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**Political Literacy to the Community Through Digital Literacy Program at the Electoral Commission of Palembang City**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the dissemination of Political Literacy to the Community Through Digital Literacy at KPU Palembang City, recognizing it as a crucial factor for fostering quality elections within the framework of democratic governance, particularly within the realm of KPU Palembang City's activities aimed at enhancing political awareness, fostering critical thinking, and providing political education to the public via digital literacy. Given the ongoing advancement of information technology, facilitating the accessibility of reliable and accurate political information to the public is paramount, thereby enabling them to comprehend and align with political objectives (political literacy).

This study critically examines political literacy within the framework of augmenting community engagement. The specific objectives of this study are twofold: firstly, to identify the political determinants contributing to political literacy within society, and secondly, to delineate the barriers to political literacy encountered by the KPU of Palembang City.

The methodology employed in this research paper is qualitative in nature, incorporating techniques such as interviews, literature reviews, and data analysis. The primary data collection involved direct engagement with a member of the Palembang City Election Commission. The findings of this study reveal that the political determinants underlying political literacy include low levels of public engagement and insufficient political education. Additionally, barriers to political literacy within the community encompass factors such as political apathy, geographical remoteness hindering accessibility, and educational disparities.

**Keywords:** Political Literacy, Society, Electoral Commission of Palembang City

## **ABSTRAK**

Artikel ini mengkaji tentang Literasi Politik Kepada Masyarakat Melalui Literasi Digital di KPU Kota Palembang sebagai salah satu syarat penting untuk menghasilkan pemilu yang berkualitas dalam konteks kehidupan berdemokrasi khususnya di KPU Kota Palembang dalam menjalankan proses politik untuk melakukan upaya meningkatkan kesadaran politik, daya kritis yang dimiliki, dan memberikan pendidikan politik kepada masyarakat melalui literasi digital yang dimana semakin berkembangnya teknologi informasi saat ini untuk lebih mempermudah masyarakat dalam menerima informasi politik yang aktual baik dan benar supaya masyarakat paham dan tahu arah tujuan berpolitik (melek politik). Kajian ini dimaksudkan untuk mendeskripsikan secara kritis literasi politik dalam konteks untuk meningkatkan partisipasi masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk 1. Mengetahui faktor politis yang melatarbelakangi literasi politik kepada masyarakat. 2. Bagaimana kendala literasi politik di KPU Kota Palembang.

Metode kajian yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini adalah menggunakan metode jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data wawancara, studi literatur, dan analisis data. Penelitian ini dilakukan secara langsung kepada salah satu Anggota KPU Kota Palembang. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan faktor politik yang melatarbelakangi literasi politik ini yaitu rendahnya partisipasi masyarakat dan kurangnya pendidikan politik. Adapun kendala literasi politik kepada masyarakat memiliki beberapa faktor yaitu sikap apatis terhadap politik, letak geografis masyarakat yang sulit ditempuh, dan tingkat pendidikan yang tidak merata.

Keywords: Literasi Politik, Masyarakat, KPU Palembang

## **INTRODUCTION**

As a nation that has chosen democracy as its political system, Indonesia conducts its political processes through a democratic system wherein every citizen is given ample opportunity to participate. In democracy, political literacy is essential for the populace. Political literacy is the ability that every individual must possess in facing political phenomena. This poses a challenge for the populace in responding to various political information they encounter, particularly for those categorized as novice voters. Literacy encompasses three aspects: cognitive, which observes how an individual utilizes political information acquired; effective/attitudinal, the ability of citizens to address political issues around them; and behavioral, which assesses individuals' capacity to express political understanding in daily life. Additionally, social media plays a significant role in the dissemination of political information. In fact, the majority of social media users are young adults aged between 20 and 29.

Considering the significant number of voters participating each year, researchers are prompted to understand their political comprehension by examining their information-seeking behaviors in accessing relevant information. This proves the substantial role of voters; thus, how voters utilize their political information is crucial. Information-seeking behavior is intertwined with technological advancements as a medium for rapid information dissemination, enabling access to political news from various sources. The existence of social media enhances flexibility in political discussions and public issue deliberations through connections facilitated by internet usage, encouraging political participation over political alienation.

Understanding and possessing political literacy skills will shield individuals from potential manipulation of political information that may lack accuracy. Moreover, their political choices will be based on clear information and conscious decision-making. This indicates that political literacy plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of public opinions and fostering tolerance toward different political issues, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of democracy, especially among the younger generation.

Furthermore, efforts to increase political awareness and critical thinking, especially among communities with low political literacy, are crucial. The low level of political literacy is attributed to several factors, including the ineffective functioning of political parties, politicians, and civil society organizations operating in the socio-political realm to strengthen political literacy, as well as the lack of political specialization and role models among political elites.

One component of political literacy is novice voters, where communities play a significant role as agents of change for the nation. Communities must better understand politics and take responsibility for the decisions they make in addressing political issues or phenomena around them.

Therefore, political participation and competent political policies, coupled with adequate political literacy, are vital. This study observes the Palembang City Election Commission (KPU) as part of political activities, governmental policy actions, and responses to applicable laws. The importance of political literacy lies in a process that prioritizes independence and integrity while avoiding media-propagated biases that narrow critical thinking, as misconceptions in measuring the success of political education efforts render attempts to enhance political literacy ineffective.

Thus, the reason for examining this research is that political literacy is one of the programs of the KPU or political literacy development aimed at the public, including in Palembang City. As the 2024 elections approach, various preparations are made by the KPU, particularly in Palembang City, to support the continuity of the presidential election democracy festival, including political education through digital political literacy. Political literacy also influences public confidence in political figures and the public's tendency to assess or understand politics.

Political literacy is crucial for the populace. According to Bernard Crick, political literacy comprises adequate knowledge, skills in information retrieval and comparison, and attitudes regarding political issues. This indicates that political literacy plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of public opinions and fostering tolerance toward different political issues, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of democracy, especially among the younger generation. Moreover, it endeavors to increase political awareness and critical thinking among communities, recognizing that the populace is a demographic with weak political literacy. The academic rationale for investigating this research is to understand the low level of political literacy in Palembang City's populace using digital media in the realm of receiving political information from the Palembang City KPU in developing political potential among the populace.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Bernard Crick (Putri, 2017), Political Literacy is the implementation of a compound of knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding politics, ranging from minor political issues to influencing oneself and others in decision-making. With political literacy, novice voters can receive political education that assists them in participating in political activities related to various aspects such as the concept of the state, power, decision-making, and public policy. According to Jenni S. Bev, political literacy or Political Literacy is a skill and knowledge for citizens to participate in governance and is related to the implementation of state regulations.

Political literacy also entails efforts to interpret knowledge or insights about politics and political issues in daily life so that the public has an understanding of politics, political participation, and political matters. This enables the public to choose political conditions according to their understanding.

The article written by Huzaifa Katarudin on "The Influence of Political Literacy on the Political Participation of Novice Voters in the 2018 Local Elections in Pariaman City" found that literacy has an impact on the political participation of novice voters, especially political literacy through the use of information and communication technology, whether electronically, in print media, or online. Conversely, conventional political literacy does not have a significant influence on novice voters. Today, novice voters are interested in politics while relaxing, even though there is an influence of political literacy through schools and families, it is not significant because they are a generation familiar with media use (media literacy). Hence, gadgets/tablets are more frequently used compared to receiving information seriously or being confined to information provided by teachers or parents, which may cause boredom and stress. This is evidenced by open-ended questions posed to respondents.

Next, the research findings by Eka Nora Putri on the impact of political literacy on voter participation in elections. Among the aspects influencing voter participation in elections is the level of political literacy in society. Political literacy involves understanding political issues, beliefs of the contestants, and how their inclinations influence themselves and others. In short, political literacy is a compound of knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding politics, including elections. The factors influencing the level of political literacy in society include the need for political information, search strategies, communication of information movements, and evaluating products of the political process. By examining these factors, the level of political literacy in society can be determined, followed by recommending what policies can be formulated to enhance political literacy in society. One area highlighted in assessing the influence of political literacy on voter participation is Solok Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. This research found a significant relationship between the level of political literacy and voter participation in Solok Regency. After conducting an analysis of the relationship between the level of political literacy and voter participation.

## **METHOD**

The research method employed is qualitative, aiming to generate descriptive data focusing on important issues as they naturally occur during the research process. This type of research seeks to describe and depict the attitudes of a phenomenon, event, or occurrence happening presently.

Qualitative research is a methodological approach that yields descriptive data in the form of spoken and written expressions from observed individuals. Researchers construct a complex picture, analyze words, report informants' views in detail, and conduct studies within a scholarly context. The qualitative research process begins with determining the research

objectives and questions, followed by designing data sampling, managing data, and analyzing data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the author will describe Political Literacy at the Palembang City Election Commission (KPU) in 2022, where the KPU of Palembang City launched a political literacy program through digital literacy aimed at providing political education and increasing public participation in the electoral process to make the public more discerning in choosing future leaders. Political literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for political awareness, active engagement, effectiveness, and critical thinking in following the political process, particularly at the KPU of Palembang City (Cangara, 2016).

Before the Palembang City KPU launched the political literacy program through digital literacy, there were several obstacles. Some members of the public were not interested in politics, and there was a lack of political education, resulting in low public participation in the democratic process, especially in Palembang City. Additionally, public perceptions of politics as a contentious arena varied, influencing diverse viewpoints among the populace. The author conducted research on members of the Palembang City KPU to understand political literacy during elections (Faisal, 2016).

Political literacy entails a practical understanding of concepts drawn from everyday life and language, involving efforts to comprehend political issues and the beliefs of contestants. Political literacy is compounded with knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding politics. According to Jenni S. Bev, it is a skill necessary for public participation in governance, with the core content of political literacy being political participation. Hence, political literacy is an essential aspect of democracy, as the public will not grasp democracy and governance well without understanding political issues and activities (Gunawan, 2013).

According to Mr. Kurniawan, S.E., a member of the Palembang City Election Commission, the political literacy conducted by the KPU entails imparting understanding, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the public, especially millennials, to actively participate in increasing community involvement. Numerous factors and activities are involved in conducting political literacy among the public, particularly millennials or Generation Z, who tend to engage with digital literacy, thus influencing public participation (Kurniawan, 2022).

The political factors that led to the inception of political literacy by the Palembang City KPU were the low level of community participation and the lack of political education among the populace. Therefore, the Palembang City KPU is obligated to provide political understanding or education to the public to enhance community participation (Syawaluddin, 2022).

It is necessary to provide understanding to the public that politics involves risks, victories, and defeats. One of the political factors influencing political literacy conducted by the Palembang City KPU is political education. This entails directly educating the public to socialize the electoral process stages, especially in Palembang City, so the public knows when elections are held (Gismar, 2010).

Apathetic attitudes entail a lack of sympathy and enthusiasm toward an object, hence political apathy refers to a low level of sympathy and enthusiasm toward political developments resulting in indifference. Political apathy is not a new phenomenon in Indonesian politics. Although it has existed for a long time, it began to be discussed during the reform era and remains a relevant topic today, especially in the information age where everyone can freely

access and express opinions on social media. Restoring public trust is not easy, but efforts are being made. One of the government's efforts is to continue providing political education to the public through political literacy programs at the Palembang City KPU (Uchjana, 2007).

The low level of public knowledge about political education has prompted the KPU to act swiftly to anticipate the upcoming 2024 elections. According to Mr. Kurniawan, S.E., it is often encountered in the field that some members of the public still consider it taboo to learn about politics. This strongly motivates the KPU to innovate to at least minimize public ignorance about politics through digital political literacy programs.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on Political Literacy to the Community Through Digital Literacy Program at the Palembang City Election Commission (KPU), the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Based on the analysis conducted, the underlying factors of political literacy to the community through the digital literacy program are the low participation of the community and the lack of political education among them, resulting in societal apathy. Political apathy refers to a disposition characterized by the absence of sympathy and enthusiasm towards a subject, particularly evident in the realm of politics. This has strongly propelled the KPU to innovate strategies to minimize public ignorance about political literacy, aiming to enhance community participation in the democratic contestation process in Palembang City.
2. Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted, the challenges of political literacy to the community through the digital literacy program at the Palembang City Election Commission include societal apathy towards politics, leading to a lack of interest in the information presented. Additionally, other challenges include geographical constraints that make direct engagement difficult and the uneven distribution of education levels among the community, often referred to as local wisdom.

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