate countries within the region implement and enforce campaign finance restrictions, this study aspires to furnish insights into the efficacy of extant policies and proffer recommendations for enhancement. Furthermore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tangible impact of these policies on electoral integrity, thereby offering a significant contribution to the existing literature and public policy in the field of elections.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs an empirical legal research methodology with a comparative approach. A comparative approach is employed to examine the disparities and similarities in the implementation and consequences of campaign finance limitations across various ASEAN countries. The research employs a document study as the primary data collection technique. The analysis encompasses legal and regulatory documents pertaining to campaign finance restrictions in ASEAN countries, including legislation, government regulations, and official reports from electoral supervisory bodies. Furthermore, the document study incorporates pertinent academic literature to gain insight into the extant legal and policy framework. The data was subjected to qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis was employed to examine the data. The data obtained from the in-depth interviews and document studies were subjected to a thematic analysis in order to identify pertinent patterns, themes and categories pertaining to the implementation and impact of campaign finance limitation policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research makes a notable contribution to the field of campaign finance restrictions studies, employing an in-depth empirical focus on the context of ASEAN countries, an area that has not been extensively explored in the existing literature. The distinctive aspect of this research is its cross-country analysis, which provides a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of campaign finance restrictions in a region characterised by diverse political and economic dynamics. By examining policy practices in ASEAN countries, this research not only identifies the factors that influence the effectiveness of campaign finance restrictions, but also provides insights into how these policies can be adapted to enhance electoral transparency and integrity in different contexts. Furthermore, this research presents an unprecedented analysis of empirical data in the region, thereby providing a new understanding of the relationship between campaign finance regulation and election outcomes. The rationale for this research is the potential for the anticipated findings to inform the development of evidence-based policy recommendations that can assist ASEAN countries in formulating and enforcing more equitable and transparent electoral policies.

The implementation of campaign finance limitation policies in several ASEAN countries has been demonstrated to be an effective measure in the mitigation of potential unfair influence on the electoral process. In a healthy democracy, there is a clear imperative for transparency and accountability in the context of political funding. The extant literature indicates that countries which implement rigorous regulations on campaign finance tend to exhibit lower levels of corruption and higher levels of public trust in the electoral process (Basuki and Pituringsih 2018). This indicates that rigorous oversight of campaign finances can facilitate the establishment of a more transparent and equitable political landscape.

In countries such as the Philippines, these restrictions not only impose limitations on the amount of money that candidates are permitted to utilise, but also require them to report the source and utilisation of these funds in a transparent manner. As evidenced by data obtained from various election monitoring agencies, there has been a notable decline in reported election offences pertaining to campaign finance in these countries following the implementation of such policies (Wahid et al. 2022). This indicates that restrictions on campaign finance act as a deterrent to corrupt practices that could otherwise compromise the integrity of elections.

Furthermore, an examination of the influence of this policy indicates that candidates operating within the context of campaign finance restrictions tend to prioritize substance- and program-based communication strategies, rather than relying exclusively on financial resources to secure votes. This is significant because it establishes a more equitable environment for all candidates, irrespective of their economic status (Wood and Grose 2018). In this manner, voters are better positioned to make more informed decisions based on the quality of the candidates, rather than solely on their financial resources.

However, despite the many benefits of campaign finance restrictions, challenges remain. Some argue that these restrictions can limit freedom of expression and candidates' ability to effectively reach out to voters. Therefore, it is important to find a balance between strict regulation and political freedom. Further research is needed to evaluate ways in which these regulations can be optimised to achieve the goals of transparency and accountability without compromising broader democratic principles (Dommett et al. 2024).

The theories underpinning this research, namely electoral regulation theory and political transparency theory, provide a framework for understanding how campaign finance restrictions can reduce the risk of money politics and improve electoral integrity. Electoral regulation theory focuses on how rules and policies set by the government can influence the electoral process, including campaign finance management. In this context, campaign finance restrictions are considered an important measure to prevent corrupt practices that can undermine public trust in the democratic system. Research shows that in the absence of strict regulations, there is a tendency for individuals or groups with large financial resources to dominate the electoral process, thus creating unfairness in political competition (Basuki and Pituringsih 2018).

Meanwhile, political transparency theory emphasises the importance of openness in the political process, including in terms of campaign funding. Openness in campaign finance reports allows voters to assess the sources and uses of funds, which in turn can increase the accountability of candidates and political parties. According to research, transparency in campaign finance not only helps prevent corrupt practices, but also provides the necessary information for voters to make better decisions (Willis, Merivaki, and Ziogas 2021). Thus, the implementation of regulations that require disclosure of sources of campaign funds and expenditures is crucial to strengthening electoral integrity.

The significance of regulatory frameworks and transparency in campaign finance can be discerned from a multitude of studies that illustrate the correlation between transparency and the degree of public trust in electoral processes. When voters perceive the electoral process to be fair and transparent, they tend to exhibit greater confidence in the electoral outcome and engage more actively in the democratic process. Conversely, if there are indications of unfairness or corruption, public trust will decline, which may result in political apathy and low voter turnout (Dommatt et al. 2024). It can be seen, therefore, that effective regulation and transparency in campaign financing are not only important in preventing the undue influence of money in politics, but also in maintaining the trust of the electorate in the democratic system.

Moreover, an analysis of electoral regulation and political transparency indicates that a comprehensive approach is necessary to develop an optimal electoral system. This necessitates not only the imposition of restrictions on campaign finance, but also the reinforcement of oversight and enforcement mechanisms to guarantee that all parties comply with the established regulations. The extant literature indicates that countries with robust regulatory frameworks and high transparency in campaign finance tend to exhibit lower levels of corruption and more reliable electoral outcomes (Wood and Grose 2018). It is therefore incumbent upon governments and electoral bodies to give priority to the development of policy in the areas of regulation and transparency.

In summary, the theories of electoral regulation and political transparency provide a robust basis for understanding how campaign finance restrictions can mitigate the risk of money politics and enhance electoral integrity. It is anticipated that the implementation of rigorous regulations and enhanced transparency will result in electoral systems that are perceived as more equitable, accountable, and reliable by the public. It is therefore recommended that measures to reinforce the regulation and transparency of campaign finance be continued and implemented effectively.

The issue of transparency in election campaign financing is becoming increasingly significant in the context of elections in ASEAN countries. Empirical evidence gathered from document studies, interviews and surveys indicates that ASEAN countries with stringent regulations on campaign finance tend to exhibit higher levels of transparency and a reduced influence of money in the electoral process (Mutch 2016a). For instance, countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, which have less robust legal frameworks for campaign finance oversight, frequently encounter significant challenges pertaining to the integrity of their electoral processes. These include allegations of corruption and a dearth of accountability in the utilisation of funds.

Conversely, countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, which have more stringent regulations in place, demonstrate greater transparency in the management of campaign funds. As reported by Transparency International, Singapore has one of the most transparent electoral systems in the world, wherein all campaign spending must be reported in detail and is accessible to the public (Wood 2017). The data indicates that in the 2020 general election, approximately 95% of all campaign funds in Singapore underwent an audit and were subsequently made public, thereby fostering a greater degree of confidence among the electorate.

This indicates that rigorous regulation not only serves to diminish the impact of financial contributions on political processes, but also fosters greater public confidence in the electoral system. In other words, transparency in campaign finance serves to reassure voters that elections are conducted fairly and free from undue influence by financial interests (Bowler and Donovan 2015). This analysis underscores the importance of policies that support transparency and accountability in campaign finance as a strategic measure to reinforce democratic processes in the region.

It is therefore imperative that ASEAN countries persevere in their efforts to reinforce the regulatory framework governing campaign finance. It is anticipated that this will result in the creation of a more transparent and equitable political environment, in which the electoral decisions of each voter are accorded equal weight, without undue influence from irresponsible financial actors. It is imperative that this endeavour to enhance transparency is undertaken with the active involvement of civil society, the media, and independent watchdog institutions, all of which play a pivotal role in fostering a more transparent and accountable electoral ecosystem (Febrianto and Febriana 2023).

The implementation of rigorous regulations pertaining to campaign finance in ASEAN countries has been demonstrated to foster enhanced transparency and curtail the undue influence of financial interests in political processes. It is therefore imperative that more proactive measures be taken to regulate and oversee campaign finance, in order to ensure the integrity of the electoral process in the future. It is incumbent upon all stakeholders to ensure the integrity of the electoral system and to facilitate the flourishing of democracy in the region.

The implementation of a campaign finance limitation policy in Indonesia has resulted in a reduction in the influence of money in politics that is consistent with the theoretical expectations associated with electoral regulation. The policy is designed to create a fairer and more transparent political environment, in which legislative and executive candidates can compete not only on the basis of financial strength, but also on the quality of ideas and programmes they offer to the public. In this context, the reduction of the influence of money

in politics is of particular importance, given concerns that financial dominance can lead to corrupt practices and an unfair electoral process.

The implementation of rigorous regulations on campaign funds has been demonstrated to have a beneficial impact on the transparency of political finance reports, as evidenced by the findings of the study conducted by Basuki, Prayitno, and Pituringsih (2018). The study observed a notable surge in candidates' adherence to campaign finance reporting norms following the implementation of the policy. Approximately 70% of the candidates under study reported the utilisation of their campaign funds accurately and in a timely manner. This suggests that the policy was not only effective in reducing the influence of money, but also increased accountability among candidates. Greater transparency enables voters to make more informed decisions regarding their electoral choices, basing their decisions on the policies and vision of the candidates, rather than on the amount of money spent on their campaigns (Basuki and Pituringsih 2018).

Further analysis indicates that, while campaign finance limitation policies have been successful, challenges remain. Notwithstanding the enhancements in reporting compliance, there are indications that some candidates may attempt to circumvent the system by utilising unregistered sources of funds or in a non-transparent manner. It is thus imperative that electoral oversight bodies maintain rigorous supervision and enhance their capacity to detect and prevent violations. Furthermore, civil society has an essential function in monitoring and reporting irregularities, thereby fostering a more transparent and ethical political environment (Dairani 2021).

The data indicates that the implementation of transparent regulations and robust monitoring procedures can deter the practice of money politics and enhance public confidence in the electoral process. The phenomenon of money politics, which often involves the illicit use of financial resources to influence electoral outcomes, has emerged as a significant challenge in the political systems of numerous countries, including Indonesia. In this context, it is crucial to comprehend how rigorous regulation and transparent oversight can function as instruments to combat the practice (Currinder 2018).

Moreover, effective oversight mechanisms, such as those provided by independent institutions and public participation in the monitoring process, also play an important role in curbing money politics. Independent oversight institutions are able to conduct regular audits and checks, while community participation, such as that of volunteer election monitors, allows for the voting and reporting of irregularities. When individuals are engaged in the electoral process, they perceive a sense of obligation to uphold the integrity of the election, which subsequently enhances public confidence in the electoral outcomes (Iskandar and Qolbi 2023). It can be reasonably deduced that the combination of rigorous regulation and efficacious supervision will not only diminish the prevalence of money politics but also fortify democratic processes and enhance public confidence in the electoral process.

The efficacy of rigorous regulatory measures is exemplified by the implementation of electoral legislation that establishes limits on campaign finance and mandates transparency in financial reporting. To illustrate, in certain jurisdictions, prospective legislators are obliged to disclose all donations received and expenditures incurred during their electoral campaigns. This obligation serves to enhance transparency for the public, while also enabling oversight institutions to detect and pursue potential violations. The data from various studies demonstrate

that when candidates are compelled to adhere to these regulations, there is a notable decline in the prevalence of money politics (Myers 2021b). This indicates that the implementation of rigorous regulations may deter potential candidates from engaging in fraudulent activities.

This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that strict campaign finance regulations can enhance the quality of democracy by reducing injustice and non-transparency in elections. In this context, it is crucial to recognise that irregular campaign funding frequently results in a concentration of financial resources among a few candidates, thereby undermining the democratic process (Currinder 2018).

Moreover, the implementation of rigorous regulations pertaining to campaign finance facilitates enhanced transparency in the political domain. The obligation for candidates to report the sources and uses of their campaign funds serves two important purposes. Firstly, it enables voters to make more informed decisions. Secondly, it reduces the possibility of corruption and damaging money politics practices. The findings of Mutch (2016) indicate that in countries where there are more stringent regulations, there is a notable decline in political scandals pertaining to campaign spending (Mutch 2016b). This indicates that rigorous campaign finance regulation is not only advantageous for electoral fairness but also for the integrity of the political system as a whole.

Further analysis indicates that effective campaign finance regulation can facilitate the participation of a greater number of candidates from diverse backgrounds in electoral processes. By reducing the reliance on major donors who frequently have ulterior motives, candidates from underrepresented communities can be afforded a more equitable opportunity to compete. This is crucial for the creation of a more inclusive representation in government, which can subsequently result in the formulation of policies that are more responsive to the needs of diverse communities. Iskandar and Qolbi (2023) demonstrate that the involvement of a greater number of candidates from diverse backgrounds in the political process is associated with the production of policies that are of a higher quality and more reflective of the interests of citizens (Iskandar and Qolbi 2023).

The implementation of rigorous campaign finance regulations serves not only to enhance the quality of democratic processes but also to reinforce public confidence in the political system. When the electorate perceives that elections are conducted in a fair and transparent manner, they are more inclined to engage in the democratic process, both as voters and as candidates. It is therefore imperative that policymakers persevere in the strengthening and enforcement of existing regulations, while also contemplating reforms that are necessary to address the novel challenges that have emerged in the domain of campaign finance. This will guarantee the continued robustness and efficacy of democratic processes for all.

The practice of money politics has the potential to compromise the integrity and fairness of the electoral process. Consequently, it is imperative that the state implement rigorous measures to regulate and monitor the utilisation of campaign funds. In this context, the implementation of more stringent restrictions on campaign finance is of particular relevance. The data collected indicates that countries which have implemented more stringent restrictions on campaign finance demonstrate superior levels of electoral integrity and greater public trust in the accuracy of election results (Currinder 2018).

The practical implications of this research indicate that countries seeking to enhance the integrity of their electoral processes should consider implementing more stringent regulations

concerning campaign finance and ensuring the presence of robust oversight mechanisms. This entails the reinforcement of electoral oversight institutions with the capacity to audit and verify campaign finance reports. Furthermore, previous research has indicated that transparency in campaign finance reporting is a crucial element in the prevention of money politics. The implementation of transparency measures facilitates the public's ability to monitor and assess the sources and uses of campaign funds, thereby enhancing the accountability of candidates and political parties (Myers 2021a).

Moreover, this research underscores that the efficacy of this policy hinges not only on the presence of regulations but also on the efficacy of law enforcement and transparency in campaign finance reporting. In the absence of robust enforcement mechanisms, the efficacy of existing regulations is undermined, and the phenomenon of money politics persists. It is therefore imperative that the government not only establishes rigorous policies but also ensures the implementation of stringent sanctions for those who violate these policies. Furthermore, it is imperative that political education for voters be enhanced to ensure greater awareness of the significance of selecting candidates who are not engaged in money politics practices (Iskandar and Qolbi 2023).

In order to adequately address the issue of money politics, it is necessary to adopt a multidimensional approach. This necessitates a collaborative approach between governments, oversight institutions and civil society, with the objective of establishing a fairer and more transparent electoral environment. In addition, this research offers not only theoretical insights but also practical recommendations that can be implemented by countries committed to enhancing electoral integrity and preventing the negative influence of money in politics (Dairani 2021).

The findings of this study have significant social and ethical implications, particularly in regard to enhancing public confidence in the electoral process and curbing corrupt practices. In the context of democracy, public trust constitutes a fundamental pillar supporting the legitimacy of the government (Sorauf 2019). When individuals perceive the electoral process to be fair and transparent, they are more likely to engage in electoral participation and to endorse the resulting outcomes. The reduction of the influence of money in politics, facilitated by campaign finance restrictions, contributes to a fairer and more transparent electoral process, which in turn strengthens democratic integrity.

The findings of this study demonstrate that when campaign funds are limited, legislative candidates and politicians are more inclined to cultivate closer relationships with their constituents, as opposed to solely relying on large donors. Such a political environment may be more responsive to the needs of the people (Myers 2021b). The data indicates a notable decline in reported instances of corruption pertaining to campaign spending in regions where stringent campaign finance restrictions are in place. This indicates that effective regulation can diminish the motivation of politicians to engage in corrupt activities.

The legal implications of this research underscore the necessity for effective policy implementation and rigorous oversight to guarantee the equitable and uniform application of campaign finance regulations. The efficacy of a policy is contingent upon not only the presence of regulations but also the commitment to enforce them. In this regard, electoral oversight institutions must be adequately resourced and independent in order to fulfil their duties (Putri and Agustina 2024). Inadequate enforcement of legislation may result in the emergence of

loopholes that can be exploited by individuals or groups seeking to circumvent existing restrictions. It is therefore imperative that the capacity of these oversight institutions be increased through training and technical support, so that they can perform their duties more effectively.

Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that political education for the general public is of paramount importance. By providing a more nuanced understanding of campaign finance mechanisms and their impact on the democratic process, citizens can become more discerning and active in demanding accountability from their leaders. Such education can be conducted through programmes involving civil society, educational institutions and the media. Over time, enhanced political awareness among the general public may contribute to the development of a more robust and resilient political culture, in which corrupt practices are less likely to gain traction (Hafid 2019).

In light of these findings, this research not only sheds light on the significance of campaign finance restrictions but also underscores the necessity for collective action from all stakeholders to foster a more transparent and accountable electoral system. These endeavours will contribute to the consolidation of democracy and the enhancement of public trust, which will ultimately yield long-term benefits for society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this analysis substantiate the assertion that campaign finance limitation policies in ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, have a pronounced effect on enhancing transparency and accountability in the electoral process. The studies reviewed demonstrate that the implementation of rigorous regulations on campaign finance has effectively diminished the influence of monetary contributions in politics, which directly contributes to reduced levels of corruption and enhanced public confidence in electoral outcomes. Greater transparency enables voters to make more informed decisions, focusing on the quality of candidates rather than their financial strength.

Nevertheless, this success is not without its challenges. Nevertheless, there remains a possibility that candidates may attempt to circumvent regulations through opaque means. It is therefore imperative that election supervisory agencies continue to reinforce their supervisory and enforcement mechanisms. Furthermore, the active involvement of civil society and independent institutions is essential for monitoring and reporting irregularities, thereby guaranteeing the efficacy of these regulations in establishing a transparent and impartial political environment.

In conclusion, this research emphasises the necessity of a dual approach, comprising rigorous regulation and efficacious supervision, for the eradication of money politics. With the backing of all sections of society, these measures can reinforce democratic processes and maintain the integrity of the electoral process in ASEAN countries. It is therefore recommended that policy development should prioritise the regulation and transparency of electoral processes, in order to facilitate the growth and flourishing of democracy in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Author thanks to institute and all of people in most cases, sponsor and financial support acknowledgments.

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