

Political Communication of the General Election Commission (KPU) of East Luwu Regency in Increasing the Participation of Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections

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Abstract. *The study aims to analyse the political communication strategies employed by the General Election Commission (KPU) of East Luwu Regency in increasing the participation of voters with disabilities during the 2020 Regional Head Elections. This qualitative research uses descriptive methods, focusing on how political communication impacts the participation of disabled voters. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and literature review, involving KPU officials and disabled voters. The results showed that KPU's communication strategies, such as targeted socialization and partnerships with disability organizations, significantly influenced voter participation. However, barriers such as limited accessibility and lack of family support hindered full voter engagement. The conclusion suggests that improving infrastructure and increasing awareness among families and communities are crucial to enhancing the political participation of voters with disabilities.*

Keywords: *Political Communication, Voter Participation, Disabilities, Regional Elections*

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INTRODUCTION

General elections are a medium or means of expressing people's sovereignty and are a moment for the people to participate in national life. Likewise with the implementation of regional head elections which are a form of implementing democracy and a place to realize people's sovereignty. The implementation of regional head elections in 2020 has indeed become a polemic in society, because the election at that time coincided with the Covid-19 Pandemic. This makes election organizers throughout Indonesia have to think of all ways so that this democratic party runs well, one of which is how to increase voter participation so that they can continue to voice their voting rights in the midst of this pandemic. Therefore, one way to increase voter participation is to communicate well between the Election Institution and the community who have the right to vote.

Communication plays an important role in the political arena and the two complement each other (Amah & Cendana, 2017). We often encounter this practice in democratic party events organized by the General Election Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Body (Election Supervisory Body) and the Election Organizer Honorary Council (DKPP). Communication also plays an important role in changing the sensitivity of political attitudes, this is in line with the function of the General Election Commission (KPU) which has the task of influencing the political attitudes of the community to participate in channel their voting rights in every stage of the General Election or Regional Election. Therefore, the KPU must have a good political communication strategy that is implemented to influence the political attitudes of the community to participate in voting.

General elections are one indicator of the stability and dynamics of a nation's democratization (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2021). In Indonesia, the implementation of general elections (Election) has indeed been taking place periodically since the beginning of the independence of this nation, but the democratization process through previous elections has not been able to produce mature democratic values due to the authoritarian political system. Success in implementing the Election is an indicator of the maturity of the people's political attitudes in determining the direction and future of the development of the State and nation of Indonesia (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019). The high level of community participation in elections in reality does not merely indicate a high level of democracy, because of the emergence of the phenomenon of mobilized participation.

Based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, it is explained that general election regulations are needed as a manifestation of a democratic and integrity-based state system in order to ensure consistency and legal certainty as well as effective and efficient general elections. This is the basis and reference for the KPU in carrying out its function as an election organizer. The Regional Head Election (Regional Election) itself is regulated based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2020 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2020 concerning the Third Amendment to Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors into Law into Law. The two state legal products regulate the work of the KPU in carrying out political communication. The KPU's target is to increase public participation in voting who have been included in the list of mandatory voters who have been previously recorded.

Mandatory voters themselves are regulated in several criteria, namely, being 17 years of age or older on voting day, married or have been married. Not currently mentally/memory impaired. Not having their voting rights revoked based on a court decision that has permanent legal force. Domiciled in the voter's administrative area as evidenced by an E-KTP. Voters who do not yet have an E-KTP can use an E-KTP recording certificate issued by the Population and Civil Registry Service. Not currently serving in the Indonesian National Army (TNI) or the Republic of Indonesia Police. (PKPU RI No. 11 of 2019). The success of holding a general election is an increase in public political participation. This is manifested in the distribution of voting rights owned by the community who are required to vote in the General Election and Regional Election. Participation is an important aspect of democracy.

The assumption underlying democracy (participation) is that the person who knows best about what is good for him/herself is the person himself/herself. Because political decisions made and implemented by the government concern and affect the lives of citizens, citizens have the right to participate in determining the content of decisions that affect their lives in participation, citizens in influencing the process of making and implementing political decisions. Citizen activities can be divided into two, influencing the content of general policies and participating in determining the making and implementation of political decisions. To increase voter participation, good political communication is needed (Surbakti, 2010) political communication can be defined as the process of conveying information about politics from the government to the public and from the public to the government. Furthermore, Cangara (2016) wrote that political communication is a process, how to introduce the political system of a person or group or political institution to others with the aim of influencing political attitudes.

It cannot be denied that political communication is something that is very important in achieving the goals that have been set. For that, knowledge about the definition of political communication is very important. If the communicant understands political communication, it is likely that they will be able to create something better (Sugiarti & Ruliana, 2020). In dealing with communication problems, planners are faced with several problems, especially in the use of available communication resources to achieve certain goals that they want to achieve.

The General Election Commission (KPU) must have a strategy to increase voter participation, especially among people with disabilities, this strategy is usually in the form of socialization or political education (Nazir et al., 2021). This strategy is something that must be done by the KPU so that the public really knows about the election, in addition to providing technical instructions, the public also needs to be given an understanding of how to exercise their voting rights correctly and not because they are influenced by other things that are not beneficial to the community itself. One of the challenges for the KPU in each Regency/City is to provide understanding to disabled voters. People with disabilities have the same standing in the eyes of the law to exercise their right to vote in the General Election or Regional Election. People with disabilities who meet the requirements have the same opportunity as Voters, as candidates for DPR members, as candidates for DPD members, as candidates for President/Vice President, as candidates for DPRD members, and as Election Organizers (Article 5 of Law No. 7 of 2017).

According to Law No. 19 of 2011 concerning the Ratification of Disability Rights, People with disabilities are people who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory limitations for a long period of time in interacting with their environment and community attitudes encounter obstacles that make it difficult to participate fully and effectively based on equal rights. Therefore, the recognition that discrimination against disabilities is a violation of the dignity and values inherent in every human being. As a celebration of a five-yearly democratic party, it is only right that the General Election (Election) has access to all citizens without exception. Providing political understanding to people with disabilities is not as easy as to society in general. Various limitations sometimes become obstacles for the KPU to convince and invite them to exercise their right to vote.

Voters with disabilities are influenced by special methods that are summarized in the community participation program at the KPU. Facilities and infrastructure are needed to accommodate people with disabilities in exercising their right to vote. In East Luwu Regency itself, the number of disabled voters in the 2020 Regional Election was 1,001 people spread across 11 sub-districts, but only 403 people exercised their right to vote, in other words, 598 people were absent from exercising their right to vote at the Polling Station (TPS). The fact that the voting rights of people with disabilities have not been maximized has resulted in low participation as voters with disabilities in the 2020 East Luwu Regency Regional Election. Previous research conducted by (Sari & Rifa, 2021) in 2021 entitled "Communication Strategy of the Bantul Regency General Election Commission in Socializing the Implementation of Regional Head Elections During the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic" showed that all stages of the regional elections carried out by the Bantul Regency KPU were in accordance with PKPU Number 5 of 2020, by implementing health protocols and conducting online and offline socialization involving all elements of election organizers and regional stakeholders, resulting in high voter participation in Bantul.

Then the results of previous research conducted by (Hariyono & Arifin, 2021) entitled "Political Communication Strategy of Election Supervisory Body Tuban Regency in Preventing Disputes in the 2020 Regional Election in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic" explained the results of his research that in preventing disputes in the election process, Election Supervisory Body Tuban Regency uses formal, informal, vertical and horizontal political communication patterns where the use of these communication patterns is chosen by looking at the complexity of the dynamics faced by Election Supervisory Body Tuban Regency. The East Luwu General Election Commission (KPU) actually pays great attention to voters with disabilities. The proof is that many legal regulations have been made to cover services for voters with disabilities, but the implementation of these good intentions has not been fully maximized in the field, many people with disabilities do not have access to polling stations. The General Election Commission (KPU) at various levels has conducted socialization to voters with disabilities regarding voting techniques. However, the KPU does not have a solution on how voters with disabilities can get equal access to come to the Polling Station (TPS).

The challenge of fulfilling the political rights of disabled groups also comes from their own families, there is an understanding from some families who believe that disabled people do not

have to voice their political choices, they also do not want to bother bringing their disabled family members to the Polling Station (TPS) this is what causes the Abstain from voting rate, even though all this time what has been echoed is not to abstain, but because of the lack of access for friends with disabilities, they finally cannot exercise their voting rights and become Abstain from voting. Based on several problems above, it is a reference for the author to research "Political Communication of the East Luwu General Election Commission (KPU) in Increasing the Participation of Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Election".

Literature Review and Previous Study

The results of previous research conducted by (Supriadi, 2017) entitled "Political Communication of the DPRD in Increasing the Legislative Role in the City of Bandung" showed that political communication carried out by the Bandung City DPRD in increasing the legislative role in the City of Bandung, was carried out by communicating directly with the community which is usually represented by certain elements of society. The strategies used in conveying political communication are carried out in various ways, starting from planning, delivering messages, and managing political communication media (Ernst et al., 2019).

In managing political communication messages, the management of strategic political issues is still minimally carried out by the Bandung City DPRD, they also rarely appear in the mass media and news about the Bandung City DPRD is also very minimal. To overcome this, the Bandung City DPRD utilizes social media to communicate that is not conveyed through the mass media. Then previous research conducted by (Sofyan, 2020) entitled "Political Communication Strategy of the Regional Election Commission (Kpud) of Temanggung Regency in the 2013 Central Java Regional Election" showed that in the political communication strategy it is not only placed in the aspect of building togetherness in achieving the political goals of organizing the Regional Election, but also placed on maintaining figures, building consensus and strengthening institutions. Thus, the results of the political communication strategy will have optimal value to achieve institutional political goals.

Furthermore, previous research by (Sari & Rifa, 2021) in 2021 entitled "Communication Strategy of the Bantul Regency General Election Commission in the Socialization of the Implementation of Regional Head Elections During the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic" showed that all stages of the regional elections carried out by the Bantul Regency KPU were in accordance with PKPU Number 5 of 2020, by implementing health protocols and conducting online and offline socialization involving all elements of the election organizers and with regional stakeholders, making the voter turnout high in Bantul.

Previous research conducted by (Hariyono & Arifin, 2021) entitled "Political Communication Strategy of Election Supervisory Body Tuban Regency in Preventing Disputes in the 2020 Regional Election in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era" explains the results of his research that in preventing disputes in the election process, Election Supervisory Body Tuban Regency uses formal, informal, vertical and horizontal political communication patterns where the use of these communication patterns is chosen by looking at the complexity of the dynamics faced by Election Supervisory Body Tuban Regency. Looking at several previous studies discussed earlier, most of them discuss how communication strategies are used by several institutions in carrying out their duties. Meanwhile, this study will later discuss how and what kind of Political Communication is carried out by the Institution in this case the General Election Commission (KPU) of East Luwu in influencing or convincing voters, especially voters with disabilities, to participate in the 2020 Regional Election.

Political Communication Concept

Definition of Political Communication

The definition of communication has been put forward by many experts in the field of communication, and it is indeed very simple and easy to understand. Communication according to (UCHJANA EFFENDY, 2017), communication is the event of conveying human ideas. In line with

Effendi, Edwin (Emery et al., 1967) Communication is the art of conveying information, ideas, and attitudes from one person to another. Nimmo Communication is a process of social interaction that people use to construct meaning which is their image of the world and to exchange that image through symbols (Nimmo et al., 2005). While "politics" according to Sumarsono et al. (2006) in their book Civic Education, politics is a series of principles, principles, events, paths, methods, and tools used to achieve certain goals. Meanwhile, political communication according to (McNair, 2018) political communication is a communication process to influence public knowledge, beliefs and actions related to political issues (Surbakti, 2010) political communication can be defined as the process of conveying information about politics from the government to the public and from the public to the government. Furthermore (Cangara, 2016) wrote that political communication is a process, how to introduce the political system of a person or group or political institution to others with the aim of influencing political attitudes.

Elements of Political Communication

Perloff (2021), stated that the process of political communication requires supporting elements, including sources (communicators), messages, media or channels, recipients, and effects. The explanation is as follows:

Political communicators

All parties involved in the process of conveying messages to other parties to achieve goals. These parties can be individuals, groups, organizations, institutions or governments (Pawito & R., 2015). A similar opinion was also expressed (Nimmo et al., 2005) that the basic element in the politician's communication network is the formal government apparatus. In this case, the communicator in organizing the regional elections is a political state institution called the KPU which has the authority to organize regional elections or elections nationally and at the provincial and district levels. The communication process carried out by this communicator is to convey political messages from the stages of the regional election process, campaign, voting until the election of the elected regent to the community who act as political communicators. The political communication process carried out by the KPU is not only for the public, but also for political parties and candidate pairs.

Political Message

The communication process carried out by an institution to the community is certain to have a message, because with the message delivered, good communication will be established. The message can be defined as the dimension of the content of the communication that can be explained in verbal sentences but also presented in non-verbal packaging (Abakumova et al., 2021). In this case, a political message is a statement conveyed by an institution or government, either written or not, in the form of symbols or verbally containing political elements to be conveyed to the community, for example political speeches, delivery of information on election laws, and others.

Political Channels or Media

This channel is a way of how a communicator in delivering a message can be effectively received by the community and have a positive effect. According to Nimmo et al. (2005) there are three types of communication channels, namely mass communication, interpersonal and organizational communication.

Political Message Recipient

The recipient of the message is the party who is the target of the message sent by the source (Ferreira & Teles, 2019). So in this case the recipient of the message from the communicator (KPU) is all levels of society who are registered as voters or not voters are expected to receive messages of every information or policy regarding politics that is distributed in various ways in order to provide a response or effect to the political communication message,

for example to come to vote in the general election or regional election for residents who have registered and meet the requirements as voters to come to the TPS.

Effect or Influence

Effect or influence is the difference between what is thought, what is done, what is felt by the recipient before and after receiving the message (Kemp et al., 2020). If the elements of communication stated above are depicted in a picture and associated with the Lasswell model, then the relationship between one element and another can be seen as follows:

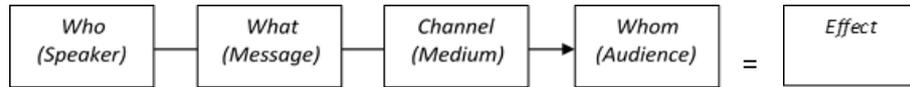


Figure 1. Communication Flow Diagram

Source: Kemp et al. (2020)

The long-known Lasswell formula, namely who, says what, to whom, through what channel, and what effect, has been used by other experts such as Nimmo in explaining the scope of political communication. In communication research, Lasswell's formula has given birth to a research model known as the Lasswell model which begins with the communication process of who is the message giver, what message is delivered, with what media and who is the recipient of the message. So that the process carried out is able to provide a positive or desired effect. (Arifin, 2011) In an effort to influence the political attitudes of the community, at least there is a theory used by the persuader so that the community follows what the persuader wants, namely the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) theory. ELM is a persuasive theory that processes a message persuasively in a different way by activating each route (Griffin, 2012). This theory is used to predict when someone will act to respond or not to a message from a persuader (Littlejohn et al., 2014).

In the Elaboration Likelihood Model theory, there are two approaches that must be taken by the persuader, namely the central route (message elaboration) and the peripheral route (no message elaboration). This central route will examine the ideas or concepts of a message whether the idea or message has the right benefits and consider its implications. While the marginalized route outside the central route is a shortcut process for receiving a message by rejecting or accepting a message without considering cognitive aspects. The peripheral route prioritizes signals as a way to change attitudes, such as the credibility of a party or candidate for regent, the competence of a persuader compared to the arguments and facts presented.

In the processing of message elaboration, people who use the central route always emphasize a high cognitive level and are only carried out by people who have a high intellectual level. While those with low education always use the peripheral route of source credibility, and the environment outside the content of the message takes action. To be able to meet the expected target, at least the message giver must understand the three patterns in the ELM theory, namely:

Strong Positive Attitude Change

In this case, the persuader must be able to provide a positive message and strong conviction to the community to use their rights as citizens in the regional elections based on strong arguments or reasons in using their right to vote that one vote is very important for the journey of democracy which will result in a major shift in attitudes towards the positive as desired by the persuader. With the addition of accurate data, and a credible persuader, the recipient of the message will respond positively and change over time.

Strong Negative Attitude Change

The type of message recipient at this stage will not respond, even though the persuader has presented strong arguments and facts. In fact, the message recipient does not react at all. In this case, the voter responds with an indifferent or apathetic attitude.

No Change Attitude

The recipient of the message in this case is a person who ignores the news/information/notifications of others who are called indifferent or do not want to listen at all. So that the message giver finds it very difficult to spread the message to the public, because the public no longer cares about the course of the regional elections. In this case, the message giver must be able to invite the public by displaying accurate and precise data (Strong Positive Attitude Change) and conveying the contents of the message well to be able to influence the public to use their voting rights in the regional elections. If the delivery of the message via the central route is not possible, then the message giver can do it by increasing the human resources of the message giver credibly and the environment outside the contents of the message.

Political Communication Process

Political Communication begins with the political process, Oliver Garceau in (Nimmo et al., 2005) the political process is a pattern of equal interaction carried out between communicators and participants in order to make decisions. With voter education, they will have the knowledge to act in using their voting rights. In line with Mitrin & Putri (2022), in general political communication is seen as a process of political interaction and is an activity that takes place continuously. This means that what is happening now is actually a continuation of what happened before and all will be connected with what will happen in the future. As a process, political communication can be understood with at least five elements: a. involvement (actor or participant), b. message, c. channel, d. situation or context, and e. influence or effect. The communication channel is a means or tool to facilitate the exchange of information or messages. The delivery of messages from the communicator to the communicant can be in the form of images, writing, or actions. Not only technical media are used as a means of delivering messages, but every individual who wants to convey a message can directly convey it to a particular person or group. In short, it can be said that the communication channel is more than just a connection point, but consists of a shared understanding of who, can talk to whom, about what, under what circumstances, and to what extent can be trusted (Broadbent, 2020).

According to Bowden & Mirzaei (2021), there are three types of communication channels, namely: 1) mass communication which is a method of delivering messages from one person to many people, 2) interpersonal communication which is one on one communication, and 3) organizational communication which combines the delivery of interpersonal communication to mass communication. Meanwhile, (Nimmo et al., 2005), states that mass communication is divided into two, namely direct mass communication when a communicator speaks in front of an audience to convey his political message and mass communication using media here the media and means participate in conveying political messages to the audience (Nimmo et al., 2005).

Function of Political Communication

McNair explains that Political Communication functions to present political messages from the government, political institutions to the public, political parties and vice versa (McNair, 2018) explains the basic functions of political communication as follows: 1) Providing political information to the public about what is happening around them; 2) Educating the public about the meaning and significance of politics; 3) Providing itself as a platform to accommodate political issues so that they become discourse in forming public opinion and returning that opinion to the public; 4) Making reports/news addressed to the government or political institutions. The media in this case functions as a guard in helping to create good, transparent and accountable governance; 5) In a democratic society, political media functions as a channel of advocates that can help so that institutional policies and programs can be channel to the mass media (McNair, 2018).

Based on the description above, those who carry out political communication must be able to provide political information to the public as well as accommodate political problems that occur in society. In line (Cangara, 2016) regarding the function of political communication, among

others, providing information about politics through the media, both print and electronic media. Thus, political communication built by political institutions, political parties and candidates provides an informative function to the public to gain support from voters.

The Purpose of Political Communication

One of the purposes of political communication is the expected effect or impact of a political communication process carried out by the communicator on the community (Cangara, 2016). In this case, political communication to the community must be carried out through: 1) Mass channels which are divided into mass media and delivering messages to the audience or group, 2) Organizations, 3) Personal which ultimately the community uses their right to vote not to abstain. Political image is also related to the formation of public opinion, because basically political public opinion is built through political image (Arifin, 2011). Political image is related to the formation of public opinion because basically political public opinion is realized as a consequence of political communication cognition (Yulianto, 2014).

Meanwhile, (Pawito & R., 2015) provide the view that image is a shadow of an impression, or a picture of an object, especially political parties, candidates, political elites, and the government. Image Theory is an approach to political psychology that draws connections between the image of decision makers and the resulting behavior (Cottam 2012). Politicians or political leaders and political institutions are very interested in forming their political image through political communication in an effort to create social stability and meet the demands of the people. For example, the president's announcement that economic difficulties have been resolved will automatically raise an image of a better future for the people (Arifin, 2011).

METHODS

The approach used in this study is descriptive, namely a study that describes in detail about "Political Communication of the East Luwu KPU in Increasing Disabled Voter Participation in the 2020 Regional Election." and a description of the problem being studied as it is. In this study, the author uses a qualitative descriptive form that explains, interprets, and analyse existing data. The location of the research on "Political Communication of the General Election Commission (KPU) of East Luwu Regency in Increasing Disabled Voter Participation in the 2020 Regional Election" was carried out in East Luwu Regency. In this study, data will be obtained from two sources, namely, primary data, data that will be obtained directly from informants, this data collection is in the form of interviews, and conducting observations (direct observation of research), and secondary data, data obtained from documents, records, official archives, books, and relevant literature in completing the data. In this study, what is needed is the East Luwu KPU guidebook, the Disability Module, the Organizational Structure and other archive data needed. Data collection techniques that will be used in this study, namely observation, interviews and literature studies. The data obtained will be analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. Data analysis is the process of simplifying data into a form that is easier to read and interpret.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

KPU Luwu Timur's Political Communication Strategy to Influence Changes in the Political Attitudes of Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Election

According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Griffin, 2012), the persuasion process can go through two routes, namely the central route and the peripheral route. KPU Luwu Timur uses both of these routes in its political communication:

Central Route (Message Elaboration)

The central route is a concept in information processing theory that shows how individuals are actively involved in processing messages, paying attention to the arguments presented, and elaborating deeply on the information received. In the context of general elections, the central route occurs when voters not only receive information passively but also truly analyse and evaluate the messages given. This route is effective when voters have a high interest and

motivation to pay attention to details, such as disabled voters in the 2020 Regional Election in East Luwu Regency. The following are the steps taken by the East Luwu KPU in Encouraging Disabled Voters Through the Central Route:

Direct Socialization and Special Education for Disabled Voters

The East Luwu KPU conducted direct socialization aimed at providing a clear understanding of voting rights, election procedures, and voting procedures. In this socialization, the KPU adjusted communication methods for disabilities, for example using sign language for the deaf or printed materials in Braille for the blind. The provision of structured and complete information aims to encourage voters to actively process information, pay attention to arguments presented by election organizers, and understand the importance of their participation in democracy. This elaboration process allows disabled voters to be more critical of the messages received, encourages a deeper understanding of their political rights and increases confidence in participating in the Regional Election.

Holding an Election Simulation for Disabled Voters

As part of efforts to encourage message elaboration, the East Luwu KPU also held a voting simulation specifically designed for disabled voters. In this simulation, voters not only receive information verbally, but also experience the voting process directly. By presenting simulations, the KPU provides an opportunity for voters to practice election procedures according to their conditions, including how to use special voting booths, assistance, and other procedures. This direct experience helps voters with disabilities to understand more deeply the election procedures, analyse the relevance and accuracy of the messages conveyed. This allows them to evaluate and form a more positive political attitude towards the election system and ultimately increase their participation.

Provision of Special Voting Booths and Assistance of Officers at Polling Stations

The East Luwu KPU also provided specially designed voting booths to suit the needs of voters with disabilities. For example, voters using wheelchairs had access to larger booths, while blind voters received ballots in Braille format. In addition, polling station officers were specially trained to assist voters with disabilities without compromising the confidentiality of their choices. These facilities not only made it easier for voters with disabilities to vote, but also demonstrated the KPU's real concern for their inclusion in the democratic process. When voters with disabilities saw that their needs were prioritized, they were more motivated to process the information provided by the KPU in depth. They felt valued, and this led to a strong elaboration of the messages received, which led to increased active participation in the election.

Through these strategies, the East Luwu KPU effectively utilized the central route to encourage voters with disabilities to process election-related messages in more depth. Direct socialization, election simulations, and the provision of special facilities not only provide information to voters with disabilities, but also increase their elaboration of the information, which contributes to positive changes in attitudes towards the election system and increases their participation in the 2020 Regional Election.

Peripheral Route (No Message Elaboration)

The peripheral route is one of the mechanisms in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) that shows how individuals process messages without deep cognitive involvement. In the peripheral route, message recipients tend to respond based on cues that are not directly related to the argument or content of the message, such as visual appeal, the speaker's reputation, or social influence. This is in contrast to the central route, where individuals actively evaluate and elaborate on the information received. The peripheral route occurs when voters do not have the motivation or ability to analyse the message in depth.

In the context of disabled voters in the 2020 Regional Election in East Luwu Regency, the peripheral approach can play an important role, especially for voters who may not be fully

involved in the political election process or have cognitive or physical barriers in understanding the message delivered. The following is the East Luwu KPU's strategy in Using the Peripheral Route to Increase Disabled Voter Participation:

Use of Influencers or Local Community Figures

The East Luwu KPU leverages the influence of local community figures, especially those who are well-known and respected by the disability community, to disseminate important messages related to the election. These figures can include community leaders, disability activists, or religious figures who have moral and social authority in the eyes of disabled voters. In this case, the presence of these figures becomes a peripheral signal that can increase the credibility of the message delivered by the KPU, even though voters may not critically evaluate the content of the message.

Disabled voters tend to be influenced by the reputation or trust they have in the figure rather than paying attention to the rational arguments presented. For example, when a respected disability figure delivers a message about the importance of participating in the election, disabled voters tend to accept the message without further elaboration on why the right to vote is important. The social influence of these community figures can make the message feel more relevant and credible, even without deep cognitive engagement.

Visually Appealing Campaign Materials

The East Luwu KPU also utilized visual design in their campaign to attract the attention of disabled voters. Visual elements such as posters, brochures, and social media content designed with bold colour, simple images, and short, clear messages were often used to convey election information. These strong, eye-catching visuals can act as peripheral cues that influence disabled voters without requiring in-depth analysis of the message.

Visually appealing campaign materials are especially helpful in the context of disabled voters who may have limitations in processing complex information. Instead of conveying long, complex messages, the KPU relies on graphic designs that are eye catching and easy to remember. For example, posters that show the election process with simple illustrations and bold colours can make it easier for voters to understand the election procedures without having to elaborate on in-depth information.

Simple and Memorable Slogans

The East Luwu KPU also uses short and memorable slogans in its campaign for disabled voters. Slogans such as "Your Rights, Your Voice!" or "Let's Vote!" are designed to influence voters through direct messages that do not require in-depth elaboration. Disabled voters who may not have the interest or time to understand more details about the election can be motivated to participate simply by the simplicity of the message that is repeatedly delivered. These slogans serve as peripheral cues that can be easily received and remembered by the audience. While the peripheral route can be effective in attracting the attention of disabled voters, there are several drawbacks that can limit its impact:

Lack of Deep Understanding

One of the main drawbacks of the peripheral route is the lack of deep understanding of the message being conveyed. Because voters with disabilities may not elaborate on the message cognitively, they may not fully understand or consider the rationale behind participating in the election. As a result, while they may be motivated to participate, their engagement may be temporary or superficial. Without deep understanding, the decisions they make may not be fully based on critical thinking.

Reliance on External Cues

Voters influenced by the peripheral route tend to rely more heavily on external cues such as the presence of community leaders or attractive visual designs. This means that when these

cues are absent or less powerful, voters' motivation to participate may decrease. Reliance on external influences also makes their participation less stable, as changes in the external context or conditions can drastically affect their decisions.

Lack of Sustained Attitude Change

The peripheral route tends to produce unstable or unsustained attitude change. Voters influenced by peripheral cues may be more likely to change their opinions when faced with new, more attractive cues. For example, if in the future another issue or campaign regional election is presented that is more visually appealing or is delivered by a different figure, voters may change their political preferences without a strong understanding of why.

Potential for Manipulation

Because voters influenced by the peripheral route tend to respond to external cues without questioning or elaborating on the message, they are more susceptible to manipulation. Peripheral cues, such as the use of public figures or striking visual designs, can be used unethically to influence political decisions without providing clear or accurate information. This can pose a risk of misuse of political communication strategies that disadvantage voters with disabilities.

Participation of Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu

Data from the study showed that the participation of disabled voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency experienced a significant increase. Of the 1,001 registered disabled voters, 403 people exercised their right to vote, reflecting a 12% increase compared to the previous Regional Elections. This increase indicates the success of the communication and accessibility strategies implemented by the General Elections Commission (KPU). However, despite the increase, the participation only reached around 50% of the total registered disabled voters. This means that half of disabled voters have not yet exercised their right to vote, indicating challenges that must be overcome in the future. One of the main factors contributing to the increase in participation was a more inclusive and effective communication strategy.

The East Luwu Regency KPU succeeded in conveying information about the importance of political participation to disabled voters through various media, both directly and through social media. They also involved organizations of people with disabilities in the socialization process, so that messages could be delivered in a relevant and easy to understand manner. Improving accessibility at Polling Stations (TPS) also played an important role. The KPU made adjustments at polling stations to make them more accessible to voters with disabilities, such as providing adequate access for wheelchair users, as well as visual and audio guides for voters with visual or hearing impairments. This helped reduce physical barriers that could impact participation. However, while the polling station communication and accessibility strategies have shown positive results, the study also revealed significant weaknesses.

The participation rate, which is still at 50%, indicates that existing efforts have not reached all voters with disabilities equally. The majority of voters with disabilities who participated were those who received direct socialization or had good access to information from the KPU. In contrast, those who lived in remote areas or were not covered by socialization programs had lower participation rates. Geographical barriers, limited communication infrastructure, and lack of access to inclusive socialization programs were the main challenges.

Thus, despite the increase in participation, the 50% figure indicates that the Luwu Timur Regency KPU needs to expand the reach of socialization and accessibility programs, especially for voters with disabilities in remote areas. Collaboration with local governments, communication service providers, and civil society organizations can be an important step to ensure that all voters with disabilities have equal access to information and democratic processes.

Inhibiting Factors of Political Communication on Disabled Voter Participation in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency

This study identifies several inhibiting factors that affect the effectiveness of the General Election Commission's (KPU) political communication in increasing disabled voter participation in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency. Although the KPU's efforts have resulted in increased participation, there are still a number of significant challenges that hinder the full involvement of disabled voters. The following is a detailed description of these inhibiting factors:

Lack of Physical Accessibility to Polling Stations (TPS)

Many voters with disabilities, especially in remote areas or areas with inadequate infrastructure, still have difficulty accessing polling station locations. Geographical factors and poor road conditions are often the main obstacles for voters with disabilities, such as wheelchair users or individuals with other mobility limitations. Although the KPU has made efforts to provide more disability-friendly facilities at polling stations, the availability and quality of this physical access is not evenly distributed across all regions. In some areas, adequate accessibility such as special lanes for wheelchair users, clear visual signs, or other assistive facilities is still very limited. This condition makes voters with disabilities reluctant or have difficulty coming directly to polling stations, so their participation remains low.

Lack of Information in Remote Areas

The socialization carried out by the KPU has not fully reached voters with disabilities in remote areas. One of the main factors causing this is the limited communication infrastructure, such as telephone signals and internet access, which makes the information distribution process uneven. In some areas, voters with disabilities do not receive sufficient information regarding election procedures, the implementation time, and the importance of their participation. Limited human and financial resources also limit the KPU's ability to reach all regions, especially remote areas that are difficult to access. As a result, voters with disabilities in these areas tend to have less understanding of their voting rights and how they can be involved in the democratic process.

Lack of Awareness and Support from Family and Social Environment

Another factor that influences the participation of voters with disabilities is the lack of support from their family and social environment. In some cases, the families of voters with disabilities do not encourage or provide sufficient support for them to participate in the election. This is often due to the view that political participation is not a priority for individuals with disabilities, or because of the assumption that the election process is too difficult and complex for them. In addition, a social environment that is less concerned or does not provide sufficient information also contributes to the low motivation and confidence of voters with disabilities to participate. Support from family and social environment is very important because it can help facilitate access to information and logistics, such as transportation to the polling station, as well as provide moral encouragement so that voters with disabilities feel that their votes are valuable.

Limitations of Disability-Friendly Socialization Media

One of the main obstacles identified is the lack of socialization media that is friendly to voters with disabilities, especially for those with sensory disabilities, such as the blind and deaf. Although the KPU has created various campaign materials, most of these materials have not been fully adapted to the needs of voters with disabilities. For example, blind voters require campaign materials in Braille or easily accessible audio formats, while deaf voters require materials accompanied by sign language translations. In many cases, existing socialization materials do not meet these specific needs, making it difficult for voters with sensory disabilities to understand the messages conveyed. The lack of a specific communication approach to this group is a barrier for them to get the right information and participate in the election.

Overall, although there are clear efforts by the KPU to increase the participation of voters with disabilities, this study shows that these challenges need to be addressed immediately. The

KPU needs to collaborate more closely with disability organizations, local governments, and the community to ensure that physical access to polling stations, equitable distribution of information, social support, and disability-friendly socialization media can be significantly improved. These efforts will not only increase the participation of voters with disabilities, but also ensure that the democratic process is truly inclusive of all levels of society.

KPU Luwu Timur Political Communication Strategy to Influence Changes in Political Attitudes of Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections

Central Route (Message Elaboration)

In the 2020 Regional Election in East Luwu Regency, the KPU implemented a political communication strategy that refers to Griffin's Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), by utilizing the central route and peripheral route to influence the political attitudes of disabled voters. The central route, which focuses on in-depth information processing, was implemented through several strategic initiatives.

The East Luwu KPU began by conducting direct socialization and special education for disabled voters. Based on the results of interviews with the East Luwu KPU Commissioner, this strategy involved the use of sign language for the deaf and braille printed materials for the blind, to ensure that messages related to voting rights and voting procedures could be accessed properly. In an interview with Mr. Saenal, he stated the following:

"We started by conducting research on the special needs of disabled voters and used various methods to ensure our message was delivered effectively. This socialization was designed to increase the understanding and involvement of disabled voters so that when voting time comes, our friends with disabilities will no longer have difficulty in choosing the Regional Head."

This socialization not only provides information but also encourages voters to actively process information and understand their rights in democracy, which leads to increased confidence in participating in the election. Furthermore, the East Luwu KPU held a special election simulation for voters with disabilities.

This simulation allows voters to experience the voting process directly, including the use of special voting booths and other procedures. Mr. Ramlan as Secretary of the KPU added the following:

"Election simulations can provide direct experience that greatly helps voters with disabilities to understand procedures and feel more prepared and capable at the time of the election."

In addition, the author also conducted interviews with voters with disabilities to confirm this, with one respondent stating the following:

"The simulation we participated in was very useful. We could try out how to vote directly, which reduced anxiety and made us feel more prepared."

The KPU also provided special voting booths and training for polling station officers to assist voters with disabilities without compromising the confidentiality of their choices. KPU Commissioner Mr. Saenal said the following:

"We provide facilities that meet the needs of each type of disability and train polling station officers to provide good assistance. This is part of our commitment to ensuring the inclusion of voters with disabilities in the democratic process."

Disabled voters felt that attention to their needs greatly motivated them to participate more actively, as expressed by one voter as follows:

"The information and facilities provided made us feel valued and more motivated to participate in the election."

Through these steps, the East Luwu KPU succeeded in utilizing the central route to encourage voters with disabilities to process election messages more deeply. Direct socialization, election simulations, and the provision of special facilities contributed to positive changes in attitudes towards the election system and increased their participation in the 2020 Regional Election.

Peripheral Route (No Message Elaboration)

In the 2020 Regional Election in East Luwu Regency, the KPU implemented a political communication strategy involving the peripheral route to influence the participation of disabled voters. The peripheral route, according to Griffin's Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), involves less in-depth message processing, where individuals are more influenced by external cues such as visual appeal or the reputation of the speaker, rather than in-depth cognitive analysis.

The East Luwu KPU utilized several peripheral route-based strategies to increase the participation of disabled voters. First, they involved local community leaders who were known and respected by the disabled community. These figures, such as community leaders and disability activists, played an important role in disseminating election messages. The following is the author's interview with Mr. Seanal, KPU Commissioner:

"We leverage the influence of community leaders to increase the credibility of the message. The presence of these figures provides peripheral cues that reinforce our message, even though voters may not analyze the message content in depth."

This is in line with an interview with one disabled voter who stated:

"When a disabled figure we respect delivers a message, we feel more motivated to participate without having to think about further details."

Second, the KPU uses visually appealing campaign materials to attract the attention of disabled voters. Striking graphic designs, including posters, brochures, and social media content, are designed to convey election information in an easy-to-understand manner. Mr. Saenal added as follows:

"Attractive visual materials help disabled voters understand basic information without requiring in-depth elaboration."

Third, the KPU applies simple and memorable slogans in their campaign. Slogans such as "Your Rights, Your Voice!" or "Let's Vote!" are designed to influence voters with direct and memorable messages. Mr. Saenal, a KPU Commissioner, expressed as follows:

"These slogans function as peripheral cues that can be easily received and remembered by voters."

In line with this, one disabled voter said:

"These short slogans make us feel inspired to vote without having to understand all the details of the election."

However, although the peripheral route is effective in attracting disabled voters, there are several weaknesses that need to be considered. The lack of in-depth understanding is one of the main weaknesses.

Voters influenced by the peripheral route may not fully understand the reasons behind their participation, which can result in decisions that are less based on critical thinking. In addition, reliance on external cues such as the presence of community leaders or attractive visual designs can make voter participation less stable, as their motivation may decrease if these cues are absent or less strong. In addition, attitude changes generated through the peripheral route tend to be unstable. Voters influenced by peripheral cues can easily change their opinions when faced with new, more attractive cues.

Finally, there is a risk of manipulation because voters who respond to peripheral cues may be more susceptible to unethical influence. The use of peripheral cues must be done carefully to avoid misuse that can harm disabled voters. By using the peripheral route, the East Luwu KPU succeeded in attracting the attention of disabled voters and increasing their participation in the 2020 Regional Election, although with several risks and limitations that must be watched out for.

Participation of Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu

Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Research shows that the participation of disabled voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency has increased significantly. Of the total 1001 registered disabled voters, 403 people exercised their right to vote, reflecting an increase of 12% compared to the previous Regional Elections.

This increase indicates the success of the communication and accessibility strategies implemented by the East Luwu KPU. A more inclusive communication strategy contributed to this increase. The East Luwu KPU conveyed information about the importance of political participation through various channels, including social media and direct involvement with organizations for people with disabilities.

The following are the results of an interview conducted by the author with Mr. Ramlan, Secretary of the East Luwu KPU, who stated the following:

"We engaged with various disability organizations to ensure our messages were delivered in a way that was relevant and easy for voters with disabilities to understand."

This helped raise awareness and encouragement to participate. Improving accessibility at Polling Stations (TPS) also played a significant role. Adjustments at polling stations, such as providing access for wheelchair users and visual and audio guides for voters with visual or hearing impairments, helped reduce physical barriers.

In line with the interview results, one disabled voter expressed the following:

"The changes made at the polling station were very helpful. I felt more comfortable and could participate without any obstacles."

However, despite the increase, participation of disabled voters still reached around 50% of the total registered disabled voters. This shows challenges that need to be addressed further. The study revealed that those who participated were generally those who received direct socialization or had good access to information from the KPU. In contrast, voters who were in remote areas or not covered by socialization programs had lower participation rates. Mr. Saenal continued as follows:

"Geographical barriers and limited communication infrastructure are the main challenges in reaching all disabled voters."

To further increase participation, the KPU needs to expand the reach of outreach and accessibility programs, especially for voters with disabilities in remote areas. Collaboration with local governments, communication service providers, and civil society organizations can be an important step. These steps aim to ensure that all voters with disabilities have equal access to information and democratic processes, so that their participation in elections can be more optimal in the future.

Inhibiting Factors of Political Communication on Disabled Voter Participation in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency

Disabled Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency This study identified several inhibiting factors that influenced the effectiveness of KPU's political communication in increasing disabled voter participation in the 2020 Regional Elections in East Luwu Regency. Despite the increase in participation, significant challenges still hinder the full involvement of disabled voters.

Lack of Physical Accessibility to Polling Stations (TPS)

Many voters with disabilities, especially in remote areas or areas with inadequate infrastructure, still have difficulty accessing polling stations. Geographical factors and poor road conditions are often the main obstacles, as expressed by Mr. Saenal, Commissioner of the East Luwu KPU as follows:

"Physical access constraints, especially in remote areas, are still a big problem. We have tried to provide disability-friendly facilities, but the quality is not evenly distributed."

Although the KPU has tried to provide disability-friendly facilities, such as special lanes and visual signs at polling stations, this accessibility is not evenly distributed across the region. Some areas are still very limited in providing these facilities, causing disabled voters to have difficulty coming to polling stations, so their participation remains low.

Lack of Information in Remote Areas

The KPU's socialization has not fully reached disabled voters in remote areas, mainly due to limited communication infrastructure such as telephone signals and internet access. A disabled voter from a remote area stated the following:

"We don't get enough information about the election because of poor signals and lack of internet access."

Limited human and financial resources also limit the KPU's ability to reach these areas, leaving disabled voters in these areas less aware of their voting rights and how to engage in the democratic process.

Lack of Awareness and Support from Family and Social Environment

Lack of support from family and social environment also affects the participation of disabled voters. Some families may not encourage political participation of disabled people or consider the election process too complex. One family member of a disabled person said the following:

"We are not very supportive because we feel the process is complicated and not many people know how to participate."

A social environment that is less caring or does not provide information also reduces the motivation and confidence of disabled voters, preventing them from participating in elections.

Limitations of Disability-Friendly Socialization Media

The limitations of disability friendly socialization media are also an obstacle. Although the KPU has created various campaign materials, many of these materials have not been adapted to the needs of voters with disabilities, such as the blind and deaf. A blind voter expressed the following:

"The existing campaign materials do not help us much because they are not available in Braille or easily accessible audio formats."

The KPU needs to create more specific and inclusive socialization materials to ensure that all voters with disabilities get the information they need.

Overall, although the KPU has made significant efforts to increase the participation of voters with disabilities, these challenges need to be addressed immediately. Closer collaboration with disability organizations, local governments, and the community is essential to improve physical accessibility, information distribution, social support, and disability-friendly socialization media. These efforts will help ensure an inclusive democratic process and higher participation from all levels of society.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the KPU has succeeded in increasing the participation of disabled voters through the central and peripheral route approaches, in accordance with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). Central Route: This strategy focuses on in-depth information processing through direct socialization, the use of sign language and braille materials, and election simulations. These steps have succeeded in increasing the understanding and involvement of disabled voters, which ultimately motivates them to participate more actively in the election. Peripheral Route: The KPU uses community leaders who are respected by the disability community, attractive visual campaign materials, and simple slogans. Although effective in increasing attention and participation, this method is less stable in influencing long term attitude change and tends to make voters more vulnerable to manipulation. Disability Voter Participation: Disability voter participation increased by 12%, reflecting the success of the KPU's inclusive strategy. However, participation is still around 50%, indicating that there are still challenges in reaching voters in remote areas. Inhibiting Factors: The main challenges identified are physical accessibility to polling stations, lack of information in remote areas, minimal support from family and social environments, and limited disability friendly socialization media.

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