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Strengthening Digital-Based Community Political Literacy in the Prevention of Money Politics in South Bangka Regency

Annisa Nur Syafitri¹, Astika Umyy Athahirah^{2*}, Herlina³

¹Inspektorat Daerah Kabupaten Bangka Selatan

²Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri Kabupaten Sumedang

³Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Nagari Kabupaten Solok

Corresponding author: Astika Umyy Athahirah astika@ipdn.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Political Literacy, Digital-Based Community, Money Politics

Received : 4 September

Revised : 10 October

Accepted : 13 November

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ABSTRACT

The high number of money politics in 2019 in South Bangka Regency affects the increasing vulnerability of money politics during the 2024 election period. The General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) in the 2019 general election stated that South Bangka Regency is ranked in the top 20 areas prone to money politics and ranks 18th in Indonesia in the 2024 general election and the second highest money politics in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. This study aims to determine the urgency of political literacy in preventing money politics in the South Bangka Regency and to obtain an overview of efforts to strengthen people's political literacy in preventing money politics. This study used Quasi-Qualitative Design (QQD). Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data was processed using triangulation of data collection techniques. The study shows that the political literacy of the community in the prevention of money politics in South Bangka Regency is still very worrying because the lack of public knowledge related to the government structure, low interest in news and political issues, and low public understanding of money politics and its implications for democracy. Therefore, we suggest cooperation between stakeholders, especially in this digital era, is essential in increasing political literacy and preventing money politics

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, one of the countries with a democratic political system, provides opportunities for the community to be involved in the democratic process as a form of people's sovereignty. According to (Noviati, 2016), each country has differences in the implementation of democracy. The difference between the two countries is seen in the implementation of general elections, which are used as a democratic mechanism to elect people's representatives, namely the district and proportional systems. By paying attention to the provisions contained in the state foundation, the principle of people's sovereignty is implemented in two stages, namely the stage of direct implementation by the people then continued with the second stage, namely the indirect stage carried out by representative institutions.

In implementing general elections, people can determine their political choices without coercion from any party and maintain the secrecy of their political decisions. However, in reality, the general election process at the democratic party has injured the principles and values contained in the legal basis of the Indonesian State. Even the election is used as a venue for misappropriation and violations in the election process by individuals who only want power without making a real contribution to the people (Kristian Sumual et al., 2023). Elections should be held to elect state leaders who can provide solutions to the problems faced by the people, create people's trust so that they can carry out state functions and duties, and give a sense of security and peace to the people (Kristian Sumual et al., 2023).

Various implementation violations often affect elections. According to the General Election Vulnerability Index (Election et al.), four aspects of vulnerability occurred in the election stages:

security, civil servant neutrality, hate speech, the politicization of ethnicity, religion, race, and the practice of money politics. (Bawaslu, 2018) It also explained that various forms of election misappropriation and violations have been ingrained in the implementation of democratic parties, such as attacking and knocking each other down and legalizing multiple ways, such as giving money to the public to get votes in general elections, known as money politics (Salurante et al., 2022). Money politics is transactional politics. It involves giving cash, making donations of goods or necessities, and luring or promising something in exchange for political benefits (Begovic & Cuan, 2021).

Based on the data of the 2019 Election Vulnerability Index, the potential practice of money politics based on the subdimensions of campaigns, voter participation, power relations at the local level, voting implementation, election supervision, and public involvement, there are 177 districts/cities with a percentage of 34% with a high level of vulnerability and 337 districts/cities with a rate of 65.6% with a moderate level of vulnerability (Bawaslu, 2018).

The data above shows that money politics occurs in all corners of the country, and this is one of the main priorities of the General Election Supervisory Agency in reducing the vulnerability that must be carried out because the case of money politics is the most dominant case that occurs in the implementation of the 2019 elections. The rise of money politics in Indonesia is evidenced by 166 cases of money politics in the 2020 regional head election, 31 cases in the 2019 general election, and 50 cases in the 2020 general election (CNN Indonesia, 2021).

In 2019, there were reports of alleged money politics in South Bangka. South Bangka is included in the district with the highest level of money politics, ranked second in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. This is evidenced by the data on alleged reports and findings of violations in the 2019 legislative election in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province as follows:

Table 1. Data Findings and Reports on Alleged Money Politics Practices in the 2019 Legislative General Election

No	Region (Regency/city)	Report (Case)	Findings (Case)
1	Pangkal Pinang	-	-
2	West Bangka	1	-
3	South Bangka	3	1
4	Central Bangka	-	1
5	Bangka	2	3
6	Belitung	-	1
7	East Belitung	2	1
Total		8	7

Source: Bangka Belitung Islands Provincial Election Supervisory Agency, 2019

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that through data from the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), the total number of findings and reports of alleged money politics practices in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province is as many as 15 reports and findings spread across all districts/cities in Bangka Belitung. South Bangka Regency is one of the top 3 districts/cities with the most money politics findings and reports in Bangka Belitung. South Bangka ranks second in the top 3 positions with one finding and three reports of alleged money politics.

South Bangka's position as the second-highest district with the second-highest level of money politics practice in Bangka Belitung Province is based on a statement from (Sofia et al., 2023), It is also influenced by its community's social and cultural conditions, such as public education, public awareness, and critical attitudes towards unhealthy political practices, including money politics.

According to (Kelana et al., 2022), Several factors cause money politics, including people's political knowledge, which is the scope of political literacy. Literacy generally has six foundations agreed upon at the World Economic Forum: literacy, numeracy, science, digital, finance, and culture and citizenship. Thus, this community's ability to have political literacy must begin with basic literacy through sufficient education to help the community think analytically and critically about its rights in a democracy.

From this problem, the researcher is interested in finding out how the political literacy of the community in South Bangka is depicted amid many factors that hinder the government from providing political education to the community. A lack of political understanding can also cause the

rise of money politics. It will have a destructive impact on society; one of the damaging impacts is that people do not fully understand their voting rights and the importance of their votes in the democratic process. People who do not understand their voting rights may not realize they have the right to vote without accepting money or goods from a candidate and do not consider money politics a natural part of the electoral process.

Research on political literacy and money politics has been done quite a lot. Based on the results of mapping using <https://openknowledgemaps.org/>, there are several studies by (Putri, 2017b) (Pahlevi et al., 2020) (Syarifudin, 2022) (Rosit et al., 2023) (Ali Rasyid, 2023). However, the previous research above has not discussed preventing money politics through strengthening digital-based community political literacy. This research must be carried out during the onslaught of technology and digitalization. Strengthening political literacy is expected to be able to adopt the dynamics of digitalization so that it can play an influential role in preventing money politics. Therefore, this study aims to obtain an overview of efforts to prevent money politics through strengthening digital-based community political literacy in the South Bangka Regency.

METHODS

This research is based on the postpositivism paradigm with quasi-experimental design (QQD). The stages in quasi-qualitative research consist of 9 (nine) steps, as explained by (Bungin, 2020); the first stage of this study is searching for the problem. The researcher searches for the problem through discussion, observation, and journals or literature to raise the issue in this research. The second stage is conducting a literature review. In this stage, the researcher compares using literature related to the problem in the study. The third stage is the founding gap; at this stage, researchers begin to find differences theoretically and empirically.

The researcher constructs the hypothesis in the next stage, namely the fourth stage. In this fourth stage, researchers build a hypothesis to collect data in the field. Then, in the fifth step, the researcher plans data sources and constructs the data collection method. At this stage, the researcher plans the data sources that will be used to collect data, what data is needed, and the method used to collect data.

Then, the researcher collects data using data collection methods and research instruments in the sixth stage. At this stage, the researcher will also record the data transcript daily, build a theme, and categorize the data obtained, followed by the seventh stage, namely keeping a diary, transcript, coding, themes, categorization, and memos. At this stage, the researcher carried out the core process, which was also carried out using the quasi-qualitative method. This stage is critical because if there is a mistake in the process, it will interfere with the following process. The researcher could not complete the last two steps for the eighth and ninth stages because these stages involved building a theory based on novel findings.

The data collection technique used data triangulation, which includes interviews, observations, and documentation, to obtain data from the same source (Sugiyono, 2017). This research was explained by conducting direct observations and interacting directly with the National and Political Unity Agency of South Bangka Regency and the Community to ensure data accuracy and facts. The researcher used the data collection stages Straus and Glaser (1967) referred to in (Bungin, 2020). As a theoretical sampling, the data sources obtained are primary and secondary data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Political literacy, in general, is an effort to create a society with political abilities, capabilities, and skills to participate in politics critically. Thus, the community can implement adequate political capabilities in regional elections. (Sahid & Nurjaman, 2017). According to Jenni S Bev, in (Putri, 2017a), It is stated that the public urgently needs political literacy to voice political participation in government. In addition, Denver and Hans, in (Neneng, 2022), They have explained that political literacy is knowledge that provides an understanding of political issues and an experience that will help people effectively fulfil their role as citizens.

Community political literacy is the ability of the community to understand, analyze, and participate in the political process effectively. So, to prevent money politics, people must have good political literacy. People's political literacy is used as the primary basis as a preventive measure for money politics, but based on the findings and analysis of researchers through the process of direct interviews with informants in each sub-district in South Bangka Regency, the level of political

literacy of most people is still considered very lacking. This is evidenced by the fact that most people do not understand the structure of government and its functions and roles. Most people still do not know the news and current political issues. Even during the last General Election, the public did not know about the debate between presidential and vice presidential candidates, which was hotly discussed through social media and television.

A serious problem in South Bangka is that it is prone to money politics. However, most people do not know the issue of money politics in South Bangka, so when interviewed by researchers, they only answered that they did not know. Most people do not know that programs and activities are organized by the National Unity and Political Agency and the Election Supervisory Agency to reduce the money spent on politics in South Bangka. Public knowledge of political issues, news, and Campaign and Election rules is still very lacking. Although some people understand and can give opinions regarding the debate of presidential and vice presidential candidates, most are still considered incapable and lack political literacy.

The results of interviews with the people of South Bangka Regency concluded that the public's understanding and perception of the practice of money politics still varied. Although there is some level of awareness about money politics, there is still ignorance and a lack of deep understanding of the concept and its impact. Some people may have a relatively clear understanding of money politics, identifying it as an offer of money or goods to influence the outcome of an election. However, some people do not understand or even know the terms and practices of money politics. Some informants also feel that money politics is a legitimate or accepted way to gain political support,

while others consider this a form of bribery or an unethical act.

In addition, there are still people who have never experienced or witnessed the practice of money politics in their environment, which shows that the distribution of this practice may not be even undetected by everyone. From this, it can be concluded that essential tasks must be done to improve the political literacy of the people of South Bangka Regency, especially related to understanding and awareness of money politics. Further education and counselling measures are needed to provide a better understanding of the practice of money politics, its negative impact on democracy, and the importance of the role of society in preventing it. We can only build a more transparent, honest, and fair political system by increasing public awareness and active participation in the South Bangka Regency.

The main reason for money politics is the people of South Bangka Regency's low political knowledge—the low level of public education evidences this. The limited education causes most people to lack understanding of the political process and the impact of money politics, so some people are still laymen and do not have enough knowledge of the practice of money politics and its implications for democracy.

In this study, the author uses the theory. (Madhok, 2005) As an analysis tool, four elements of political literacy can be identified and measured in this theory. **The first** is the indifference and awareness of political activities and institutions' importance, authority, and role. **The second** is the ability to make an opinion and position autonomy in the political process to produce a political *outcome* (the ability to handle the political process to produce a political *outcome*). The third is knowledge about policies and planning government

budget funds for development and public services. Fourth is participation in political activities.

According to (Madhok, 2005), the four elements of political literacy are very relevant to the research context and more appropriate to answer the researcher's formulation of the problem regarding the picture of community political literacy in the prevention of money politics and obtain an overview of efforts to strengthen community political literacy in preventing money politics in South Bangka Regency.

In answering the challenges of digitalization, the researcher sees the strengthening of political literacy discussed from a digital perspective through the use of the Internet and social media, which is increasingly prevalent in Indonesia. This is because digital-based political literacy is not taboo to talk about now. Almost every home has gadgets and even more than one gadget in one house. So today, various political information is more accessible through their respective gadgets.

First, some people in South Bangka still lack awareness of the importance of political institution activities, their authority, and their role. People such as housewives who take care of household chores daily feel that political affairs do not impact their survival. Likewise, most people who work as farmers only care about the sufficiency of their daily lives rather than finding out and following the current political news/issues.

In the second aspect, the people in South Bangka can express their opinions and have autonomy in their political views. This can be seen from the ability of informants to analyze political issues, such as debates between presidential and vice presidential candidates. In addition, informants can express their opinions on voting rights to advance society, nation, and state. With the ability to analyze political issues and express opinions

through voting rights, people in South Bangka have good political literacy in the dimension of opinion ability and position autonomy.

In the third aspect, many people still do not know the policies or regulations the government has made regarding politics. This policy knowledge is undoubtedly significant for the community, especially political policy knowledge. This is because the community is the main target for prospective political leaders. With the knowledge of public policies, it is hoped that it can reduce fraud in politics, such as *money politics*. Policy knowledge is one of the indicators in the dimension of knowledge about policies and planning government budget funds for development and public services. Policy knowledge is a benchmark for the community's political literacy level. In this case, political literacy in the dimension of public policy knowledge in South Bangka is still low because there are still many people who do not know the policies that have been made by the government, even related to the regulations on budget funds used to hold political education and socialization activities, but the public does not understand.

In the fourth aspect, there is still a lack of participation of the people of South Bangka in political activities such as participating in activities and discussions. However, the community's involvement in giving their voting rights during the election was successfully carried out. However, the community still lacks political knowledge because, when making choices, people must be able to choose what kind of leader they want. Do not just choose carelessly and assume that one vote determines the future of the next 5 to 10 years. Most of the people interviewed by the researcher directly said that when they came to the polling station, they did not have a choice, so it is correct if the

researcher concludes that the people of South Bangka are not equipped with political knowledge so that they are not able to make their choice.

Based on the explanation above, various efforts are needed to improve the political literacy of the digital-based community in the prevention of money politics, some of which are: The first, routinely carry out socialization activities to prevent money politics in the community so that the National and Political Unity Agency can schedule comprehensive and structured socialization and political education programs to increase public understanding of money politics, including its impact on democracy and society. In addition, it also provides an awareness to the public about the importance of preventing money politics, including ways to identify and report on money politics practices.

The second is increasing access to digital information through accurate and trustworthy political information through literature, seminars, public discussions, or online platforms. One example is the use of poster media to socialize on the street. In this case, the National and Political Unity Agency can collaborate with the Election Supervisory Agency to create and distribute posters about the prevention of money politics that are installed in strategic places on roads or other public places to increase public awareness so that the easier it will be for the public to access political information, and the higher their level of political literacy.

The third is active socializing on social media. To prevent money politics and increase political literacy, the National and Political Unity Agency can use social media as the primary channel to disseminate information and educational campaigns about money politics. This includes creating engaging educational content and building

community engagement through digital platforms.

The last is training and workshops. The government can organize training and workshops on money politics for various community groups, including voters, youth, women, and the general public. This training can include understanding the practice of money politics, reporting violations, and understanding the importance of clean political participation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, the author concludes that, based on theoretical analysis, public political literacy in the prevention of money politics in the South Bangka Regency is still very worrying. The dimension of political literacy shows a deficiency. This is due to the public's lack of understanding of the structure of government and its role, following current news and political issues, interest in discussing current political conditions, and their lack of participation in political organization activities, political discussions, campaigns, or demonstration activities.

In this case, various efforts are needed to strengthen digital-based community political literacy, such as routinely conducting socialization activities to prevent money politics, increasing access to political information by using multiple media, namely the provision of literature, seminars, and online platforms, being active in socialization on Social Media and conducting various training and workshop activities on money politics for different community groups, including voters, youth, women, and the general public.

The author suggests that relevant stakeholders, such as the National Unity and Politics Agency of South Bangka Regency, should be able to expand the reach of anti-money political socialization on social media by utilizing the most popular platforms among the people of South

Bangka, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp or even being able to use Tiktok with various exciting content. The South Bangka Regency National and Political Unity Agency should be able to collaborate with local community leaders, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, and women leaders, to socialize in anti-money politics because they have considerable influence in their communities. The National and Political Unity Agency of South Bangka Regency should also be able to encourage the active participation of civil society organizations, such as youth groups, farmer organizations, and women's communities, in disseminating information and educating the public about the dangers of money politics.

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