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**EFFECTIVITIES OF WEST SUMATRA KPU *RELAWAN DEMOKRASI*'S
PERFORMANCE IN IMPROVING VOTERS' POLITICAL LITERACY**

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Abstract

This research aims to learn the effectivities of *Relawan Demokrasi* (literally democracy volunteers)—a civil group created by the General Election Commission (KPU) to improve voters' political literacy—in West Sumatra province. KPU's responsibility in administering the legislative, presidential, and local administration elections is crucial to maintaining the democratic process in Indonesia. This research used mixed method with sequential explanatory approach. The quantitative data were collected from voters, followed by qualitative data from the West Sumatra's KPU and *Relawan Demokrasi* members. Based on the three indicators of *Relawan Demokrasi*'s performance—purpose, result, and outsiders' assessment—the performance is relatively ineffective. Although *Relawan Demokrasi* is a positive movement to improve voters' political literacy, it is not well prepared to train and educate the public. Therefore, it is crucial for KPU to increase the performance effectivities to improve the public's political literacy and education.

Keywords: performance effectivities, *Relawan Demokrasi*, political literacy, West Sumatra, general election commission (KPU)

A. Introduction

The General Election Commission (KPU), established in 1999, is the reputable administer of every stage of Indonesia's election; legislative, presidential, and local administrative elections. During its sixteen years of administering the elections, KPU has gained popularity and support from the public, although some candidates and parties have been occasionally contesting election results at the Constitutional Court. Overall, Indonesia has been experiencing relatively peaceful elections with no significant problems. This shows the importance of KPU in Indonesia's electoral democracy not only as the administer but also in informing and educating the public on politics and the essence of election.

However, the effectivities of the KPU important role in disseminating political literacy in all levels of the society remains problematic. The voters' participation in the

*Nora Eka Putri and Alia Azmi: Relawan Demokrasi's
Performance Effectivities*

2014 presidential election was only 69.58%, well below the 2014 legislative election at 75.11%, and the 2009 presidential election at 71.17%. In West Sumatra, voters' participation in the 2015 gubernatorial election was only 58.62%, amounting 2,071,576 voters, which is below the 2010 election at 2,111,835 voters. In recent years, the KPU releases information in limited time, materials, and location, therefore it failed in attracting the interest of all levels of the society. The KPU also rules that candidates should not mobilize great mass in an open campaign, making the recent elections are 'less festive' than the previous ones. Moreover, when most Indonesian mass media tend to politically lean to certain candidates and parties, the KPU—who should disseminate neutral and general information—could not compete with the 'commercialized politics', making the political literacy process weaker.

Mujani and Liddle (2010) identified that Indonesia's voting behavior in the last three elections was influenced by the media and the candidates' capabilities. Nora Eka Putri (2011) also found that in the 2008 Padang mayoral election, the winning candidates gained the most votes thanks to their problem-solving capabilities supported by communication capabilities and the mass media. Her other work (2015) also reveals that the society benefited from the mass media to get political education both about the election and political rights. However, since the KPU limited the involvement of mass media in political campaign, the public started to feel less vibe of the "democratic feast."

Therefore, this research will focus on the effectivities of the KPU's role in disseminating the elections and political rights, particularly through its civil partner group *Relawan Demokrasi*. *Relawan Demokrasi*—which includes members representing five strategic voter groups; young voters, religious groups, women groups, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups—is expected to help KPU in reaching their communities. This research was located in Padang city, since it is the capital of West Sumatra and has highest number of voters, relatively more educated public, and heterogenous society. West Sumatra is one of the provinces who held Indonesia's simultaneous local elections at the end of 2015. This article discusses: (a) Padang city's political literacy at the West Sumatra administration election, and (b) *Relawan Demokrasi*'s performance in improving political literacy in West Sumatra 2015 administration election.

B. Literature Review

1. Political Literacy

According to Bernard Crick (2006), political literacy is a practical understanding of the concepts derived from daily lives and languages to understand the issues of politics, the belief of contestants, and their tendencies to influence themselves and others. Crick's four perspectives on the public's political literacy are (2006: 122):

- 1) The need for political literacy, concerning any information needed about the political parties and candidates (formal education, career, family, vision and mission, etc).
- 2) Decision on search strategy, particularly investigate the political process such as campaign fund sources, campaign team members, and violation of campaign procedures.
- 3) The movement to communicate information, which concern the role of the media in publication process. It is better for the media to create a strong association to watch the election as well as a balancing power, for example covering campaign promises as an authentic prove to remind the candidates in the future.

- 4) Evaluation of the latest product of political process, particularly a thorough evaluation of every stage of national and local elections. The society has the right to evaluate and recommend a candidate.

2. *Relawan Demokrasi*

Relawan Demokrasi is a KPU's partner group in disseminating political rights and educating the voters about the election that bases in cities and regencies (Buku Saku, 2015). *Relawan Demokrasi* includes members from strategic voter groups; youth voters, religious groups, women groups, disabled groups, and marginalized groups. *Relawan Demokrasi* members represent each of these groups and train their communities about political rights and the election, since not all communities are reachable for KPU.

Relawan Demokrasi's duty is to improve society's awareness and full responsibility in optimally using their suffrage in the election, in order that voter turnout and the election quality will be better than the previous ones. *Relawan Demokrasi* should obey several codes of ethics such as be independent, impartial, and non-partisan. They are also not allowed to receive any gifts from the election participants which might indicate partiality.

3. Performance

Performance means perfecting a job responsibly as has been targeted. Torang (2013, p.74) identified four characteristics of performance; responsible in solving problems, deciding purposes, seeking feedbacks, and reliable. Wibowo (2012, p.7) refer to performance as a work result or achievement. However, performance defines wider scope, not only work result, but also the working process.

According to Prawirosentono in Pasolong (2008: 197), performance is a result of work that is achievable by the workers or groups of workers in an organization depending on their duties and responsibilities to achieve organizational purposes legally, lawfully, morally, and ethically.

Therefore, performance is closely relevant to the result of implementing a program or an activity. The result of the implementation determines the quality of the program. Concludingly, performance is the willingness of certain or a group of people to work or perfect it according to their duties and targets.

According to Sutrisno in Fahdil Asri (2015), there are six factors of performance indicators; (a) work result, (b) knowledge about work, (c) initiative, particularly in solving problems, (d) mental capabilities in getting instructions and speed in work instruction and adaptation to the existing works, (e) attitude, particularly the positive attitude in finishing all works and assignments, (f) discipline in time and presence.

4. Effectivities of Organization

Sondang Siagian (2001: 24) defines effectivities as the success of realizing a target. This means the closer a work result to achieve its target, the more effective the performance. Miller in Tangkilisan (2005) stated: "...effectivities refer to how far a social system achieve its goals. Effectivities should be distinguished from efficiencies, which refers mainly to comparison between cost and result, while effectivities directly refer to the achievement of purposes." Georgopualos and Tannebaum (in Etzioni, 1969: 82) explained that "...the perception can mean that effectivities of organization is the level of which an organization, which is a social system, with all its resources and facilities try to fulfill its purposes without waste and avoid unnecessary tension among its members." Generally, effectivities mean the ability or limitation of an organization in achieving its goals or targets.

C. Research Method

This research used mixed method approach by sequential explanatory, which means the research was started by quantitative data gathering and analysis, and followed by qualitative data gathering and analysis based on the result of the quantitative data process (Cresswell, 2010). This explanatory approach was designed to gather data not only from respondents (voters) but also from the West Sumatra's election commission (KPU) to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information. The quantitative data was collected by delivering questionnaires to respondents by accidental sampling in Koto Tengah district, which has the biggest number of voters among districts in Padang city. The qualitative data was collected by interviewing West Sumatra KPU chairman and commissionaire.

D. Research Result

1. The Determining Factor of Padang Voters' Political Literacy Product Moment Correlation Test

Table 1. Correlations

		X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.867(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Y	Pearson Correlation	.867(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows that product moment correlation analysis between X and Y results in correlation coefficient $r_{yx1}=0.867$ in coefficient interval 0.800-1.00 with the level of correlation *very strong*.

The significance coefficient for T test = 17.195 as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Coefficients (a)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	-3.362	1.058		-3.179	.002
	X	.184	.011	.867	17.195	.000

a Dependent Variable: Y

The value of T table in error level 5% = 1.98 and error level 1% = 2.617. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is acceptable due to the positive correlation between X and Y that is proven from the result of T test = 17.195, which is higher than T table = 1.98.

2. *Relawan Demokrasi* Performance

Relawan Demokrasi members, who represent five strategic voter groups, are supposed to help KPK in disseminating information about the election to their communities. However, they have not performed optimally due to the minimal preparation by the West Sumatra KPU. During the preparation, *Relawan Demokrasi* was trained to acknowledge their main duty and function, which is to improve voters' political awareness and participation, as well as to improve the quality of local elections. The KPU confirmed

that the minimal preparation was due to the lack of financial support. West Sumatra KPU's commissioner Nova Indra stated that they did not set any target for *Relawan Demokrasi* to achieve, but they expect the members work professionally although allocated only Rp400,000 per three months.

The Chairman of West Sumatra KPU Amnasmen informs that the 2015 local election is the first one where the local election commission (KPUD) facilitates the procurement of candidates' campaign attributes. It is also the first participation of *Relawan Demokrasi* in West Sumatra's local election. Therefore, its role is crucial in disseminating information on stages, programs, and schedules of the 2015 local elections.

However, the number of voter participation in the 2015 West Sumatra gubernatorial election decreases from the previous elections, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Voter Participation by Elections

	2009 Legislative Election	2009 Presidential Election	2010 Local Election	2014 Legislative Election	2014 Presidential Election	2015 Local Election
Voter turnout	2,223,239	2,361,608	2,111,835	2,537,163	2,354,327	2,071,576
Voters' Level of Participation	70.34%	70.71%	63.56%	68.37%	63.98%	58.62%

Source: kpu-sumbarprov.go.id

The voter turnout and level of participation in the 2015 West Sumatra gubernatorial election is the lowest. Although the *Relawan Demokrasi* movement was deployed, there was no significant impact on voter turnout and level of participation. Therefore, the movement is not yet effective in improving voters' political literacy, and evaluation for the movement's urgency is needed.

E. Discussion

Based on Crick's four political literacy indicators, the research found that Padang citizens fulfill the first indicator, which is the need for political information, such as political parties and candidates' biographies (formal education, families, career, vision and mission, etc). They responded the KPU's political education quite well, as stated by West Sumatra KPU commissioner Nova Indra:

"...The West Sumatra society's respond to the democratic feast is quite good, if we disseminate information about local or regional elections, for example in campuses, people were always enthusiastic, as well as in other environments..."

The second indicator of political literacy—the decision on search strategy in investigating all the political process such as the source of campaign fund, campaign team, violation of campaign procedure—is conducted in various ways depending on the level of education and the skills in information technology. The higher the level of someone's education, the more efforts he/she does to find information about political parties or candidates. This data, however, needs to be supported by qualitative data.

The third indicator—communicating information by the media. It will be better for the media to establish a strong association to watch the election, which serve as a balancing power. The media can record campaign promises for future evidence in evaluating selected candidates. The coverage should be balanced and fair since the media is responsible to educate the public, not only to search for capital. This argumentation will be more accurate by interviewing the media directly.

The fourth indicator—evaluating the result of political process—the public has the rights to evaluate the capabilities of any candidate. It is understandable that in every political spectrum and every level of political literacy, the public's political participation is also influenced by other factors. However, the public's political literacy is considered more objective in evaluating and criticizing the political process, thus the critics is not only the expression of personal dissatisfaction but also measurable for the betterment of the society.

F. Conclusion

The three indicators of *Relawan Demokrasi*—purpose, work result, and outsiders' evaluation—shows ineffectivities of the movement. Based on the purpose indicator, not all the members of *Relawan Demokrasi* understand their duties and the purpose of the movement, due to the minimal training for the recruited members. Work result also indicates ineffectivities because of the voluntary traits of the duties, therefore not all of them work all the time, although the KPU had allocated operational budget for them. Based on outsiders' evaluation, *Relawan Demokrasi* had not reach the basic elements of political dissemination, since most respondents do not acknowledge *Relawan Demokrasi*. The low voter turnout and level of participation at the 2015 gubernatorial election also indicates the ineffectivities of *Relawan Demokrasi*.

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