

Analysis of Public Perception on The Imei Registration Policy for Internationally Purchased Mobile Phones in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of international mobile devices in Indonesia has made the implementation of IMEI registration policies critical in addressing the circulation of illegal handphones. This study examines public perceptions of IMEI registration policies in Pangkal Pinang, specifically for international handphones. The research employs a qualitative approach with purposive sampling of 32 informants, including customs officers, handphone retailers, and the general public. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document reviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that while 67% of respondents understand the purpose of the IMEI registration policy, only 40% comprehend its technical procedures. The customs officers highlighted the challenges of incomplete documentation and misinformation among applicants, while retailers noted its impact on sales, particularly regarding imported handphones. The general public expressed mixed reactions, with affordability and lack of awareness as the primary concerns. The findings align with Edward III's policy implementation model, emphasizing communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Communication gaps and limited resources, particularly the number of personnel handling registration, remain significant barriers to effective implementation. This study recommends enhanced outreach programs, improved technological infrastructure, and regulatory harmonization among government agencies. Addressing these challenges will contribute to the policy's effectiveness in regulating international handphone imports and protecting consumer rights.

Keywords: IMEI registration, public perception, international handphones, customs policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication devices, the Indonesian government has implemented the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) registration policy since 2020. This policy aims to reduce the circulation of illegal mobile phones that do not fulfill the state's tax obligations and ensure that telecommunication devices operating in Indonesia comply with regulatory standards. The policy is regulated under the Minister of Communication and Informatics Regulation No. 1 of 2020 and is supported by implementing the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) system. This system integrates IMEI data from various telecommunication operators, ensuring that only registered devices can access mobile networks in Indonesia (Ministry of Communication and Informatics, 2020).

Implementing the IMEI registration policy is designed to protect economic interests and consumer security. Economically, this policy aims to curb the circulation of illegally imported devices often sold at lower prices, promoting fair competition in the market. The policy also discourages mobile phone theft, as stolen or lost devices can be blocked from mobile networks, reducing their resale value. However, many unregistered imported mobile devices, particularly international second-hand phones, continue to circulate in the market. Consumers are often attracted to these devices due to their lower prices, without fully understanding the risks associated with using unregistered devices (Abdurrahman et al., 2021).

The Customs and Excise Office of Pangkalpinang (Kantor Pengawasan dan Pelayanan Bea dan Cukai Tipe Madya Pabean C Pangkalpinang) is one of the institutions responsible for processing IMEI registrations in its jurisdiction. The registration process requires applicants to submit documents such as passports, boarding passes, and purchase invoices. However, many applicants fail to provide the required documents due to a lack of awareness, resulting in delays or unsuccessful registrations. Additionally, the emergence of illegal IMEI registration services, or "IMEI brokers," advertised on social media platforms has become a significant challenge in enforcing the policy. These illicit practices cause revenue losses for the government and put consumers at risk of using mobile phones with uncertain legal status (Prasetyo & Wijaya, 2022).

This research employs a qualitative approach to analyze the public perception of the IMEI registration policy, focusing on factors influencing compliance, challenges encountered, and the effectiveness of government efforts in socializing the policy. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of societal attitudes, behaviors, and experiences regarding IMEI registration (Creswell, 2013). The study draws on semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis to understand the realities on the ground.

Through this research, we aim to identify solutions to improve public awareness and compliance with the IMEI registration policy while providing recommendations for the government to enhance policy implementation. The findings will improve regulatory enforcement and consumer protection in Indonesia's telecommunications sector.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore public perceptions of the IMEI registration policy for international second-hand mobile phones in Pangkal Pinang City. A qualitative approach is suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of social phenomena and the policy implementation process in the field.

This research is designed to collect data through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The collected data includes information from various stakeholders, such as Customs officials, the general public, and mobile phone retailers, to provide a holistic perspective. A descriptive approach depicts and explains observed phenomena without manipulating research variables.

2.1. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through the following steps:

a. In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted with key informants, including Customs officials, IMEI registration service applicants, mobile phone sellers, and the general public. This technique allows researchers to obtain rich and relevant data on perceptions, challenges, and policy implementation efforts.

b. Participatory Observations

The researcher directly observed the IMEI registration process at the Pangkal Pinang Customs Office to understand operational procedures and technical obstacles encountered.

c. Documentation Analysis

Additional data was obtained from official government regulations, operational reports from Customs offices, and socialization materials related to the IMEI registration policy.

2.2. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using the Successive Approximation Method, allowing the researcher to validate data in stages. The analysis process includes:

- a. **Data Categorization**
Interview, observation, and documentation data were categorized into key themes, such as public perception, policy implementation barriers, and policy effectiveness.
- b. **Thematic Analysis Technique**
Data was analyzed using a thematic approach to identify patterns, relationships, and relevant themes related to the research objectives.
- c. **Data Triangulation**
The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation, which involved comparing interview findings, observations, and documents to ensure consistency in findings.

2.3. Research Assumptions

This research is based on the following assumptions:

- a. Public perception of the IMEI registration policy is influenced by their level of understanding, socialization efforts, and individual experiences.
- b. Policy implementation involves multiple stakeholders with interrelated roles and responsibilities.
- c. Challenges in policy implementation can be addressed by enhancing inter-agency coordination, increasing the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns, and improving technological infrastructure.

2.4. Data Processing

The collected data was processed through the following steps:

- a. Transcribing interviews and grouping data based on themes.
- b. Interpreting data to understand the social and economic context influencing public perception.
- c. Presenting analysis results in a narrative and tabular format for clarity.

This research method is designed to produce a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of public perceptions regarding the IMEI registration policy, ultimately providing relevant recommendations to enhance the policy's effectiveness.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Public Perception of the IMEI Registration Policy in Pangkal Pinang City

The research findings indicate that 67% of the people in Pangkal Pinang City understand the purpose of the IMEI registration policy, which is to reduce the circulation of illegal mobile phones. However, only 40% of respondents are aware of the technical steps involved in the registration process. Many people perceive that purchasing an international second-hand mobile phone without IMEI registration is not an issue as long as it is cheaper. This perception is often reinforced by the fact that the device remains functional at first until it is eventually blocked due to an unregistered IMEI.

Gibson's Perception Theory (1982). Public perception is influenced by experience and received information. A lack of technical knowledge and direct experience leads to misunderstandings about the importance of IMEI registration.

Effectiveness of Socialization. Socialization through social media has proven effective for the digitally active population. However, it fails to reach those who are not engaged in digital platforms. Direct approaches such as seminars or workshops are still very limited.

Challenges. Lack of awareness results in low compliance with the policy and an increase in the purchase of devices without registered IMEI, making it a significant challenge in implementing the policy.

b. **Barriers in Policy Implementation**

The study identifies three main barriers in implementing the IMEI registration policy:

- 1) **Technical Constraints.** Delays in IMEI registration exceeding the 60-day limit.
- 2) **Incomplete Documentation.** Missing required documents such as boarding passes and purchase invoices frequently cause registration delays.
- 3) **Regulatory Gaps.** The absence of regulations for international second-hand mobile phones purchased domestically and IMEI registration for devices in transit at their final destination airports.

Additional Barriers :

1) **IMEI Registration Through Foreign Tourist Routes**

Some individuals exploit foreign tourist status to register their IMEI. However, IMEI registration under this scheme is only valid for three months, corresponding to the visa validity. After this period, the device will be blocked.

2) **Illegal IMEI Registration Services ("IMEI Brokers")**

Unauthorized services offer IMEI registration for a fee, often in violation of regulations. This practice not only harms the government in terms of lost revenue but also puts consumers at risk of fraud.

3) **George Edward III's Bureaucratic Structure Theory.**

The complexity of bureaucracy and the limited number of authorized officials to approve IMEI registration slow down the service, especially when key personnel are on leave or assigned elsewhere. Public misunderstanding regarding required documents leads to many applications being rejected or rescheduled. The regulatory gaps for international second-hand devices purchased in the country or those exceeding the 60-day registration period create opportunities for violations such as illegal IMEI registration brokers.

c. **Government Efforts in Socialization and Implementation of the Policy**

The socialization of the IMEI registration policy is conducted through various digital media, such as WhatsApp, social media, and websites. However, methods such as billboards and television advertisements have not been utilized optimally. The technological infrastructure at the Pangkalpinang Customs Office is fairly adequate, yet certain technical constraints hinder service efficiency.

Digital socialization effectively reaches modern society, but it is less inclusive for those who are not digitally active. The limited personnel at the Pangkalpinang Customs Office require officers to handle multiple responsibilities, impacting service efficiency. Despite their high commitment to implementing this policy, officers face challenges due to the lack of regulatory harmonization between agencies, such as Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DGCE) and Ministry of Communication and Digital.

4. **CONCLUSION**

The conclusions of this study on public perception regarding the IMEI registration policy for international second-hand mobile phones in Pangkal Pinang reveal the following:

a. **Public Perception**

- 1) Most people understand that the policy aims to reduce the circulation of illegal mobile phones.
- 2) However, their technical understanding of the registration procedure remains low.
- 3) Many individuals believe that purchasing a device without IMEI registration is not an issue as long as it functions properly.

Recommendations

- 1) The government needs to strengthen socialization efforts through various media, including billboards, television advertisements, and in-person community engagements to raise public awareness.
 - 2) Enhancing public knowledge about the risks of using unregistered IMEI devices through both digital and non-digital outreach programs.
- b. Implementation Challenges
- Three main obstacles hinder the implementation of the IMEI registration policy:
- 1) Technical issues (system disruptions and a lack of authorized officials).
 - 2) Lack of public awareness regarding the required documentation.
 - 3) Regulatory gaps concerning international second-hand devices purchased domestically

Recommendations

- 1) **Simplify the IMEI registration process** and increase the number of authorized personnel, especially during peak service hours.
 - 2) **Develop a more reliable technological system** to streamline registration services.
 - 3) **Establish new regulations** for international second-hand mobile phones purchased domestically.
 - 4) **Monitor and crack down on illegal IMEI registration services** to prevent fraud and policy violations.
- c. Efforts in Socialization and Implementation

The government has conducted outreach efforts through digital platforms such as WhatsApp, social media, and websites. However, these efforts have not yet reached all segments of society. The infrastructure at the Pangkal Pinang Customs Office is relatively adequate, but lack of address regulatory gaps or potential misuse harmonization among institutions remain significant challenges.

Recommendations for improvement include:

- 1) Expanding socialization efforts by installing billboards in strategic locations and broadcasting advertisements on television.
- 2) Increasing the number of personnel to manage the surge in registrations.
- 3) Harmonizing regulations to address regulatory gaps or potential misuse among agencies to minimize obstacles in policy implementation.

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NOVELTY

This study contributes to identifying the gap between the IMEI registration policy and public perception. Findings indicate low public awareness of the technical registration procedures and the absence of regulations for international second-hand devices purchased domestically. These insights provide valuable recommendations for policymakers in designing more inclusive and effective policies. Additionally, this research proposes concrete suggestions to enhance the efficiency of IMEI registration policy implementation.

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