

Counseling on Strengthening Human Resources of Bawaslu Merangin Regency

Penyuluhan Penguatan Sumber Daya Manusia Bawaslu Kabupaten Merangin

¹ Salman

² Fuji Cantika

³ Fitri Handayani

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Law, Universitas Merangin

Email Correspondence: salmansayuti85@gmail.com

*Correspondence Writer

ARTICLE INFO:

Article History:

Received: December 15, 2024

Revised: January 03, 2025

Published: January 24, 2025

Keywords:

Counseling;

Election Supervision;

Ethics and Integrity.

Kata Kunci:

Penyuluhan;

Pengawasan Pemilu;

Etika dan Integritas.

Abstract:

Effective election supervision is crucial in ensuring honest, fair, and transparent elections. This study aims to improve the election supervisors' skills in Merangin Regency through counseling, simulations, and hands-on practice, as well as strengthening the ethics and integrity of supervisors in carrying out their duties. The method used in this community service is the provision of theoretical materials followed by election supervision simulations that depict various stages of the election process. Participants are also trained to understand the importance of maintaining ethics and integrity in every action they take. The results of this service show that simulations and hands-on practice enhance the technical skills of supervisors, while strengthening ethics and integrity bolsters supervisors' commitment to a fraud-free election. It is hoped that this activity can improve the quality of election supervision in Merangin Regency and create more credible and trusted elections in the community.

Abstrak:

Pengawasan pemilu yang efektif sangat penting untuk menciptakan pemilu yang jujur, adil, dan transparan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan pengawas pemilu di Kabupaten Merangin melalui penyuluhan, simulasi, dan praktik langsung serta memperkuat etika dan integritas pengawas dalam menjalankan tugasnya. Metode yang digunakan dalam pengabdian ini adalah pemberian materi teoritis yang dilanjutkan dengan simulasi pengawasan yang menggambarkan berbagai tahapan pemilu. Selain itu, peserta juga dilatih untuk memahami pentingnya menjaga etika dan integritas dalam setiap tindakan mereka. Hasil pengabdian ini menunjukkan bahwa simulasi dan praktik langsung dapat meningkatkan keterampilan teknis pengawas, sedangkan penguatan etika dan integritas dapat memperkuat komitmen pengawas terhadap pemilu yang bebas dari kecurangan. Diharapkan, kegiatan ini dapat meningkatkan kualitas pengawasan pemilu di Kabupaten Merangin serta menciptakan pemilu yang lebih kredibel dan dipercaya oleh masyarakat.



INTRODUCTION

Elections are one of the main pillars in the democratic system that function to provide legitimacy to the elected government. In the implementation of honest, fair, and transparent elections, the role of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) is very vital (Satria, 2023). Bawaslu is responsible for ensuring that the election runs without fraud and abuse of authority, as well as maintaining voters' rights so that they are well protected (Afifudin, 2020). In Merangin Regency, as in other regions, effective supervision of elections is highly dependent on the quality of human resources (HR) owned by Bawaslu. Therefore, strengthening the human resources of the Merangin Regency Bawaslu is very important so that this institution can carry out its duties and functions optimally. Structured and sustainable counseling and training will be a strategic step to improve the competence, integrity, and performance of election supervisors in the region.

In recent years, the holding of simultaneous regional elections has become a big challenge for election organizers, especially for Bawaslu who has a great responsibility in supervising the course of elections by maintaining independence, professionalism, and accountability (Fauziah, 2023). This simultaneous election requires Bawaslu to monitor various aspects at once, ranging from voter verification, campaign supervision, voting supervision, to the preparation of vote recapitulation (Aermadepa, 2024). Given the existing complexity, strengthening the capacity of human resources in the Merangin Regency Bawaslu is an urgent thing to do. Election supervisors in this area need to be equipped with knowledge, skills, and broader insight into election regulations and information technology that is growing rapidly.

One of the efforts that can be made to strengthen Bawaslu's human resources is through counseling activities. Counseling can provide a deeper understanding of the duties and obligations of Bawaslu in carrying out its supervisory function, as well as increase awareness of the importance of professional and independent supervision in order to create clean and democratic elections (Syafarani, 2024). With counseling, Bawaslu members in Merangin Regency are expected to gain comprehensive knowledge about the election process that must be supervised, as well as effective and efficient supervision techniques. This extension activity also needs to be adjusted to the local context, taking into account the geographical, demographic, and social conditions of the local community.

Counseling focused on strengthening the human resources of the Merangin Regency Bawaslu will equip supervisors with skills in managing election data and information, as well as the ability to identify potential violations in each stage of the election. In addition, this counseling also aims to improve the ability of supervisors to communicate with the public, both in providing information related to the election process and in reporting findings of election violations to the authorities. Therefore, this counseling activity is not only focused on increasing the technical capacity of election supervision, but also on strengthening integrity and ethics aspects in carrying out their duties as professional and responsible election supervisors.

The active involvement of the community in election supervision is also very important. Therefore, this counseling will also involve the wider community as part of a participatory supervision system that can help strengthen the function of

Bawaslu in preventing and supervising election violations. People who are well educated about their rights and obligations in elections can help identify potential violations that may occur and report them to Bawaslu for follow-up. Supervision based on community participation will improve the quality of elections, as well as provide a sense of security and trust to the public that elections are carried out honestly and fairly.

Another challenge faced by the Merangin Regency Bawaslu is the limited resources in terms of adequate budget, facilities, and technology to support maximum supervision. In this case, the counseling carried out is also expected to open up the insights of supervisors on how to utilize information and communication technology (ICT) to support more effective and efficient election supervision. The use of ICT-based applications can help in the collection, processing, and analysis of election data, as well as accelerate the reporting of findings of violations that occur in the field. Therefore, counseling on the use of technology in election supervision is an inseparable part of efforts to strengthen Bawaslu's human resources.

It is also necessary to have a capacity building strategy that not only focuses on technical aspects, but also on the mental aspects and work ethics of election supervisors. Professional supervisors must have a high commitment to integrity, honesty, and transparency in carrying out their duties (Alaydrus, 2023). Strengthening the character and work ethics of election supervisors needs to be an important part of this counseling activity. That way, the supervisors of the Merangin Regency Bawaslu will not only be technically skilled, but will also have a high moral commitment to maintain the quality of the elections held.

The implementation of this counseling also needs to be supported by good cooperation between the Merangin Regency Bawaslu, related government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in election supervision. This collaboration will open up space for sharing knowledge and experience, as well as strengthen the monitoring network involving various parties. That way, the strengthening of Bawaslu's human resources will be maximized and election supervision will be more transparent, accountable, and free from political intervention (Fahriza, 2019).

This counseling activity is also very relevant to efforts to improve the quality of democracy in Merangin Regency. Good democracy requires elections that are free from fraud, manipulation, and other violations. By strengthening competent, transparent, and independent Bawaslu human resources, it is hoped that more quality elections will be created and can provide results in accordance with the will of the people. Therefore, strengthening Bawaslu human resources in Merangin Regency is not only a matter of increasing the capacity of election supervisors, but also directly contributing to the development of a better and sustainable democracy in the area.

Through this counseling, it is hoped that synergy can be created between Bawaslu, the community, and all related parties in maintaining the quality of transparent and accountable elections in Merangin Regency. Strengthening Bawaslu's human resources will have a positive impact on the implementation of future elections, which will increasingly involve community participation and maintain the quality of democracy in Merangin Regency as a whole.

METHOD

The service method that will be applied in this activity is a participatory and community-based counseling approach (Rosadi, 2022). This counseling will be carried out by involving members of the Merangin Regency Bawaslu directly in each stage of the activity. The first step is to identify needs through surveys and interviews with Bawaslu members to find out areas that need strengthening, both in terms of knowledge and skills. This aims to design counseling materials that are relevant and in accordance with the conditions and challenges faced by Bawaslu in carrying out their duties. Through this approach, it is hoped that the material presented can be more focused and provide maximum benefits for participants.

The next stage is the preparation of an extension module consisting of various important topics around election supervision, including applicable regulations, effective supervision techniques, and the use of information technology in supervision. This module also includes aspects of strengthening the integrity and work ethics of election supervisors, which is an important factor in maintaining the credibility of Bawaslu. Counseling will be carried out by lecture methods, interactive discussions, and case studies that actively involve participants. Thus, participants not only receive information, but are also involved in the learning process that can enrich their understanding of quality election supervision.

At the implementation stage, counseling will be carried out through a series of sessions divided into several days or weeks, depending on the needs and schedule agreed with the Merangin Regency Bawaslu. Each session will be focused on a specific topic, starting with an introduction to the electoral system, to more specific surveillance techniques such as monitoring campaigns, voting, and vote counting. Participants will also be invited to understand the various challenges that often arise in election supervision and how to overcome them with the right approach. In this case, the extension method will rely heavily on discussions and case studies that describe real situations in the field.

To ensure maximum participant involvement, each counseling session will be equipped with simulations and hands-on practice regarding supervisory tasks that must be carried out in each stage of the election. This simulation aims to allow participants to experience firsthand the challenges faced in election supervision and how to identify and follow up on violations. The use of this simulation is expected to provide a more concrete experience for participants in facing the actual election situation. With this approach, it is hoped that election supervisors can increase their confidence and ability to carry out their duties more effectively.

This service method also includes the use of information technology to support the counseling process and make it easier for participants to access the material that has been delivered. This technology-based learning will involve the use of web-based applications and specialized software designed to assist supervisors in monitoring and reporting potential election violations. In addition, counseling materials will also be available in digital form so that participants can relearn them at any time after the activity is over. The use of this technology aims to increase efficiency in supervision, as well as introduce supervisors to technological developments that can support the implementation of their duties.

Evaluation is carried out at each stage of the activity to measure the extent to which participants' knowledge and skills have improved after participating in counseling. This evaluation will be carried out through written exams, group discussions, and assessments of participants' ability to conduct supervision

simulations. The results of this evaluation will be used as a basis for compiling recommendations for improving the quality of human resources of the Merangin Regency Bawaslu in the next service activity. In this way, the service method not only aims to provide knowledge, but also to ensure the sustainability and improvement of the quality of election supervision in the area.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Improving Election Supervision Skills through Simulation and Direct Practice

Improving election supervision skills is one of the important aspects of this service, especially considering that skilled and professional election supervisors will be at the forefront of maintaining the quality of democracy. Honest, fair, and transparent elections do not only depend on existing rules, but also on the quality of supervision carried out (Chandra, 2024). Election supervisors who have qualified skills can detect potential violations faster, as well as ensure that every stage of the election runs smoothly without any fraud (Chandra, 2020). Therefore, it is important to provide training that is not only theoretical, but also practical so that election supervisors have adequate skills to face various challenges in the field (Ratama, 2023).

In this service activity, simulation and hands-on practice are very effective methods to improve the skills of election supervisors. Through simulations, participants can experience firsthand what it is like to be involved in situations that may occur during the election, such as surveillance of campaigns, voting, or the vote counting process. This activity allows participants to learn how to conduct careful supervision, as well as identify potential violations that can occur in each stage of the election. In this way, election supervisors in Merangin Regency not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience that can be directly applied in their daily tasks.

This surveillance simulation is designed to describe various conditions that may occur in the field, both in situations that are running smoothly and when problems occur. For example, in campaign supervision, participants can be taught to monitor the implementation of campaigns in accordance with the rules, as well as how to follow up on reports of violations related to the campaign. Similarly, in the voting stage, simulations can depict situations where there is potential for fraud or violations, such as the practice of money politics, double voting, or intimidation. By facing various situations like this in the simulation, participants are expected to train themselves to think critically and act quickly when facing similar problems in the real world. In addition, the simulation also provides an opportunity for participants to practice making the right and quick decisions in sometimes urgent conditions. Election supervisors are often faced with situations that require instant decisions, and wrong decisions can potentially damage the integrity of the election itself. In the simulation, participants are trained to recognize violations quickly and take appropriate action without hesitation. By practicing in simulated situations frequently, election supervisors will be more confident and trained in making the right decisions on the ground, which in turn can prevent potential violations that can damage the course of the election.

The importance of this simulation also lies in its ability to create a hands-on experience that enriches the participants' understanding. The theoretical knowledge gained in lecture and discussion sessions will be easier to apply if followed by practical experience that hones skills in handling real situations. Hands-on

experience through simulation will provide deeper insights into how to overcome obstacles that arise during the election monitoring process. In each simulation, participants will be faced with various scenarios that force them to think creatively and adapt to existing situations.

The simulation also allows participants to collaborate with fellow election supervisors in teams. Election supervision often involves cooperation between many parties, both between Bawaslu members, election organizers, and the community. By working in teams during the simulation, participants can learn how to communicate effectively and work together to achieve a common goal, which is to create clean and legitimate elections. Skills in working in this team are indispensable because election supervision is a collective effort that requires synergy between various parties to detect and follow up on any violations that occur. After participating in this series of simulations, participants are expected to not only have a deeper knowledge of the stages of the election, but also practical skills that they can apply directly during election supervision. The simulations carried out during the counseling will equip supervisors with more mature readiness to face field challenges. When they actually get into the field, they are already familiar with the various situations that may arise and have the experience to handle problems well. This will certainly improve the quality of supervision carried out by the Merangin Regency Bawaslu.

Participants will also be given the opportunity to evaluate their performance during the simulation. This evaluation will include important aspects such as accuracy in detecting violations, the ability to make the right decisions, and the ability to work in a team. Through evaluation, participants can find out their strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas that need improvement. This evaluation process provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on themselves and improve their performance in real election supervision. Simulations and hands-on practice also facilitate highly effective experiential learning. By conducting simulations repeatedly, participants can learn from the mistakes and improvements made in each session, so that they are more skilled and confident in facing supervisory tasks in the field. The experience gained in this simulation is also a teaching material for inexperienced election supervisors, who can learn a lot from senior supervisors who are already experienced in handling certain situations.

Overall, this simulation method aims to improve election supervision skills in the Merangin Regency Bawaslu by providing a more concrete and applicable experience for the participants. With skills honed through simulation, election supervisors will be better prepared and more responsive in dealing with election violations that may occur in the field. This is expected to result in cleaner, more transparent, and more credible elections in Merangin Regency.

Simulations and direct practice in this counseling also serve as a means to test the extent of participants' understanding of the material that has been delivered. With the direct experience they gain, participants will better understand how to carry out election supervision duties correctly. This experience will of course provide very useful provisions in improving the quality of supervision carried out by the Merangin Regency Bawaslu in the future, as well as strengthening the integrity and trust of the community in the democratic process in the area.

Strengthening the Ethics and Integrity of Election Supervisors to Realize Honest and Fair Elections

Strengthening the ethics and integrity of election supervisors is a key factor in creating clean, honest, and fair elections. Without a supervisor with high integrity and clear ethical standards, the implementation of elections can become vulnerable to practices that undermine democracy, such as fraud, money politics, or abuse of power (Arqon, 2024). Election supervisors who maintain integrity will act objectively, impartially, and prioritize the interests of the people and the state. Therefore, one of the important goals in this service is to strengthen the character of election supervisors through training and counseling that emphasizes the importance of maintaining ethics in the implementation of their duties.

The process of strengthening ethics and integrity is carried out by providing election supervisors with a deep understanding of their duties and moral responsibilities. They must realize that every action and decision taken can affect the outcome of the election and create a much greater impact on democracy. Counseling on supervisory ethics will include an understanding of independence in acting, not being influenced by any party, and maintaining professionalism in each stage of the election. Supervisors who have a strong understanding of ethics will be better able to maintain their objectivity and independence, as well as avoid temptations that can damage the credibility of elections (Dahri, 2023).

One of the aspects emphasized in strengthening ethics is the avoidance of conflicts of interest (Matin, 2024). Election supervisors must have full awareness that they must not have relationships or affiliations with interested parties in the election, be it legislative candidates, regional head candidates, or other parties who have the potential to have personal interests. Good supervision can only be created if supervisors act neutrally, impartially, and avoid any form of potential bias that could influence their decisions. Therefore, training and counseling will also focus on identifying and handling conflicts of interest so that election supervisors can operate fairly and honestly.

Strengthening integrity also teaches election supervisors about the importance of transparency in every stage of the election. Election supervisors who have high integrity will always prioritize information disclosure to the public, provide honest reports, and are willing to face questions or criticism from the public regarding the supervision process carried out. This transparency is very important to maintain public trust in the implementation of elections, so that people feel that the democratic process is carried out with full justice and honesty. Therefore, integrity strengthening training will include how to maintain open communication with the community as well as provide a clear explanation of each step taken during the monitoring process. In addition, strengthening ethics and integrity also includes debriefing on how to deal with pressures or temptations that may arise during the supervision process. Election supervisors are often in stressful situations, both from interested election participants and from other political or social pressures. In situations like these, supervisors must be able to maintain a professional and ethical attitude, not easily tempted to commit violations or accept offers that could damage their integrity. Counseling will provide skills to deal with this pressure in a wise way, as well as provide moral support so that supervisors remain steadfast in the principles of ethics and integrity they have learned.

Strengthening ethics and integrity is also related to increasing supervisors' awareness of the importance of keeping confidential the information they obtain

during supervision. In many cases, election supervisors will have access to highly sensitive information, such as voter data, campaign information, or even findings of violations that are being addressed. Therefore, it is very important for the supervisor to maintain the confidentiality of such information and only disclose it in accordance with applicable procedures. The training will provide knowledge on how to protect confidential information and avoid data misuse that can harm certain parties.

One way to strengthen the integrity of election supervisors is to provide a real example of successful and quality election supervision. In this training, supervisors will be taught to understand how supervision carried out with high ethics can contribute to the creation of elections that are free from fraud and manipulation. The counseling will include case studies and discussions on how transparent and honest supervision can strengthen the democratic system and increase public confidence in the election results. By understanding the positive impact of quality supervision, it is hoped that supervisors will be more motivated to maintain their integrity during their duties.

Strengthening integrity also includes the importance of self-supervision. Every election supervisor needs to have a disciplined attitude and responsibility for the work carried out. They must be ready to receive evaluation and criticism of their performance, and be willing to make improvements if deficiencies are found in the implementation of their duties. Supervisors with high integrity are those who not only maintain the quality of supervision in the field, but also constantly strive for improvement in the way they work. This counseling will involve participants in self-reflection, where they are invited to identify the values that are important to them in carrying out their duties as election supervisors.

In this training, the importance of maintaining good relationships with peers and other related parties will also be emphasized. Election supervisors who have high integrity must be able to work well in the team, maintain honest communication, and respect the opinions and views of others. Good cooperation will strengthen the effectiveness of supervision, because election supervision is not a task that is carried out individually, but requires coordination between various parties involved. Supervisors with integrity will always maintain the harmony of the working relationship, and ensure that every decision taken is the result of careful discussion and consideration.

It is also important to provide internal supervision in order to strengthen the integrity of election supervisors. In this service, participants will be taught about internal supervision mechanisms that can be used to ensure that each supervisor operates in accordance with the ethical and integrity standards that have been set. This internal oversight not only aims to identify violations or non-compliance with the code of conduct, but also to encourage each supervisor to be more accountable to his or her duties. With the existence of internal supervision, it is hoped that the quality of supervision will increase and its integrity will be more guaranteed.

Strengthening the ethics and integrity of election supervisors in Merangin Regency is expected to be the foundation for realizing clean, honest, and fair elections. Every supervisor who understands and practices ethical principles in their supervisory duties will contribute to the creation of a more transparent and trustworthy electoral system (Suntara, 2024). Therefore, it is important for every supervisor to continue to strengthen ethical values and integrity in every step they take, so that the elections held are not only legally valid, but also legitimate in the

eyes of the public, which in turn will increase public participation in the democratic process.

Strengthening ethics and integrity also has a long-term impact on the reputation of the election supervisory institution itself. When election supervisors in Merangin Regency carry out their duties with full integrity, they not only maintain the credibility of the election, but also strengthen public trust in Bawaslu as an independent and professional institution. By improving the quality of the surveillance carried out, people will feel safer and confident that their voting rights are respected and protected. This will encourage active participation of citizens in every election process, thereby strengthening the quality of democracy and accelerating more inclusive and sustainable socio-political development.

CONCLUSION

Improving election supervision skills through simulation and direct practice as well as strengthening the ethics and integrity of election supervisors is an important step in ensuring the creation of honest, fair, and transparent elections. The simulations provided real experience for election supervisors to identify potential violations and handle situations on the ground quickly and appropriately. On the other hand, strengthening the ethics and integrity of election supervisors ensures that they can carry out their duties with independence, transparency, and without being influenced by pressure or temptation, ultimately contributing to the creation of credible and trusted elections by the public. With strong skills and ethics, election supervisors in Merangin Regency are expected to be more effective in carrying out their roles, ensuring that each stage of the election runs well and in accordance with applicable rules. Strengthening technical competence and integrity not only improves the quality of supervision, but also strengthens public trust in the democratic process. As a result, this service has a positive impact on more transparent, fair, and clean elections, which will strengthen the foundations of democracy in Merangin Regency and in Indonesia as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all parties who have supported and participated in this service activity, especially to the Merangin Regency Bawaslu who has provided full opportunity and support to carry out this program. Thank you also to the election supervisors who have been enthusiastic about participating in every counseling, simulation, and hands-on practice session. The success of this activity is inseparable from the good cooperation between the organizers, participants, and all related parties. Hopefully, the results of this service can provide great benefits in improving the quality of election supervision and creating more honest, fair, and transparent elections in Merangin Regency.

CONFLICT INTEREST

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in the implementation and writing of this article.

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