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Internship Program within the People's House: Building a Positive Image of the Indonesian House of Representatives

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze in depth the contribution of the Internship Program within the People's House to building a positive image of the House of Representatives. The study employs a mixed methods approach with an explanatory sequential design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first phase emphasizes a descriptive qualitative approach as the primary interpretative framework, collecting primary data through in-depth interviews with several key informants. Subsequently, the second phase utilizes a quantitative approach with a questionnaire instrument developed based on the qualitative themes identified in the first phase. The research population comprises alumni of the internship program, utilizing census sampling where the entire population is included as the sample. The results indicate that the Internship Program within the People's House provides valuable practical experience for students and plays a crucial role in constructing a more accurate and positive public perception regarding the vital role of the House of Representatives in the Indonesian democratic system. The findings of this study demonstrate that political education, the direct involvement of the younger generation in the institutional processes of the House of Representatives, and targeted communication strategies are essential instruments in building public trust, increasing social capital, and strengthening the image of state institutions.

Keywords: House of Representatives; Internship within the People's House; Negative Perceptions; Positive Image; Students.

INTRODUCTION

The Independent Learning Policy, initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, in 2019, represents a significant transformation in the Indonesian education system. One of the fundamental changes introduced was the elimination of the National Examination, which replaced the Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey (Nifriza et al., 2023). This new assessment system emphasizes students' literacy, numeracy, and character development. Through this policy, the government strives to provide flexibility and encourage innovation so that teachers and students can develop their potential without being burdened by excessive administrative regulations (Surahman et al., 2022).

Based on the spirit of providing freedom to learn, the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) program is implemented at the higher education level. This program allows students to explore learning outside their study programs for three semesters (Sudaryanto et al., 2020). The essence of this program is to equip students with skills relevant to the needs of industry and the world of work, in line with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thinking on the freedom to learn, where students are encouraged to optimally develop their potential with the support of lecturers who act as facilitators (Faiz & Kurniawaty, 2020).

One of the flagship programs within the MBKM framework is the Certified Internship and Independent Study (MSIB). This program offers real work experience in government and private institutions for one to two semesters. Effendy and Hertati (2024) explain that this program allows students to delve directly into the professional world with credits that can be converted into courses. Through direct

projects, instruction, and mentoring from professional mentors, students can improve their technical (hard skills) and interpersonal (soft skills) and produce graduates who are more prepared to face the world of work challenges (Rahman et al., 2023).

Interestingly, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, an institution often in the public spotlight, has become one of the favorite destinations for students participating in the MSIB program. The internship program at the House of Representatives, known as the Internship within the People's House, offers a unique learning experience for students. Data from the Center for Human Resources Development and Communication of the House of Representatives (Pusbangkom) shows a significant increase in applicants for the program, namely 31,216 students in the last year, an almost threefold increase from the previous year. This phenomenon indicates a student perception shift towards the House of Representatives. The institution, previously often the object of criticism and demonstrations, is now seen as a strategic locus of learning for the younger generation.

The Internship Program within the People's House provides opportunities for students to comprehensively study the legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions of the House of Representatives. Students are involved in various activities, such as studying the legislative process, budget preparation, and oversight mechanisms. They also have the opportunity to interact with the House of Representatives commissions, participate in a simulation of parliamentary sessions, and collaborate with professional mentors (Suprayitno et al., 2022).

The Internship Program within the People's House is not only beneficial for students but also for the House of Representatives itself. Through this program, the House of Representatives can gain fresh perspectives from the younger generation and utilize student participation as an instrument to review and improve its internal processes. Furthermore, this program can be seen as an effective communication strategy for enhancing the positive image of the House of Representatives in the public eye. By actively involving students, it is hoped that they can become agents of change who bring a better understanding of the roles and functions of the House of Representatives to the public.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze in depth how the Internship Program within the People's House contributes to building a positive image of the House of Representatives. The analysis will focus on how the program can change public perception, specifically through the role of students as education agents who disseminate information and their experiences during the program. This study will also analyze latent variables and their indicators in building a positive image of the House of Representatives and formulate future recommendations for optimizing the program.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative research methods. This approach is intended to obtain comprehensive, valid, and reliable data. Although philosophically distinct, within the mixed methods framework, both approaches can be implemented in a complementary manner (Sugiyono, 2010). Creswell (2016) explains that qualitative and quantitative methods can be utilized alternately in different phases of mixed methods research.

This study uses an explanatory sequential design, which consists of two phases. The first phase emphasizes a descriptive qualitative approach as the primary interpretative framework, while the second phase utilizes a quantitative approach for confirmatory purposes (Berman, 2017). A more precise illustration of the mixed methods explanatory sequential design can be seen in Figure 1.

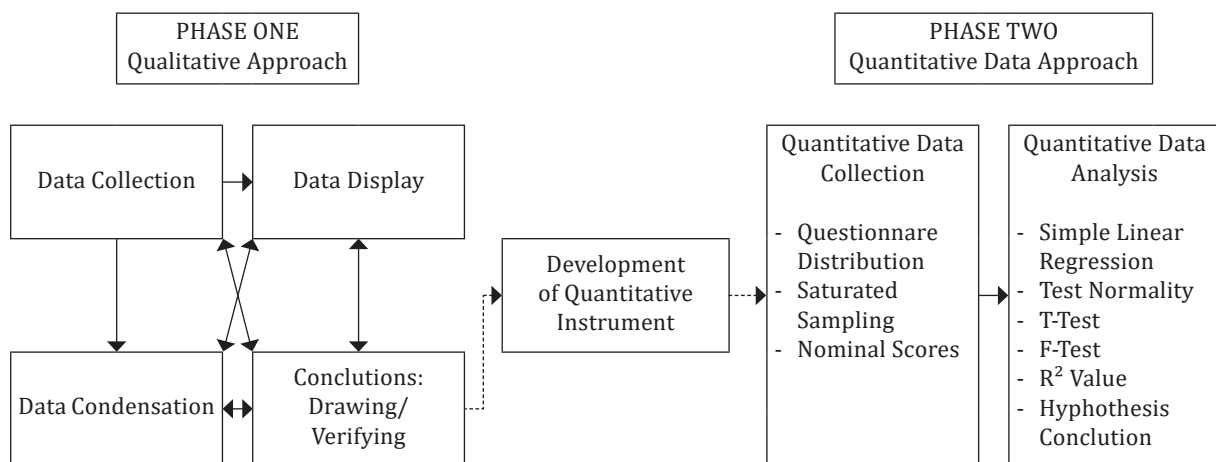


Figure 1. Mix Method Explanatory Sequential Design (Alimudin & Dharmawati, 2022)

In the first phase, primary data is collected through in-depth interviews with key informants involved in the Internship Program within the People's House, namely Pusbangkom as the program organizer, interns, and communication and public relations experts. These interviews aim to explore in-depth information regarding the role of the program in shaping the positive image of the House of Representatives. Secondary data is obtained from various literature sources, such as books, journals, scholarly articles, and reports relevant to image management, public relations, and organizational reputation. The qualitative process in this phase serves as data exploration, where emerging qualitative themes will be used to inform the development of the quantitative instrument in the second phase.

The second phase continues the first phase, employing a quantitative approach for confirmation. Based on the qualitative themes identified in the first phase, namely the image of the House of Representatives as perceived by alumni of the Internship Program within the People's House, a quantitative instrument in the form of a

questionnaire is developed. This questionnaire is distributed to the entire research population, consisting of 30 student alumni who completed the program in September 2024. Census sampling is used in this study, meaning the entire population is included as the sample. A Likert scale is used for scoring the questionnaire, ranging from strongly agree (5) to disagree (1).

In analyzing the data, this study also considers the theories of [Goffman \(1959\)](#) and [Elsbach and Sutton \(1992\)](#) on strategies public sector organizations use to control public perception. This approach analyzes how the House of Representatives manages its image and reputation through the Internship Program within the People's House as part of a broader reputation management effort.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Dynamics of the House of Representatives Image: Challenges and Opportunities in the Reformation Era

The House of Representatives' image reflects Indonesia's social, political, and economic dynamics. In the post-reformation era, the House of Representatives has been under intense public scrutiny, with its performance in legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions continuously monitored and evaluated by the public ([Tomsa & Bax, 2023](#)). Despite its vital role in the government system, the House of Representatives must strive to build and maintain a positive public image.

Beyond the issue of corruption, another significant challenge hindering this effort is the negative perception arising from corruption cases involving some members of the House of Representatives ([Umam et al., 2020](#)). These actions, which from the perspective of agency theory can be seen as deviations in the behavior of agents (members of the House of Representatives) from the interests of the principal (the people), not only damage the reputation of the individuals involved but also tarnish the image of the legislative institution as a whole ([Ariva & Ermawati, 2020](#)). This situation poses a significant challenge for the House of Representatives in maintaining and increasing public trust, which is crucial social capital for the legitimacy and effectiveness of political institutions.

In addition to these challenges, the House of Representatives must manage public communication in the digital era, characterized by increasing public participation through social media. In this context, the spiral of silence theory becomes relevant for analysis. This theory explains how individuals tend to conceal their opinions if they feel they are in the minority, while dominant opinions in the media will be voiced more strongly ([Laor, 2024](#)). The House of Representatives needs to develop adaptive communication strategies to reach various segments of society, create inclusive dialogue spaces, and avoid the impression that the institution is closed or unresponsive to public aspirations. For many years, there has been a gap between what the House of Representatives does and how the public

perceives it. Ineffective communication often exacerbates negative perceptions, even when the House of Representatives performs its duties and functions well (Marua & Muzakkir, 2023). Therefore, the House of Representatives must continue to adapt to the changing dynamics of public communication to ensure that accurate and positive information regarding their performance can be effectively conveyed to the public.

B. Image Management of the House of Representatives: Strategies for Improving and Maintaining a Positive Image in the Digital Era

The House of Representatives efforts to improve and maintain a positive image in the digital era demand a comprehensive and adaptive communication strategy. This strategy must be oriented toward increasing transparency, accountability, and public engagement while also considering the dynamics of new media and changes in audience behavior. One of the main strategies the House of Representatives implements is the optimization of transparency in the legislative process. In this regard, the House of Representatives proactively provides the public with the broadest possible access to information related to the law-making process, including deliberations on draft laws, minutes of committee meetings, and records of decision-making (Muzakkir et al., 2021). This strategy aligns with the principles of open government, which emphasize transparency, participation, and collaboration in public decision-making (Sudarsono et al., 2024). By increasing transparency, the House of Representatives not only fulfills the public's right to know but also seeks to reduce misunderstandings, enhance accountability, and build public trust (Akbar et al., 2023).

Beyond legislative transparency, the House of Representatives also focuses on more effective public communication management in the digital era. The House of Representatives actively utilizes social media and other digital communication platforms to interact directly with the public (Akbar, 2024). Through these digital channels, the House of Representatives can answer questions, clarify contemporary issues, and convey their achievements and work programs more directly to the public. This strategy aims to bring the House of Representatives closer to the community and shape a more positive public perception by delivering accurate, timely, and transparent information. The use of digital media in political communication is necessary in the current information age (Akbar & Fadiyah, 2022). The presence of digital media has significantly changed the landscape of political communication, creating a new public sphere that is more dynamic, interactive, and decentralized.

Furthermore, the House of Representatives has adopted a strategy focused on political education and socialization (Royandiah et al., 2022). Through programs such as the Internship within the People's House, the House of Representatives strives to involve students in the legislative and oversight processes so they can

directly understand how the House of Representatives works. By being part of this program, students are expected to become agents of change who can disseminate a better understanding of the roles and functions of the House of Representatives in society. This political education program is expected not only to improve the image of the House of Representatives but also to strengthen political literacy among the younger generation. This aligns with civic engagement, which emphasizes the importance of active citizen participation in the political and democratic process (Muzakkir & Bailusy, 2023).

C. Weaving the Future: The Internship Program within the People's House and its Strategic Role in Enhancing the Image of the House of Representatives

The Internship Program within the People's House has opened new horizons for students to gain empirical experience in the professional world. In particular, the involvement of the House of Representatives in this program offers a valuable opportunity for students to delve directly into politics and state institutions. This program is comprehensively designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the functions, duties, and work dynamics within the House of Representatives. This institution plays a central role in the Indonesian political system. Through this program, students not only absorb theories and concepts acquired in the classroom but also engage directly in the legislative process, oversight, and other crucial functions carried out by the House of Representatives. This real-world experience allows students to gain invaluable practical insights for developing their competencies, adaptability, and future careers.

The active participation of students in the Internship Program within the People's House yields significant strategic implications, both for the students themselves and for the House of Representatives as an institution. Students involved in this program are projected to become agents of information dissemination, spreading their knowledge and experience regarding the work processes within the House of Representatives to the broader community. In this context, students act as opinion leaders who can influence public perception of the House of Representatives (Muzakkir et al., 2023). On the other hand, the House of Representatives also utilizes this program to bring the institution closer to the younger generation while embracing their potential to support the institution's performance. This strategy aligns with the concept of public engagement, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue and collaboration between public institutions and the community (Legrand, 2021).

Within the framework of the Internship Program within the People's House, students are allowed to collaborate with various divisions in the House of Representatives, including policy development, research, and public communications. One form of student involvement is producing creative and

educational content disseminated through various social media platforms owned by the House of Representatives. Students are given the freedom to explore their creativity in developing educational content that is relevant and engaging for the younger generation. Through these various tasks, students not only gain practical experience but also come to understand the complexity of the tasks faced by the House of Representatives and how this institution plays a role in maintaining a balance between various interests in government. This experience is expected to change students' perceptions of the House of Representatives from those that negative stereotypes may color to those that are more objective and appreciative. Furthermore, students are expected to become ambassadors who spread a positive understanding of the role of the House of Representatives in society.

In addition to providing benefits for students, the Internship Program within the People's House also serves as an effective public communication strategy for the House of Representatives to improve its image. The House of Representatives can demonstrate its commitment to political education, transparency, and openness to the younger generation through student involvement. Students involved in this program are expected to become agents of change who can convey positive messages about the House of Representatives to their peers and the wider community. Thus, this program not only impacts the development of student's skills and knowledge but also enhances the image of the House of Representatives as an institution that is open, responsive, and accountable to the younger generation.

The success of the Internship Program within the People's House can be seen in the enthusiasm of students to join it. Every year, the number of applicants for this program continues to increase. In 2021, the first year the program was opened, there were 17,000 applicants, with a quota of only 150 accepted. In 2022, there were 11,500 applicants, and in 2023, there were over 25,400 applicants.

In 2024, the House of Representatives became one of the strategic partners of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology because it was given the target of accepting 900 participants in the Internship Program within the People's House. This data shows that the program has successfully attracted the interest and attention of the younger generation. This high level of interest reflects the desire of students to be involved in the government process and their curiosity about the role of the House of Representatives. By taking advantage of this momentum, the House of Representatives can continue to strengthen its relationship with the younger generation and strengthen efforts to improve the institution's image in the future. The increase in the number of applicants can also be interpreted as a positive indicator of the effectiveness of the Internship Program within the People's House in raising awareness and interest among the younger generation toward the House of Representatives.

D. Internship within the People's House: A New Medium for Pusbangkom in Shaping a Positive Image of the House of Representatives

The Internship Program within the People's House has a strategic dual role. On the one hand, this program is a vehicle for students to enhance their skills and knowledge through empirical experience in the political world. On the other hand, this program also serves as a medium for the House of Representatives to build and strengthen its image in society, especially among the younger generation. In this context, Pusbangkom plays a crucial role in managing this program to ensure a positive impact on public perception of the House of Representatives. Through Pusbangkom's active involvement, the Internship Program within the People's House is designed not only to introduce students to the main functions of the House of Representatives but also to construct the image of this institution in the eyes of the younger generation and influence public opinion broadly.

The Internship Program within the People's House is one of the strategic communication programs for the House of Representatives to build a positive image and mitigate negative sentiment that may develop on social media. From a political communication perspective, this program can be seen as a form of public diplomacy aimed at influencing foreign public opinion (in this case, the younger generation, who are considered "foreign" to the political processes in the House of Representatives) through the provision of information and the creation of positive experiences (Triwibowo, 2023). Pusbangkom understands that students participating in this program have great potential as agents of change who can bring their information and experiences into a broader social environment. Therefore, Pusbangkom focuses on developing a program that is not only educational but also inspires students to view the House of Representatives as an institution that plays a vital role in democracy, while also correcting misconceptions that may exist in the public mind. Students are allowed to engage in various House of Representatives activities, from observing the legislative process to participating in public communication activities. In this way, Pusbangkom not only provides practical insights to students but also encourages them to become ambassadors capable of transforming the image of the House of Representatives in society.

One of the main strategies employed by Pusbangkom is integrating proactive communication. Students participating in the Internship Program within the People's House are invited to participate in public campaigns aimed at raising public awareness about the roles and functions of the House of Representatives. In this process, students learn how the House of Representatives communicates with the public and how the image of this institution can be shaped through appropriate communication strategies. This experience is expected to equip students with a deeper understanding of the importance of communication in image building, which they can then apply in their future professional environments. In addition,

Pusbangkom also facilitates discussions and workshops involving students, members of the House of Representatives, and experts in various fields. These activities aim to create a constructive dialogue on current issues the House of Representatives faces and how this institution can respond to these challenges effectively. Through this dialogue, students gain academic insights and practical perspectives on how the House of Representatives works and how they can contribute to efforts to build a positive image for this institution. Pusbangkom acts as a bridge connecting the academic world with actual work practices in the House of Representatives.

Overall, the Internship Program within the People's House, managed by Pusbangkom, is a compelling new medium for constructing a positive image for the House of Representatives. By actively involving students in various aspects of the House of Representatives operations and communications, this program not only enhances students' understanding and skills but also helps the House of Representatives to improve and strengthen its image in the public eye. Pusbangkom, through careful and strategic management, has succeeded in making this program a tool to build bridges between the House of Representatives and the community, especially the younger generation, which can ultimately bring positive change to the image of this institution in the future.

E. Measuring the Effectiveness of the Internship Program within the People's House: A Quantitative Approach for Confirmatory Analysis

Complementing the qualitative data, the quantitative approach in this study plays a crucial role in providing objective and measurable empirical evidence. Through numerical data, patterns, trends, and relationships between variables can be accurately identified. The statistical analysis enhances the validity and reliability of the research findings while generalizing the results to a broader population, strengthening the arguments and conclusions. This study focuses on four latent variables.

First, training and relevance, with the following indicators and questions:

P1: To what extent were your tasks and responsibilities during the internship relevant to your educational background?

P2: How practical was the training or briefing provided before or during the internship at the House of Representatives?

P3: Did you feel your tasks and responsibilities were evident during the internship?

Second, work environment and support, with the following indicators and questions:

L1: How would you rate the work environment at the House of Representatives?

L2: How comfortable were you working with the team at the House of Representatives?

Third, experience and personal development, with the following indicators and questions:

D1: How would you rate your overall internship experience at the House of Representatives?

D2: Do you feel the skills you learned during the internship will be helpful in your future career?

D3: How much did this internship contribute to your personal development (skills, knowledge, etc.)?

D4: Did you get opportunities to network (build professional relationships) during your internship at the House of Representatives?

Fourth, the perception of the House of Representatives image, with the following indicators and questions:

C1: How would you rate the image of the House of Representatives before you participated in the internship program?

C2: How would you rate the image of the House of Representatives after participating in the internship program?

C3: How much did the internship experience at the House of Representatives influence your view of the professionalism and performance of this institution?

C4: After participating in the internship program, did your view of the transparency and accountability of the House of Representatives change?

C5: Did your experience at the House of Representatives change your view of the role of the House of Representatives in society?

C6: In your opinion, does the House of Representatives need to increase efforts to improve its image in the eyes of the general public?

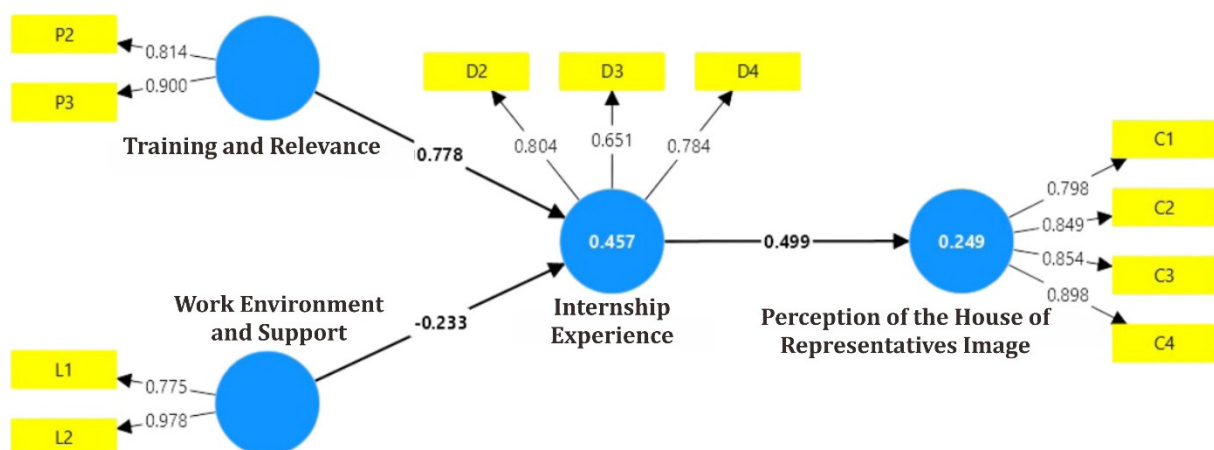


Figure 2. Analysis Model

As illustrated in Figure 2, the path relationships between the latent variables in this study are as follows:

- Training and Relevance (P) → Experience and Personal Development (D)

- Work Environment and Support (L) → Experience and Personal Development (D)
- Experience and Personal Development (D) → Perception of the House of Representatives Image (C)

The discussion of the analysis model results includes outer model analysis (reliability and validity), inner model analysis (relationships between latent variables), R-square (R^2) values, and other analyses.

1. Outer Model Analysis (Reliability and Validity)

The indicators used have outer loadings above 0.6, except for P1, D1, C5, and C6, which were eliminated from the model due to loading values below 0.6. This indicates that the indicators used are sufficiently robust to represent their respective latent variables.

2. Inner Model Analysis (Relationships between Latent Variables)

Training and Relevance → Internship Experience: The path coefficient of 0.778 indicates that training and relevance strongly influence internship experience. This means that the more relevant and better the quality of the training, the better the participants' perception of their internship experience.

Work Environment and Support → Internship Experience: This path has a negative coefficient of -0.233, indicating that the work environment and support negatively influence the internship experience. This result can be interpreted as a possibility that some aspects of the work environment and support did not meet the participants' expectations.

Internship Experience → Perception of the House of Representatives Image: The coefficient value of 0.499 indicates a moderately strong positive influence of internship experience on the participant's perception of the House of Representatives image. This means that a positive internship experience contributes to enhancing the image of the House of Representatives in the interns' eyes.

3. R-Square (R^2) Values

Internship Experience ($R^2 = 0.457$): This indicates that 45.7% of the variance in internship experience can be explained by the variables Training and Relevance and Work Environment and Support.

Perception of the House of Representatives Image ($R^2 = 0.249$): This indicates that the Internship Experience variable can explain 24.9% of the House of Representatives image variance. This suggests that other variables not included in this model may influence the House of Representatives' perception of the image.

4. Other Analyses

High Outer Loading Values: The high outer loading values for indicators C3 and C4 on the Perception of the House of Representatives Image variable (0.854 and 0.898) indicate that perceptions of professionalism and performance, as well as views on transparency and accountability, are strong indicators in determining participants' perception of the House of Representatives image.

Negative Influence of Work Environment and Support: The negative coefficient on the relationship between Work Environment and Support suggests potential issues in the work environment or interactions experienced by interns. This could be an area that the House of Representatives needs to improve to optimize the internship experience and enhance the institution's image.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the authority to file for Judicial Review of Pretrial Rulings is a complex legal issue. Although Law Number 8 of 1981 does not explicitly provide for it, legal loopholes allow for such Judicial Review to be pursued. Suspects, legal counsel, and prosecutors are legal subjects granted the right to file for Judicial Review. However, implementing Judicial Review against Pretrial Rulings still faces several challenges, particularly concerning public understanding and accessibility to the justice system. The Decision of Judicial Review on Pretrial Rulings has broad implications, not only affecting the fate of the individuals involved in the case but also contributing significantly to the protection of human rights, legal certainty, and improving the quality of law enforcement in Indonesia. Reforming the procedure for filing for Judicial Review, which includes simplifying the procedure, intensifying public awareness campaigns, and optimizing the role of legal aid institutions, becomes crucial in enhancing access to justice and the protection of human rights.

Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that suspects consistently understand their legal rights, including the right to file for Judicial Review against Pretrial Rulings deemed unjust. It is essential for suspects to proactively seek information and consult with legal counsel to obtain adequate legal assistance. Legal counsel, as assistants and legal advisors to suspects, should possess comprehensive knowledge regarding the procedures and requirements for filing for Judicial Review. Legal counsel is expected to provide clear and accurate information to suspects and assist them in filing for Judicial Review. Prosecutors, as law enforcement officials representing the state, should exercise their authority to file for Judicial Review wisely and objectively, prioritizing the interests of justice and truth. The Supreme Court must provide clear and comprehensive guidelines regarding the technical implementation of Judicial Review against Pretrial Rulings. It can be achieved by issuing jurisprudence or a Circular of the Supreme Court that thoroughly regulates the procedures,

requirements, and procedures for filing for Judicial Review against Pretrial Rulings. Additionally, the Supreme Court can also consider reforming criminal procedural law by establishing or amending legislation that explicitly regulates Judicial Review against Pretrial Rulings. The public, in general, needs to improve their understanding of legal rights and criminal justice mechanisms, including the mechanism for filing for Judicial Review against Pretrial Rulings. Enhancing public legal awareness can be carried out through various legal education and awareness programs organized by the government, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions.

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