

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE OF BENGKULU CITY IN THE 2020 BENGKULU GOVERNOR AND DEPUTY GOVERNOR ELECTIONS

Nuraida

Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia

Email: nuraida@gmail.com

Abstract

In an election, for example, political participation affects the legitimacy of the community to the pair of candidates elected. Every society has its own preferences and interests to determine their choices in elections. The purpose of the study is to analyze the reasons for the low participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections in Bengkulu City and what aspects actually hinder the level of public participation in the gubernatorial election. Determination of the focus of this study on the level of information novelty. The limitation in qualitative research is more based on the level of importance / urgency of the problems faced in this study. The results showed that the political awareness of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor elections had a significant impact on political participation and the quality of democracy in the city of Bengkulu

Keywords: Politic, Participation, Bengkulu

This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



INTRODUCTION

General elections play an important role in the democratic process in Indonesia. In a simple sense, an election can be interpreted as a political agreement between citizens and individuals or political parties to carry out political activities, in which the individual is given the authority or mandate to exercise part of the power of the people or voters (Yunita & Stanislaus, 2014). Elections are held every five years to change leaders, both at the national and regional levels. Ali Moertopo (1982) defines elections as a means for the people to exercise their sovereignty in accordance with the principles stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. Elections are basically a democratic institution that elects members of people's representatives such as DPD, DPR, and DPRD. Their task is together with the government to establish politics and regulate the course of state government.

According to Kansil & Kansil, (2006) The function of elections as a democratic tool used to: 1) Maintain and develop the joints of democracy in Indonesia. 2) Achieve a just and prosperous society based on Pancasila (social justice for all Indonesians). 3)

Ensure the success of the new order struggle, namely the upholding of Pancasila and the preservation of the 1945 Constitution.

In an election, for example, political participation affects the legitimacy of the community to the pair of candidates elected. Every society has its own preferences and interests to make their choices in elections. According to Budiardjo, (2003), political participation is the activity of a person or group of people to actively participate in political life, namely by electing state leaders and directly or indirectly influencing government policy (*public policy*). This includes all political-related activities, such as voting, campaigning, demonstrating, being a member of a political party, and participating in various forms of civil society organizations.

Conventionally, political participation is defined as the participation of citizens in activities that can affect government structures, the election of representatives, and policies. Another frequently cited definition is participation as the act of citizens in which they seek to influence or support government and politics or all voluntary activities of citizens to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels in the political system (Milbrath & Goel, 1977).

The emergence of the phenomenon of decreasing the level of public political participation in General Elections (Pemilu) in Indonesia is cause for concern. As a country that adheres to a democratic system, people's political participation is a form of evaluation and control over leaders or government administration (Liando, 2017). According to Almond, Verba, & Sidney Febriantanto, (2019) Political participation is at the heart of democracy. Low or complete absence of political participation is a problem with democratic practices. Elections held with the full participation of the community, will give legitimacy to the candidate or pair of candidates elected.

Until now, the main indicator used in looking at the extent of community involvement in any political moment or activity, is attendance at voting at the polling station (TPS). In fact, political participation when viewed in terms of its form consists of many activities / activities in accordance with the needs and interests of the community to express their political rights, such as: protests, white groups (golput), voting, and so on. Sedangkan menurut Huntington, (1994) The forms of political participation are divided into: electoral activities, organizational activities, *lobbying*, *contacting*, and acts of violence.

The decline in the level of public voting participation in elections is influenced by various factors (Solijonov, 2016). In general, factors that affect political participation are divided into: socioeconomic factors (population size, population stability, economic development), political factors (proximity to the place of election, perception of developing political issues, campaign implementation, divisions in politics), institutional factors (electoral system, compulsory voting, current/recent elections, registration requirements, election structure), and also factors Apriyani et al., (2022) individual (age, education, political interests, civic responsibilities).

Research and efforts to discuss the factors that influence people's political participation have been carried out. Research that has been carried out in Indonesia is among others carried out by: with the title of research *The Influence of Money Politics Culture on People's Political Participation in General Elections this research is about the culture of Money Politics which for the community Money Politics is like a routine business during the general election period that is more realistic than the promised programs that have an impact on Political Participation*. Arniti, (2020) with the title *Community Political Participation in Legislative General Elections in Denpasar City*, this

study discusses people who do not exercise their voting rights (golput) and explains why community participation in regional elections in Denpasar City is below national standards. Research Nasution & Kushandajani, (2019) with the title Political Participation of the People of Medan Maimun District in the 2018 North Sumatra Governor Election, this study discusses the factors that influence the low level of community participation, because of the 21 sub-districts in Medan City, Medan Maimun District has the lowest participation rate.

From the three studies mentioned, it can be concluded that research on political participation is still an interesting and relevant topic. These studies attempt to identify factors that influence people's political participation in Indonesia, particularly in the context of elections and regional heads. Some of the factors discussed include the culture of *Money Politics*, the rate of abstention or not exercising the right to vote, and local factors such as low participation rates in a sub-district or region.

There are interesting factors that we can raise when talking about political participation, especially in the 2015 Bengkulu Governor Election, where the voter turnout rate was low, at 66.81%. In his book entitled "Holding the 2015 Bengkulu Governor Election: A Record of Knowledge about Democracy in the Regions," Hendrastiti, (2021) revealed that the low participation rate was influenced by the large number of invalid ballots in each district/city. Contributing factors include gaps and public ignorance about how to vote, due to voters' lack of knowledge about voting procedures.

In the 2020 Bengkulu Governor Election, Hendrastiti, (2021) Also noted that there are many factors that influence voter turnout of the public. According to him, the KPU as the election organizer has a key role in increasing voter participation through socialization activities, voter education, and community participation. In her book entitled "Hidden Among Growing Hopes: Democracy on Earth Rafflesia," Kartika revealed that the KPU had made various political socialization efforts in the 2020 regional elections in Bengkulu Province. One of the efforts made by the KPU is socialization through digital media as a means of disseminating information. However, this method is considered less effective because not all regencies/cities in Bengkulu Province have adequate internet access, and also cannot cover all segments of voters such as elderly voters. In addition, the KPU also conducts socialization by visiting homes (*door to door*), which is considered quite effective by increasing participation by 6%. However, in the field, socialization carried out by the KPU cannot be carried out massively due to differences in community conditions and infrastructure in each region. Therefore, it is important to continue to strive to increase public participation in elections in various ways. This is so that people have high awareness in exercising their right to vote in every general election.

In 2020, a total of 270 regions consisting of 9 provinces, 22 districts and 37 cities conducted direct regional elections (Pilkada). The simultaneous regional elections became an extraordinary momentum, the specialty was carried out in a pandemic situation, so that the revision of stages, funds and reformulation of human resources were reorganized. The second specialty is the use of technological instruments in the 2020 regional elections as a new necessity for voters, candidates for regional heads and their successful teams, and organizers in local democratic operations Hendrastiti, (2021).

In 2020, Bengkulu Province is one of the provinces that holds gubernatorial and deputy governor elections held simultaneously with regional elections throughout Indonesia. The election for Governor and Vice Governor was held on December 9, 2020.

In the 2020 election for Governor and Deputy Governor of Bengkulu Province, the Bengkulu Provincial KPU set the number of DPT at 1,374,430. After the election and

vote counting, the number 2 candidate pair, namely Rohidin Mersyah and Rosjonsyah, managed to win the Bengkulu gubernatorial and deputy governor elections by winning around 41.20% of the votes or as many as 418,080 votes, the Helmi Hasan - Muslihan Diding Soetrisno pair got 328,364 votes or 32.36%, while the Agusrin Maryono - Rosyadi pair got 268,316 votes or 26.44% of the votes. The results of the counting of votes for the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor candidates in Bengkulu Province determined that 1,014,760 valid votes and 65,543 invalid votes.

From the results of the 2020 Bengkulu Provincial Governor and Deputy Governor elections, it is known that the participation of the people of Bengkulu Province reached 77.73%. This figure reaches the national participation target of 77.5%, so it can be said that the participation of the people of Bengkulu Province is fairly high.

However, there is something interesting when discussing the low public participation in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections, which of the 10 (ten) Regencies / Cities in Bengkulu Province, Bengkulu City has the lowest participation rate at 61.86%. For more information, see table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of DPT and Voter Participation Rate in the 2020 Bengkulu Provincial Governor and Deputy Governor Elections

No.	District/City	Permanent Voters List (DPT)	Participation Rate
1.	Bengkulu City	244.507	61,86%
2.	Kepahiang	107.734	80,84%
3.	Bengkulu Tengah	83.350	72,94%
4.	Rejang Lebong	193.462	76,92%
5.	Lebong	75.280	89,7%
6.	Bengkulu Utara	201.218	76,94%
7.	Muko-muko	124.418	79,19%
8.	Seluma	137.919	87,45%
9.	Bengkulu Selatan	117.552	85,6%
10.	Kaur	88.990	88,2%
Total		1.374.430	77,73%

Source: KPU Bengkulu Province in 2020

From this data is a comparison of the voter participation rate of Districts / Cities in Bengkulu Province in the 2020 Governor and Deputy Governor of Bengkulu Province elections, it can be seen that voter participation in Bengkulu City is the lowest compared to other Regencies / Cities, with a rate of 61.86%. On the other hand, Kaur District has the highest participation rate, reaching 88.2%. An interesting thing to analyze is that although Bengkulu City has the highest number of Permanent Voter Lists (DPT), amounting to 244,507 people, the level of public voter participation remains low. Low turnout in elections is an important issue in a democratic system. Research on low voter turnout in elections can provide valuable insights into factors influencing political engagement and provide suggestions for increasing public participation in democratic processes. Therefore, this matter is interesting to investigate further.

If analyzed further, the KPU has carried out socialization by assigning 5 members of KDP / kecataman and 3 PPS / Kelurahan with a total of 45 KDP and 335 PPS in Bengkulu City to carry out house-to-house socialization and attend community meetings such as social gatherings and religious activities, but the socialization carried out did not have much impact on increasing community participation because Bengkulu City obtained the lowest participation rate among Other districts / cities, The obstacles faced

are first limited socialization time, second the number of new housing in Bengkulu City, third there is a prejudice that KDP and PPS officers are not neutral.

Although massive socialization was carried out by the Bengkulu Provincial KPU and the Bengkulu City KPU by targeting various community groups, such as women's groups, religion, people with disabilities, and novice voters to encourage voter participation in simultaneous elections, it turned out that these efforts were unable to increase public voter participation. According to Hendrastiti, (2021) despite the synergy between the two KPUs, the results still show a low voter turnout rate in Bengkulu City. Later this proved that other factors most likely influenced low voter turnout, which needs further investigation. There may be factors such as ignorance of the importance of political participation, lack of trust in the electoral process, or practical constraints that hinder public participation. Therefore, further research is needed to understand these factors and provide more effective suggestions to increase public participation in democratic processes.

Previous studies have been conducted on voter participation in Indonesia, however, there is still a lack of information and analysis on the factors that influence voter turnout at more detailed levels, such as the sub-district or kelurahan level. Therefore, this study aims to identify factors that influence voter participation in Bengkulu City and provide appropriate recommendations to increase voter participation in the next general election.

Researchers will try to use Weimer's theory Musthofa, (2023) which suggests 5 causes of political participation, namely Modernization, Changes in Class Structure, Influence of Intellectuals and Modern Communication, Conflicts Between Groups of Political Leaders and Widespread Government Involvement.

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of the study is to analyze the reasons for the low participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections in Bengkulu City and what aspects actually hinder the level of public participation in the gubernatorial election.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method is the first step in answering the problem to be researched. The problem in this study is to examine the issue of political participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections. To answer the problems in this study, researchers will try to understand and interpret the meaning of a behavioral phenomenon from the people of Bengkulu City in the election of Governor and Deputy Governor of Bengkulu in 2020.

Determination of the focus of this study on the level of information novelty. The limitation in qualitative research is more based on the level of importance / urgency of the problem faced in this study (Sugiyono, 2013). This research will focus on the participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Bengkulu Province gubernatorial and deputy governor elections.

The location of the research in this study was determined at the General Election Commission of Bengkulu City as the only institution that has the authority to hold elections, especially the election of Governor and Vice Governor in Bengkulu City. For data collection techniques, it is carried out in obtaining data, both primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from the object or informant to be studied, primary data obtained through interviews with informants and observation. While secondary data is data obtained in research to complement information obtained from

primary data, secondary data in the form of studies with written data sources such as archives, books, field research, documents obtained from institutions.

Menurut Sugiyono, (2013), What is meant by data analysis techniques is the process of finding data, systematically compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, describing it into units, synthesizing, arranging into patterns of choosing which ones are important and which ones will be learned, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary Findings of Political Participation of the People of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor Elections

In the 2020 gubernatorial and deputy governor elections in Bengkulu City, people's political participation had a significant impact on election results and the quality of political representation. The political participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 election is one of the main focal points in this analysis. In these elections, how many citizens participate in the political process, such as voting.

Table 2 Number of DPT and Voter Participation Rate in the 2020 Bengkulu Provincial Governor and Vice Governor Elections

No.	District/City	Permanent Voters List (DPT)	Participation Rate
1.	Bengkulu city	244.507	61,86%
2.	Kepahiang	107.734	80,84%
3.	Bengkulu Tengah	83.350	72,94%
4.	Rejang Lebong	193.462	76,92%
5.	Lebong	75.280	89,7%
6.	Bengkulu Utara	201.218	76,94%
7.	Muko-muko	124.418	79,19%
8.	Seluma	137.919	87,45%
9.	Bengkulu Selatan	117.552	85,6%
10.	Kaur	88.990	88,2%
	Total	1.374.430	77,73%

Source: KPU Bengkulu Province in 2020

From table 2 above, there is data on the number of Permanent Voter Lists (DPT) and Voter Participation Rate in the 2020 Bengkulu Provincial Governor and Deputy Governor Elections. The turnout rate is the percentage of the number of voters who actually participated in the election compared to the number of DPT. The focus of this analysis is on the low level of participation in Bengkulu City.

Bengkulu City has a total DPT of 244,507 voters with a participation rate in Bengkulu City of 61.86%, which is lower than most other regencies/cities in Bengkulu Province. This shows that the number of voters who actually participated in the gubernatorial and deputy governor elections in Bengkulu City in 2020 was relatively low or only 149,173 voters exercised their right to vote in the 2020 gubernatorial and deputy governor elections.

This low level of participation can be a serious concern because it shows the lack of interest or involvement of Bengkulu City residents in the democratic process. This could influence the outcome of the election and reflect the need to increase awareness and political participation in the city. In further analysis, researchers conducted an investigation to understand the causes of the low participation rate in Bengkulu City, by interviewing one of the communities, by asking public perceptions about the 2020 Governor and deputy Governor elections.

These findings suggest that a number of factors identified as barriers to people's political participation directly influence their perceptions of the relevance and benefits of Governor and Vice Governor elections. With a lack of understanding of the political process and the role of leaders, as well as distrust of political leaders due to negative news, people tend to feel that their involvement in such elections has no significant impact or tangible benefit to their personal lives.

Analysis of the factors of low participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the election of Governor and Vice Governor revealed that the lack of clarity regarding the concrete benefits of the election was the main trigger for low public enthusiasm. One contributing factor is the lack of presentation of concrete programs and plans by candidates, making it difficult for people to see a direct relationship between elections and solutions to their daily economic and social problems. As a result, the lack of public motivation to participate in elections seems to arise due to the perception that the investment of time and effort in elections is not worth the possible benefits.

Main Findings of Aspects Affecting the Low Political Participation of the People of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor Elections

Several aspects were found that explain the low participation of the community in a context of Bengkulu City's participation in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor elections. The results of the study revealed that incomprehension about politics in Bengkulu City is one of the main obstacles that hinder people's political participation. Many residents feel that they do not fully understand the role of the Governor and Deputy Governor in their local government, and do not understand the political process in general. This lack of understanding creates a sense of uncertainty and distrust of the relevance of their participation in political affairs. The public may not be aware of how decisions taken by political leaders can affect their daily lives, and a lack of understanding of electoral procedures and how their votes contribute can make them feel distant from politics. As a result, this lack of understanding can reduce their motivation to engage in elections and other political activities.

Distrust of political leaders in Bengkulu City is also an important aspect that affects people's political participation. There are deep concerns about corruption and dissatisfaction with the performance of the previous government, which created a high level of skepticism among citizens. The public felt that the corruption and poor performance of the previous government underscored the problems in governance and doubted the ability of political leaders to bring about positive change. The negative news that often highlights these issues has created further doubts about the integrity and effectiveness of political leaders. As a result, the public may feel less motivated to participate in elections or support a new political leader, because they doubt that leader's ability to address the problems faced by the community.

Lack of political information and understanding is also an aspect that hinders political participation of the community in Bengkulu City. The public feels that political information is often difficult to access or insufficient, resulting in a lack of understanding of political events and the electoral process. Limited access to political information makes people feel isolated and less connected to political developments that occur in their environment. In addition, a lack of understanding of the candidates competing in the election creates uncertainty in making electoral decisions. The public must have an adequate understanding of the candidate's vision-mission and competencies to be able to make informed decisions. As a result, this lack of information and understanding can

reduce people's motivation to participate in elections, as they feel less prepared and confident to make the right choices. In order to increase political participation, efforts need to be made to improve access to quality political information and provide better political education to the public.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 which coincided with the election of Governor and Vice Governor has become a significant aspect in hindering people's political participation in Bengkulu City. The pandemic affected voter participation in several ways, first of all, by making it difficult to attend political gatherings or gather with large crowds. Restrictions on physical gatherings and efforts to limit the spread of the virus have reduced people's ability to participate in political campaign events or interact directly with candidates. In addition, the difficulty of access to relevant information during the pandemic is also a significant problem. With restrictions on meetings and social interaction, the public may have difficulty obtaining the information they need about candidates and political issues. This creates uncertainty in electoral decision-making and can reduce public participation in elections and other political activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the political landscape and challenged the traditional ways in which people engage in the political process, making adjustments and creative solutions necessary to bridge gaps in access to information and increased political participation during the pandemic.

The role of the government and KPU institutions in encouraging political participation in Bengkulu City is an important highlight in this study. The public feels that the government and related institutions often lack good information. Lack of transparency and effective communication from governments regarding political processes, elections, and citizens' roles in decision-making creates uncertainty. In addition, the vagueness of political participation procedures is also a serious problem. The public may not know how to participate in the political decision process because the procedures are not always open and accessible. As a result, lack of proper information and vagueness of procedures can be a major barrier to political participation.

The registration process in the Permanent Voter List (DPT) in Bengkulu City is one aspect that emerged from this study. The majority of citizens interviewed have been registered with the DPT, indicating that they have qualified and have the right to vote in the election. Election officials are also seen conducting regular data collection, which helps ensure that most people are properly registered. In addition, the government or relevant agencies send invitation letters to voters before the election to remind them of the date and location of the poll. Although most of the public are already registered with the DPT and received voting invitations, there are additional problems that arise. Some residents may face obstacles in attending the poll due to unfavorable working conditions. Busy working conditions or inflexible schedules can be obstacles that keep some members of the public from attending election day. Therefore, apart from the already good registration aspect, further efforts need to be made to overcome obstacles that may be faced by the public regarding voting time so that voter participation can be increased.

Main Findings of KPU Efforts to Increase Political Participation of the People of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor Elections

Elections are the main foundation in running a democratic system, where people have the right to choose their leaders. In 2020, Bengkulu City witnessed persistent and sustained efforts made by the KPU to increase public political participation in the 2020

Governor and Vice Governor elections. Active political participation of the people is the key to success in realizing a strong and thriving democracy.

The 2020 election for Governor and Vice Governor in Bengkulu City was an important moment in the history of this region. The KPU, as the frontline in facilitating the election, made various strategic efforts to encourage more active political participation from the public. These efforts include voter education initiatives, the use of information technology, and improved voting accessibility.

In this study, researchers will discuss in more detail the various efforts made by the KPU in increasing the political participation of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor elections. The main goal is to ensure that citizens are actively involved in the electoral process and feel the positive impact of stronger democracy in their cities. As such, we will explore the concrete steps the KPU has taken to achieve this goal and its impact on the political participation of local communities.

The KPU of Bengkulu City has made great efforts to increase public participation in the 2020 gubernatorial and deputy governor elections by conducting intensive socialization. They have staged campaigns aimed at educating the public about the importance of this electoral process. This effort includes the publication of various information materials explaining the stages of elections, the important role of governors and deputy governors in city government, and the rights and responsibilities of voters. In addition, the KPU also made interesting and informative campaign videos to explain the concept of elections. To reach more voters, promotion is also carried out through mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television, as well as social media, so that messages about the election of governor and deputy governor can be disseminated widely and effectively to all people of Bengkulu City.

In the framework of the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor Elections in Bengkulu City, the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Bengkulu City has also made serious efforts in ensuring that eligible voters are registered in the voter list. The KPU strives hard by organizing voter registration in various strategic locations, such as shopping centers, schools, and government offices. This action aims to make it easier for people to register as voters, so that the registration process becomes more inclusive and accessible to various community groups. With the registration locations scattered at various strategic points, it is expected that public participation in the gubernatorial and deputy governor elections can increase significantly, creating a more democratic and representative election process.

In the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor Elections in Bengkulu City, the KPU has taken a progressive step by introducing online elections. These efforts aim to increase voter accessibility to the electoral process. Through online registration and checking of voter status, people have the convenience of following the election process, which previously may have required greater time and effort. With online voting, voters can quickly and easily register, check their voter status, and obtain the information they need through digital platforms. This helps create a more inclusive and modern environment in the conduct of elections, which in turn can increase voter participation in the gubernatorial and deputy governor elections in Bengkulu City.

In the framework of the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor elections in Bengkulu City, the General Elections Commission (KPU) took an important step by holding a public debate between gubernatorial and deputy governor candidates. The main goal of the debate is to give voters a better understanding of the visions, plans, and abilities of the leadership candidates who will lead the city. The debate was held openly and

transparently, broadcast through mass media and social media, thus reaching more voters. Thus, the people of Bengkulu City have the opportunity to hear firsthand the views and comparisons between prospective leaders, which can help them make more informed decisions when choosing governors and deputy governors. This is an important step in encouraging conscious and responsive participation in the democratic process of elections.

The KPU of Bengkulu City has taken various strategic steps to ensure that the 2020 gubernatorial and deputy governor elections run well and actively participate. They have provided voters with easy-to-understand information, including voter guides and information about polling station locations in a variety of formats, such as print, online, and video, to ensure information accessibility. In addition, the KPU has made efforts to provide voting facilities that are easily accessible to all voters, including those with special needs, with the aim of minimizing queues and waiting times at polling stations.

Election supervision is also a priority for the KPU, by implementing strict supervision and transparency in the entire process. They utilize technology to monitor voting and vote counting, ensuring the honesty and accuracy of election results.

In addition, the KPU maintains continuous communication and consultation with stakeholders, including political parties and community groups. It aims to listen to input from various parties and ensure that elections take place fairly and transparently. By combining these efforts, the Bengkulu City KPU seeks to create an inclusive, transparent, and reliable election process to meet the needs of voters and maintain the integrity of the 2020 gubernatorial and deputy governor elections.

Main Findings of KPU Constraints in Increasing Political Participation of the People of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor Elections

The KPU of Bengkulu City has committed to increasing community political participation. Although they have devised a series of concrete steps to achieve this goal, there are some aspects that have become obstacles in their efforts. The lack of initial political awareness is one of the main obstacles in the efforts of the Bengkulu City KPU to increase political participation. Although the KPU has committed to raising political awareness through political education programs, there are still many residents in Bengkulu City who may not have an adequate understanding of politics. This lack of understanding can reduce individual motivation to participate in political processes, including elections. Without a sufficient understanding of the importance of political participation, citizens may feel that their involvement has not had a significant impact, and as a result, they may not be active in the political process. Therefore, creating a deeper understanding of the role of politics in daily life and overcoming the initial lack of political awareness became an important task for the KPU to increase greater political participation in Bengkulu City.

Limited access to information is one of the obstacles that need to be faced in the efforts of the Bengkulu City KPU to increase political participation. Although the KPU has actively collaborated with local media to disseminate election-related information, it is still possible that some residents in Bengkulu City experience limited access to the information resources needed to make informed political decisions. This may be due to limited internet access in some areas or lack of resources available to some residents. In the context of elections, limited access to information about candidates, election rules, or relevant political issues may hinder active political participation. Therefore, efforts to

overcome these barriers are included in an important strategy to ensure that political participation in Bengkulu City becomes more inclusive and democratic.

Health constraints related to COVID-19 are one of the significant challenges in the efforts of the Bengkulu City KPU to increase community political participation. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the KPU has tried to adjust its political education program by replacing physical gatherings with an online-based approach, hoping to continue to raise political awareness in situations that require physical restrictions. However, there are barriers that may be related to limited internet access in some areas, which may affect citizens' ability to participate in online political education programs. In addition, the pandemic has also raised health concerns, which may make some citizens hesitant to participate in elections, especially if they feel the risk of COVID-19 transmission is high in the voting process or election-related activities. Therefore, to overcome these obstacles, a more comprehensive strategy that considers technical aspects, access to information, and health security is needed to ensure that political participation is maintained and safe during the pandemic.

Low public participation in public debates and open forums organized by the Bengkulu City KPU is one of the obstacles in efforts to increase political understanding and discuss political issues among the community. Although the KPU has made efforts to create an active platform to discuss relevant political issues, the number of participants involved in these events is still relatively low. This may be due to a number of factors, such as people's lack of interest in political discussions, the limited time they have, or a lack of understanding of the benefits of participating in public debates. Therefore, to overcome these obstacles, the KPU needs to implement more effective strategies to increase public participation in events such as public debates and open forums, which in turn can generate deeper political understanding and contribute to active participation in the political process in Bengkulu City.

Motivating various community groups to be actively involved in the political process in Bengkulu City can be a challenge. This is related to local political culture which may not motivate the active participation of different community groups. In addition, there are also challenges in persuading certain groups, such as minority groups or groups with special interests, to engage in the political process. The introduction and formation of a deeper understanding of the benefits of political participation in these groups may require a specific approach and further efforts to build strong political awareness. Therefore, the KPU needs to make proactive efforts to address these challenges with an inclusive and diverse approach, as well as understand local political cultures and the characteristics of different community groups in their efforts to increase active participation in local democracy.

Interpretation of Research Findings on Political Awareness of the People of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor Elections

Political participation is an important element of democratic life, and its close relationship with political consciousness is crucial. Political awareness refers to an individual's understanding of political issues, the system of government, and the responsibilities of citizens in the administration of the state. The higher a person's political awareness, the more likely they are to be actively involved in political processes, such as elections.

In 2020, Bengkulu province held elections for Governor and Vice Governor. For the people of Bengkulu, this is an important moment in their democracy. The political

awareness of the people of Bengkulu emerged as a key factor in determining their participation in this election.

People who have a high level of political awareness will be more likely to understand the importance of elections and their contribution in determining provincial leaders. They will have knowledge of the vision and mission of the candidates for Governor and Vice Governor, as well as how the elected leaders will impact their daily lives.

When individuals feel aware that they are governed and have a firm understanding of the duties and rights of citizens in a democratic system, they tend to feel compelled to cast their votes. Political participation in the form of elections is one of the main ways in which citizens contribute in determining the future of their government. Thus, the 2020 election for the Governor and Deputy Governor of Bengkulu is an opportunity for the people to exercise their voting rights and participate in the democratic process.

In the context of this study, political awareness helps explain why some residents of Bengkulu City are not active or involved in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections. Basically political awareness will encourage them to get involved in the political process by casting their votes, thus contributing to the determination of the election results and, ultimately, there will be a change in the leadership of Bengkulu province. Political awareness is the foundation for political participation in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections, this is a concrete example that the political awareness of the people of Bengkulu City is still low.

In analyzing political consciousness, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, in their research in five countries such as America, Britain, Germany, Italy and Mexico, provide measures for this level of political awareness in three kinds of patterns, namely, cognitive awareness, affective awareness and evaluative awareness.

Implications of the Findings on Community Political Participation

The findings of research on the political participation of the people in Bengkulu City in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections have very significant implications for citizens' political participation. Political awareness related to understanding political issues, the system of government, and the responsibility of citizens in the administration of the state is the foundation of political participation in democracy. The higher an individual's political awareness, the more likely they are to be involved in a political process such as elections. The election of Governor and Vice Governor in Bengkulu Province in 2020 is an important moment in local democracy, and the political awareness of the people of Bengkulu plays an important role in determining the level of participation

Individuals who have a high level of political awareness tend to understand the importance of elections and their contribution in determining the leader of Bengkulu province. They have a better knowledge of the vision and mission of the candidates for Governor and Vice Governor, as well as the impact that elected leaders will have on their daily lives. Political awareness encourages individuals to feel that they have a strong understanding of the duties and rights of citizens in a democratic system, so they feel compelled to cast their vote in elections. General elections are the main way in which citizens contribute to determining the future of their government, and the 2020 election for the Governor and Deputy Governor of Bengkulu became an opportunity for the people to exercise their voting rights and participate in the democratic process.

However, research findings show that low political awareness in Bengkulu City is a serious problem. Factors such as limited access to quality information, low levels of political education, and the risk of false information or political propaganda are responsible for low cognitive political awareness. Lack of access to adequate information about candidates and relevant issues in elections makes it difficult for the public to make informed election decisions. Unbiased and independent information is essential in forming an objective view of candidates and issues.

Lack of understanding of political mechanisms, electoral processes, and the role of Governors and Deputy Governors in local government is also a cause of low cognitive awareness. Inadequate political education results in uninformed voters who tend to vote based on irrational or emotional considerations. Low evaluative awareness can also benefit candidates or political parties that have greater access to media resources or stronger relationships with certain interest groups. Low evaluative awareness results in elections that are not based on rational and objective judgments.

The low affective awareness in the 2020 Bengkulu Governor and Deputy Governor elections is also a challenge. Affective awareness, which includes people's feelings and emotions towards elections and candidates, plays an important role in motivating voters to participate. However, in such elections, the low affective awareness of the community can be caused by a lack of emotional closeness or identification with the candidate. Competing candidates may fail to build a strong emotional connection with voters, making them feel that their choice is not so important.

Issues that are considered less relevant by some people or presented technically and difficult to understand by voters also affect affective awareness. The perception of the candidate's integrity and competence also plays an important role in shaping affective awareness. If voters feel that the candidates are dishonest or incompetent, this can reduce their emotional attachment to the election. The main impact of low affective awareness is low voter participation, which can reduce the quality of political representation and raise questions about the legitimacy of election results.

The long-term impact of low political awareness, whether cognitive, affective, or evaluative, is serious. These include ineffective governance, abuse of power, and policy decisions that are not in line with the needs of the people. Therefore, serious efforts are needed to increase people's political awareness in Bengkulu City. This includes efforts to better political education, increased access to quality information, promotion of criticality in evaluating campaign proposals and candidate performance, and efforts to build emotional bonds between voters, candidates, and the election itself. With these steps, it is hoped that the political participation of the people of Bengkulu City can be improved, the quality of democracy will be better, and government accountability will be improved.

This study also reinforces previous research that also discusses political participation such as research conducted by Pramita et al., 2021; Randy, 2021; Sadeli et al., (2022) This study concludes that in a society that adheres to a democratic system, people's political awareness has a very important role in ensuring that the elections held are fair and represent the voice of the people. Political awareness is the main key to maintaining the health and sustainability of this democratic system.

The government has a great responsibility in raising people's political awareness. They should provide clear and accessible information about elections, candidates, and relevant political issues. In addition, the government must also ensure that the election process takes place fairly, without adverse intervention or manipulation.

Educational institutions also have an important role to play in raising political awareness. Schools and colleges should include political education, helping young people to understand the fundamentals of democracy, their rights, and the importance of active participation in elections. Political education should also encourage discussion and critical thinking about social and political issues.

In addition, civil society also has an irreplaceable role. Civil society groups, such as NGOs and advocacy groups, can provide training, resources, and information to communities about the electoral process and their political rights. They can also mobilize the public to participate in elections and monitor the electoral process to ensure transparency and fairness.

Overall, in a healthy democracy, all parties, from governments, educational institutions, to civil society, must work together to raise people's political awareness. Thus, the electoral process can run better, and democracy can develop well, illustrating the power of the people's voice and justice in the political system.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the political awareness of the people of Bengkulu City in the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor elections had a significant impact on political participation and the quality of democracy in the city of Bengkulu. Low public cognitive awareness, caused by limited access to quality information and low levels of political education, is a major factor that can seriously influence elections. Low affective awareness, which involves a lack of emotional closeness to candidates and issues deemed irrelevant, also contributes to low voter participation. In addition, the low evaluative awareness of society, which includes the ability to objectively evaluate the performance of candidates, can lead to elections that are not based on rational considerations.

REFERENCES

- Apriyani, M., Awaliyah, F., Amandit, M., & Humaidi, M. A. (2022). Pengaruh Money Politics Culture Terhadap Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat Dalam Pemilihan Umum. *Jurnal Mutakallimin: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 5(2).
- Arniti, N. K. (2020). Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat Dalam Pemilihan Umum Legislatif Di Kota Denpasar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Dinamika Sosial*, 4(2), 329–348.
- Budiardjo, M. (2003). *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Politik*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Febriantanto, P. (2019). Analisis Faktor Determinan Peningkatan Partisipasi Politik Penyandang Disabilitas Pada Pilkada Kota Yogyakarta 2017. *Jurnal Polgov*, 1(1), 157–190.
- Hendrastiti, T. K. (2021). *Tersembunyi Di Antara Harapan Tumbuh: Demokrasi Di Bumi Rafflesia*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Huntington, S. P. (1994). *Partisipasi Politik Di Negara Berkembang*.
- Kansil, C. S. T., & Kansil, C. S. T. (2006). *Modul: Hukum Perdata: Termaksud Asas-Asas Hukum Perdata*. (No Title).
- Liando, D. M. (2017). Pemilu Dan Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat (Studi Pada Pemilihan Anggota Legislatif Dan Pemilihan Presiden Dan Calon Wakil Presiden Di Kabupaten Minahasa Tahun 2014). *Jurnal Lppm Bidang Ekososbudkum (Ekonomi, Sosial, Budaya, Dan Hukum)*, 3(2), 14–28.
- Milbrath, L. W., & Goel, M. L. (1977). *Political Participation: How And Why Do People Get Involved In Politics?* (No Title).
- Musthofa, M. (2023). Analisis Pola Rekrutmen Calon Anggota Legislatif Partai Keadilan

- Sejahtera Kota Tangerang Selatan Pemilu 2019. *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, Dan Humaniora*, 7(1), 99–110.
- Nasution, F. A., & Kushandajani, K. (2019). Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat Kecamatan Medan Maimun Pada Pemilihan Gubernur Sumatera Utara Tahun 2018. *Jppuma Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Dan Sosial Politik Universitas Medan Area*, 7(2), 227–235.
- Pramita, R. A., Jusmin, J., & Biyau, H. (2021). Pengaruh Kesadaran Politik Warga Negara Terhadap Tingkat Partisipasi Politik Dalam Sistem Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah Studi Deskriptif Pada Masyarakat Kampung Klaben Kabupaten Sorong. *Jurnal Citizen Education*, 3(1), 33–38.
- Randy, P. P. (2021). Pengaruh Political Trust, Efikasi Politik Dan Orientasi Kandidat Terhadap Partisipasi Politik, Masyarakat Multi Etnis Pada Pemilu Legislatif Di Kabupaten Pasaman Barat Tahun 2019. Universitas Andalas.
- Sadeli, E. H., Sukma, R. A., Fajar, W. N., & Faridli, E. M. (2022). Pengaruh Kesadaran Politik Terhadap Partisipasi Politik Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Daerah 2020. *Jurnal Riset Pendidikan Dasar (Jrpd)*, 3(2), 117–126.
- Solijonov, A. (2016). Voter Turnout Trends Around The World. *Idea*.
- Sugiyono. (2013). Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R & D. In *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R & D*. (19th Ed., P. 240). Alfabeta.
- Yunita, R. P., & Stanislaus, S. (2014). Orientasi Politik Pemilih Pada Pemilu Legislatif Tahun 2014. *Journal Of Social And Industrial Psychology*, 3(1).

Copyright holders:
Nuraida (2023)

First publication right:
AJEMB – American Journal of Economic and Management Business
