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Disaster Communication and Civic Voluntarism during COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of Bandung

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Abstract: *This research examined communication strategies in increasing volunteer participation and communication methods in improving disaster communication skills. This research also identified challenges and obstacles in implementing civic voluntarism in the city of Bandung. This research used a qualitative method with a case study approach at the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Service. Data was collected through interviews, documents, observations and literature studies. The research results show that the people of Bandung City have a movement based on civic voluntarism in dealing with Covid 19. Technical guidance is used to encourage civic voluntarism. Technical guidance is used to train skilled volunteers in carrying out disaster communications. By having knowledge, reliability and communication skills, volunteers become one of the strengths of disaster communication in the city of Bandung. There are three main obstacles in its implementation, namely differences in education level, motivation and time availability among volunteers.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi komunikasi dalam meningkatkan partisipasi relawan dan metode komunikasi dalam peningkatan keterampilan komunikasi kebencanaan. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi tantangan dan hambatan dalam implementasi *civic voluntarism* di Kota Bandung. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus pada Dinas Kebakaran dan Penanggulangan Bencana Kota Bandung. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, dokumen, observasi, dan studi pustaka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan masyarakat Kota Bandung memiliki gerakan berbasis *civic voluntarism* dalam menanggulangi Covid 19. Bimbingan teknis digunakan untuk mendorong *civic voluntarism*. Bimbingan teknis digunakan untuk melatih relawan terampil dalam menjalankan komunikasi kebencanaan. Dengan memiliki pengetahuan, kehandalan, dan kecakapan komunikasi, relawan menjadi salah satu kekuatan komunikasi bencana di Kota Bandung. Ada tiga kendala utama dalam implementasinya, yakni perbedaan tingkat pendidikan, motivasi, dan ketersediaan waktu di antara volunter.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia holds the distinction of having the highest number of volunteers globally, according to figures released by the Gallup Institute for Statistics. This conclusion was drawn from a survey encompassing over 150,000 respondents across 146 countries in the year 2017. It was reported that Indonesia contributes the largest share to the global volunteer workforce, with a significant 53% of all volunteers worldwide originating from the country (Aditya, 2019). This rate is unparalleled globally, surpassing other populous nations such as the United States, where the volunteer rate stands at 39%, and China, at 7%. Trailing behind Indonesia, Liberia boasts a volunteer rate of 47%, followed closely by Kenya and Sri Lanka, each with 45%, and Australia at 40% (Aditya, 2019). In a survey that encompassed 13 countries, Laos was noted to have the lowest volunteer rate at 4% (Pablo, 2019).

Bandung stands out not only as a city celebrated for its creativity but also for its commitment to fostering the collaborative spirit among its diverse communities. This commitment was initiated by Ridwan Kamil and Viki Satari in 2008. The data and activities underscore the pivotal role of community volunteerism in Bandung, particularly in reinforcing the fabric of its local communities. This aspect has been especially crucial during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting the significance of volunteer efforts in responding to communal challenges (Sapriya et al., 2021). During the Covid-19 pandemic 4 years ago, society faced many challenges and difficulties (Costa et al., 2021). Bandung City, located in West Java, Indonesia, stands as a testament to the need for concerted efforts and active engagement from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, encompassing government bodies, non-profit entities, and private individuals (Miao et al., 2021).

As we transition into the endemic phase, the momentum behind movements grounded in community volunteerism appears to have diminished. This observation suggests that the vigor for widespread community engagement tends to manifest predominantly during periods of crisis (D'Alisa et al., 2015). Nonetheless, community participation, including volunteerism, remains indispensable for sustaining development and fostering stability in societal dynamics by actively engaging community members (Jun & Bryer, 2017). In this context, community volunteerism assumes a pivotal role in advancing developmental agendas and ensuring social cohesion and stability (Schmidt, 2019). Furthermore, community participation facilitates more informed decision-making processes, ensuring comprehensive consideration of the diverse needs and aspirations of all community constituents, thereby enhancing the collective sense of ownership and responsibility within the community (Kassahun, 2011).

One of the obstacles to the existence of volunteers in the city of Bandung is the difficulty in processing messages effectively during disaster communication contexts, thus making disaster communication equally important alongside the existence of community volunteering, to be understood and comprehended by the volunteers (Reimer et al., 2013). Competent volunteer manpower is required to gather data and information accurately so that the conveyed information is accurate and integrated, ensuring the reliability of information for decision-making during disasters (Nugroho & Sulistyorini, n.d.). With effective disaster communication quality, volunteers can also serve as a communication bridge between the community and other stakeholders including the government (Rattien, 1990). The lack of understanding regarding

disaster communication among these volunteers presents its own challenge and becomes a significant issue that could potentially escalate the danger in such situations (Gerstmann et al., 2019).

Reflecting on the past COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the city of Bandung successfully initiated a movement involving various sectors in Bandung under the name "Bandung Emancipation Movement from Covid-19". This Movement fostered community volunteerism across different segments of Bandung society with a spirit of enhancing communication, coordination, and synergy with the government. During the previous COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Bandung initiated this movement which involved various stakeholders and layers of society ranging from academics, religious leaders, and local celebrities to ordinary citizens such as online motorcycle taxi drivers. During the pandemic, this movement garnered appreciation and collectively raised funds that were then distributed to other needy communities in Bandung. These activities were conducted online, including religious gatherings (*istighozah*) and online performances by local artists, conveying a message to all layers of society to actively participate in the 8M initiative (5M + 3M) = Willing to be Vaccinated, Assisting Others or Solidarity, and Strengthening through Prayers. This community volunteerism is characterized by responsibility for what is received and fostering solidarity among individuals (Perdana, 2021). In this context, during the endemic period, the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency (DAMKAR) reactivated its volunteers to resume activities and reignite their enthusiasm to serve as volunteers in Bandung, particularly in disaster contexts, in accordance with the government's directive through the Minister of Home Affairs Decision regarding DAMKAR volunteers, one of which is to cultivate and revitalize volunteers down to the grassroots level in Bandung. Bandung City itself comprises 30 districts and 151 sub-districts covering an area of 16,729.65 hectares.

With the vast area and numerous districts and sub-districts in Bandung City, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency of Bandung City initiated technical guidance sessions for volunteers in the city. These guidance sessions were conducted over a period of two weeks, focusing on three themes corresponding to the three teams mandated in the Minister of Home Affairs Decision: fire rescue team, education team, and communication and information team. Each team received technical guidance on various aspects of fire disaster management, including prevention, response during disasters and fires, and post-fire disaster procedures. Specifically, the communication and education teams were tasked with disseminating fire prevention information, as well as coordinating and communicating with various stakeholders involved in prevention and mitigation efforts within the community, including compiling incident reports and rescue efforts.

The Disaster Management Law No. 24 of 2007 states that the primary step in reducing risk is through mitigation, which includes education and training. In the context of disaster communication, the focus is on communication issues, coordination, and cooperation among stakeholders, enabling volunteers to be at the forefront before official responders arrive at the scene. Additionally, volunteers can serve as a communication bridge between the community and the government.

Equipped with effective communication skills from data collection, processing, to distribution, volunteers are proven to have significant contribution in disaster management (Fyfe & Milligan, 2003). Civil volunteerism can contribute to community resilience and empowerment

by fostering unity, solidarity, and mutual support (Sapriya et al., 2021). Volunteers can play a crucial role in providing essential services and support to vulnerable individuals and groups in society (Grimm & Saulnier, 2021). Through civil volunteerism, community members can actively participate in decision-making processes, collaborate with stakeholders, and contribute to policy development and implementation (Muchlashin & Suyatno, 2020).

Several previous studies have highlighted that communication, information, coordination, and cooperation pose significant challenges, particularly when involving both the government and the community. According to Fardiah et al. (2024), digital communication in disaster communication in West Java is conducted through the establishment of the West Java Data Ecosystem, interactive public services via the "SAPAWARGA" website and application. This indicates the utilization of digital communication systems in disaster communication in West Java.

Another study by Hilmi Aziz (2023) indicates that disaster communication plays a significant and influential role in disaster risk prevention. From a mitigation perspective, disaster communication tasks can include providing rules and guidelines to the community. Another perspective interprets it as a journey of life. In terms of benefits, disaster communication has several aspects that can comprehensively reach society, including the ability to change attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and community values (K & Uman, 2019).

Another study suggests that communication during disasters is crucial for building public trust and preventing mass hysteria. The use of communication media itself can cause panic, necessitating prompt and appropriate public education to reduce panic. Understanding of disasters can be obtained through disaster communication. Therefore, swift action is needed to preserve and manage how society can embody its cultural values. Disaster communication through media also ensures that society shares and consumes information with the same perspective. Disaster communication is carried out before, during, and after disasters to ensure the success of the recovery process. There is a strong interdependence between them. A crucial strategy to reduce panic is to stabilize public expectations and transform uncertainty into stable expectations, for instance, through disaster communication (Abidin & Abidin, 2021).

Various disasters that have occurred in Indonesia have taught us the importance of disaster management. Organizationally, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) serves as the main command center for disaster management. However, various issues still arise in disaster management, especially in communication, coordination, and cooperation. Effective disaster management requires an appropriate approach, namely a systematic approach that assists in the integrated and synergistic navigation of post-disaster recovery processes among institutions and community components. When involving diverse institutions or community elements, the approach must be based on humanitarian principles (H, 2021).

Another study regarding the importance of civic voluntarism's role in disaster communication indicates an increasing trend in the utilization of volunteer crowdsourcing for disaster risk reduction from 2006 to 2018. This study recommends that the use of crowdsourcing systems by volunteers in implementation will support policymakers and disaster risk managers in making more accurate decisions before, during, and after disasters, ultimately contributing to risk reduction (Kankanamge et al., 2019).

To foster volunteer participation levels, communication strategies conducted by policymakers, in this case, the government, are also needed to cultivate volunteer enthusiasm for mitigation activities. Strategies are a series of plans aimed at achieving specific goals, in this case, aiming to foster volunteer participation (Fatmawati, 2021). Meanwhile, another study shows a review indicating that most methods for involving communities in disaster communication have proven to be effective in enhancing preparedness to a certain extent. The failure of some techniques is associated not with the fundamental problem or concept of the technique, but with the lack of comparative studies, contexts, and the capabilities of individuals executing the tasks. Direct interactions consistently yield more positive results than mass media campaigns. However, each reported intervention has its own degree of success, even though each of them experiences failures. Efforts by institutions to activate community involvement in disaster preparedness should include a variety of supporting techniques to change behavior, including direct involvement that can trigger and support readiness initiatives undertaken by the community itself (Ryan et al., 2020). Another study highlights the need to encourage citizen participation to enhance the reliability and accuracy of geographical information by volunteers. Overall, these studies emphasize the importance of volunteer participation in disaster communication and the need for effective strategies to optimize their potential (Waldman et al., 2018). This research conducted an in-depth analysis of the communication strategies used by Bandung City DAMKAR volunteers and the challenges they face in implementing civilian volunteering, while previous studies tend to provide an overview of the importance of disaster communication without a specific focus on volunteers' communication skills.

Like the aforementioned studies, the role of civic voluntarism can be a strength in the effectiveness of disaster communication provided that these volunteers have the capability and skills for effective disaster communication. Volunteers must act as gatekeepers for effective messages to be conveyed to all stakeholders. In this regard, there is still limited research on the communication skills possessed by civic voluntarism as a strength in disaster communication. These volunteers will be the communicators in delivering disaster communication messages. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and examine the importance of disaster communication skills possessed by Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency (DAMKAR) volunteers in carrying out communication, coordination, and cooperation roles with related stakeholders in Bandung City. Some aspects to be examined were communication strategies to enhance volunteer participation and communication methods in improving disaster communication skills, as well as identifying challenges and obstacles in the implementation of civic voluntarism in Bandung City.

METHOD

The subject of this research is the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency as the entity responsible for forming Volunteer Teams and providing training and technical guidance to the REDKAR volunteers in Bandung City. The research informants are the leaders of the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency, volunteers, and instructors involved in providing training to the volunteers. This research employs a qualitative method, which involves the exploration and understanding of individual and group

behaviors, as well as depicting social or humanitarian issues. Additionally, qualitative methods are utilized to obtain genuine insights into the experiences of individuals involved (Creswell, 2018). Meanwhile, the approach adopted is a case study. This approach was chosen as it constitutes a series of intensive, detailed, and in-depth scientific research activities regarding specific programs, events, or activities, whether undertaken by individuals, a group of people, institutions, or organizations (Yin, 2018).

Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the Secretary of the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency, the Project Coordinator, Instructors, and several volunteers as supporting informants. For observations, the researchers directly visited the research site during the two-week technical guidance sessions. Observations were conducted by directly observing the ongoing activities through non-participant observation. Documentation was also gathered as secondary data, such as internet data searches related to information about DAMKAR volunteers.

Subsequently, the collected data were analyzed and presented in a meaningful manner. The analysis is based on theory, consensus assessment, and data analysis involving several steps of data reduction and display (AS & Rustandi, 2022). Furthermore, data validity was ensured through triangulation, as an effort to verify and ensure the accuracy of information (Fardiah et al., 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency has the primary obligation of providing basic services, namely rescue and evacuation services for fire victims, requiring all fire victims and/or affected members of the community to be serviced within a response time of 15 minutes. Following up on this obligation, the local government acknowledges that the Minimum Service Standards in the form of protection have limitations, as stipulated in the Minister of Home Affairs Decision Number 364.1-306 Year 2020 regarding guidelines for the development of fire brigade volunteers (*Keputusan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 364.1-306 Tahun 2020*).

Guided by the aforementioned Minister of Home Affairs Decision, which is relevant to the condition of volunteers in Bandung city, particularly post the Covid-19 pandemic where volunteers in Bandung seem to be dormant due to lack of motivation, the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency has devised a strategy to reinvigorate volunteer teams down to the grassroots level to revive the presence of volunteers in Bandung. Furthermore, reliability and proficiency in disaster communication are also required for volunteers as this is an essential aspect that volunteers need to possess enabling them to effectively reduce disaster risks (Kankanamge et al., 2019). Through technical guidance, volunteers can be systematically documented, facilitating the dissemination of information and instructions and controlling all actions related to potential disasters and disasters that occur, ranging from mitigation to post-disaster management.

Communication Strategy In Fostering Volunteer Participation

The existence of volunteers was strongly felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by data showing that Indonesia ranked first in the number of volunteers, accounting for 53% of the world's total population or approximately 7.6 billion volunteers according to statistics published by the Gallup Institute. However, after the pandemic, the presence

of volunteers, especially in Bandung city, diminished. The first attempt made by the government to restore public awareness was through the Minister of Home Affairs' decision regarding disaster management, particularly fire disasters, which is a shared responsibility between the government and the community. Through this ministerial decision, the government also acknowledged that the type of basic service to be provided is evacuation and rescue services within a 15-minute response time, as stipulated in Government Regulation Number 2 of 2018 concerning minimum service standards, which was subsequently followed up by the *Regulation of Ministry of Internal Affairs Number 114 Year 2018*.

Based on these considerations, the Bandung City Government, through the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, fully realized the importance of the existence of volunteers down to the grassroots level. Reflecting on the experience during the pandemic, Bandung city residents have demonstrated tolerance and empathy, as evidenced by the massive community movement called the *Bandung Merdeka dari Covid* (Bandung Free from Covid) movement, which generated participation from various sectors. The lack of participation during the endemic period needs to be accommodated, facilitated, and provided with guidance to rekindle community participation as a source of volunteers.

In an effort to increase participation, the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency initiated technical guidance for volunteers to provide training and workshops, enabling them to become responsive and well-trained volunteers capable of handling disaster mitigation and post-disaster management. The results of this effort can turn them into effective partners for government firefighters. To achieve this, a strategy was devised by the Bandung City

Fire and Disaster Management Agency to foster volunteer participation.

The strategy is based on goal-setting, aimed at fostering volunteer participation in the Bandung city community, followed by planning. Planning is crucial in determining the strategy to achieve a goal (Fatmawati, 2021). Based on an interview with the Head of the Community Participation Development Section of the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Office, Cecep Rustiana ((Interview 16/07/2023), Planning by the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency is based on five planning steps: financial planning, need assessment planning, resources planning (human and non-human), impact planning, and alternative planning. Financial planning involves allocating funds from the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (*Anggaran dan Pendapatan Belanja Daerah*/APBD) to finance the activities, including third-party event organizers and the entire two-week activity series. The allocation of funds must adhere to regulations and be utilized appropriately, serving as a determining factor in the variety of activities conducted during the technical guidance.

Need assessment planning aligns with national needs and policies, as outlined in Minister of Home Affairs Decision Number 364.1-306 of 2020 regarding the guidelines for developing fire brigade volunteers. This ensures that the program's planning is in line with both national and institutional needs.

Resource planning, both human and non-human, involves preparing committees and expert instructors for the training sessions, as well as arranging accommodations and transportation for the volunteers attending the technical guidance sessions. This planning ensures that the resources necessary for volunteer participation are adequately provided for. Impact planning anticipates the potential

outcomes of the activities, focusing on the skills acquired by volunteers according to their respective team specialties (rescue, education, communication).

Finally, alternative planning involves creating alternative programs to address minimal responses from volunteers, such as conducting educational visits at the grassroots level. Despite initial challenges, this activity received positive responses from the community, resulting in many individuals volunteering to join the REDKAR team.

Through these planning steps, the Bandung City Fire and Disaster Management Agency successfully attracted community interest, with each sub-district sending 3 to 6 prospective volunteers. The communication planning above is based on non-profit goals with broad targets and long-term benefits, coupled with event packaging that is not overly attractive (Fatmawati, 2021).

Communication Methods in Disaster Technical Guidance

Among the three teams receiving guidance, this research focuses on the education and communication teams, in line with the research context. For these teams, two teaching methods were employed: theoretical and practical. In the theoretical aspect, volunteers were grouped in classrooms to receive instruction on disaster communication, covering basic communication concepts, message effectiveness, communication forms, communication techniques, and the communication team's role in disaster mitigation. The theoretical instruction lasted for 3 hours for each team. The selection of engaging instructors capable of adapting their style to various societal strata was crucial for effective message delivery to the volunteers. This was necessary as the volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, including retirees, recent college graduates seeking

employment, and even some working as community security personnel at the neighborhood level, resulting in varying levels of receptiveness and stimulation among the volunteers. Observations made by the author in technical guidance activities found that after completing classroom teaching, the session continued with field simulations. Role plays were conducted to simulate a fire incident in a house, where the rescue team tried to conduct rescue operations using the firefighting training received in the class. Similarly, the communication team observed and recorded the necessary data for subsequent report generation, using the communication techniques taught in class.

Equipped with strong communication skills, these volunteers became proficient in various tasks, ranging from data collection, processing, to distribution, as emphasized by Fyfe and Milligan (2023) in their research. Based on the results of observations, researchers found that social media was included as one of the topics, along with techniques such as infographics and visual communication for message delivery. Meanwhile, through an interview with Budiana (Interview 23/07/2023), one of the instructors from academia said that the skills of using social media are needed by volunteers with the aim that volunteers can quickly disseminate information using the devices they have. In the digital era, fast delivery of information is paramount, and by using devices, information dissemination can be done quickly. However, the accuracy of message delivery is equally important and should not be compromised. This is also confirmed by the leadership of the Bandung Fire Department (Interview 23/07/2023), who emphasized that volunteers must be equipped with skills in using social media to convey disaster-related messages, particularly in disaster mitigation. It is hoped that their creativity in using social

media can be leveraged effectively. This is in line with previous research conducted by Abidin (2021) who highlighted that the use of communication media itself can lead to panic, emphasizing the need for appropriate and timely public education to reduce panic. Fardiah et.al., (2023) also noted in their research that digital technology is utilized in disaster communication in present-day West Java. Each day, every neighborhood receives the same material, which rotates among the 151 neighborhoods in Bandung for two weeks.

Civic Voluntarism: Strength in Disaster Communication.

Based on the interview results, it was discovered that volunteers constitute a significant force that supplements the limited personnel of the fire department and disaster management personnel in Bandung. Volunteers can assist the fire department teams in accordance with the mandated regulation that requires the resolution of fire disasters within 15 minutes. The presence of volunteers has significant implications for the core tasks and functions of the Fire and Disaster Management Agency in Bandung. Their existence forms a distinct strength in carrying out communication, coordination, and collaboration, not only with the community, media, but also with the government and other stakeholders. This aligns with Nugroho & Sulistyorini's (nd) findings in his research, emphasizing the need for volunteers who can gather data accurately, excel in message processing, and effectively use media for distribution, resulting in integrated information of reliable and credible quality. Producing quality information can lead to commendable actions during both mitigation and disaster relief (Nugroho & Sulistyorini's, nd). Additionally, with high-quality standards, volunteers can serve as a communication bridge between the

community and the government, as well as other stakeholders. However, it's worth noting that with the increasing training and understanding of disaster communication among volunteers, potential issues may arise. This includes the danger posed by misinformation and lack of credibility in the information provided by volunteers, as highlighted by Gerstmann (2019). Therefore, possessing proficient abilities and skills in disaster communication, volunteers become a formidable force in disaster communication, ranging from mitigation efforts to response and recovery phases.

Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Civic Voluntarism in Bandung City

Similar to many other places, the utilization of citizen volunteers poses significant challenges and obstacles. This study identifies several critical aspects influencing the effectiveness and efficiency of volunteer participation in disaster response activities. These challenges include a lack of awareness and understanding among the community regarding the importance of disaster preparedness, limited access to resources, and difficulties in mobilizing and sustaining volunteer participation. Related to this, it is necessary to highlight effective communication strategies from policymakers to foster volunteer enthusiasm in mitigation activities. This is related to the main barrier of suboptimal communication between the government and the public. Clear and integrated communication strategies, including providing accurate information and sustained motivation, are key to enhancing volunteer participation. Meanwhile, there is also an emphasis on the importance of various communication techniques to change community behaviors and trigger direct participation in disaster preparedness. Shortcomings were found in

volunteers' capacity to access and utilize social media and other information technologies such as websites. These findings provided input for our research, which requires diversified communication methods and participation, ranging from social media campaigns to community meetings or outreach to enable active participation by volunteers. The use of information technology and information systems, including social media as a tool for rapid information dissemination by volunteers, can be significantly enhanced through broader and organized community involvement.

The dynamic development of communication, particularly in terms of advances in communication technology and social media, requires strategic management adaptation by the Bandung City Fire Department and Disaster Management. This must be done in order to restructure communication strategies that can meet public information needs, shape a positive image of volunteers, provide information about what volunteers need and their benefits, and understand public responses to the volunteer image by presenting it in a contemporary manner and following social media trends without reducing the substance of the message. By using communication technology such as various digital platforms that are in line with technological advancements, volunteers can communicate quickly and efficiently with other teams, including various stakeholders involved, thereby expediting the coordination process in disaster management. Through the visual and fast-spreading power of social media, volunteers can reach more people in conveying disaster preparedness messages. Thus, providing disaster communication material to volunteers using communication technology can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster response and strengthen the role of volunteers in assisting affected communities.

Furthermore, this research also identified communication methods used during the implementation of technical guidance. These methods include providing theoretical and practical materials tailored to each team's content and practice. The study focused on the communication and education teams, where volunteers were trained in disaster communication skills through theoretical and practical instruction. The classroom material included communication topics such as basic communication concepts, message effectiveness, forms of communication, communication techniques, and the role of communication teams in disaster mitigation.

This research is in line with and serves as a response to the study by Fyfe and Milligan (2023) which stated that equipped with good communication skills, volunteers can excel in data collection, processing, and message distribution. Additionally, the researchers found out that volunteers were trained in the effectiveness of messages by adapting communication techniques to the current digital era. Social media was presented as material along with communication techniques in visual form such as infographics. These findings also align with and respond to Abidin's study, which stated that the use of communication media itself may cause panic among the public during disasters, necessitating prompt and proper public education via social media.

Furthermore, this research also discusses civic voluntarism as a force in disaster communication. The researchers found out that volunteers can assist the fire brigade team in accordance with regulations stipulating that fire disaster resolution must be completed within 15 minutes; moreover, volunteers play an important role in expediting post-disaster

recovery processes. Trained volunteers who are quick to respond, especially in terms of communication skills, align with Nugroho's research findings that volunteers capable of accurately gathering and processing data, as well as effectively using media for distribution, produce integrated and credible information. Producing quality information can also lead to appropriate actions during mitigation and disaster situations.

The subsequent discussion focuses on the challenges and obstacles in implementing civic voluntarism in Bandung. The researchers found differences in the educational level and experience of each volunteer, posing challenges in delivering technical materials that needs to be tailored to each individual's level of understanding. Some volunteers, especially retirees and homemakers, are less familiar with social media platforms. Another finding is the availability of time among volunteers from various backgrounds. Another obstacle is motivation, with some volunteers showing enthusiasm while others appear less motivated. The implication is the need for collaboration from various parties, including program organizers, training and education institutions, and local communities. Additional support is required, whether in the form of advanced training, technical assistance, or individual mentoring. Volunteers with different backgrounds and experiences can understand and apply technical guidance materials in various ways. This may result in varying levels of understanding and skills among volunteers, which may affect the consistency and quality of their task performance. By understanding the implications of these challenges, program or activity organizers can take appropriate steps to address these obstacles and maximize the potential contributions of volunteers from diverse backgrounds. This

is crucial for achieving program or activity goals effectively and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

The strategy to overcome challenges and barriers in implementing civic voluntarism must be diverse, given the importance of communication and engagement of volunteers. *Firstly*, there is a need for awareness-raising measures, such as educational programs and awareness campaigns. These are necessary to promote diversity so that all layers of society understand the risks of disasters and the importance of voluntary involvement. Subsequently, capacity building is crucial, including regular training and workshops for volunteers. This aims to enhance their capacity in disaster preparedness and the use of information technology. Furthermore, effective communication strategies are paramount. The government should employ clear, consistent, and motivating strategies to encourage volunteer participation. In this regard, communication strategies including information provision need to be developed and implemented. The use of technology also plays a crucial role, where the introduction and application of new technologies such as mobile applications, proficiency in social media use, and digital platforms for community engagement in disaster preparedness can enhance the effectiveness of community participation and data collection.

Lastly, multi-stakeholder collaboration needs to be enhanced. This involves cooperation between the government, private sector, educational institutions, and NGOs to support and strengthen community voluntarism. By adopting integrated and sustainable strategies to address these challenges, Bandung City can optimize the role of communities and volunteers and

strengthen disaster preparedness and response capacities.

Based on the presented research findings, the recommendation we offer to the readers is the importance of implementing diverse strategies to address the challenges and obstacles in Civic Voluntarism implementation. Proposed measures include raising awareness through educational programs and campaigns, enhancing volunteer capacity through regular training, utilizing effective communication strategies by the government, and leveraging information technology such as mobile applications and social media for community engagement. Cross-sector collaboration is also deemed essential to strengthen citizen voluntarism. By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that the effectiveness of community participation in disaster preparedness and data collection will improve.

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