Strategic Partnership Management in Statistical Operations: A Case Study of Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS)

Risky Habib Adibrata*, **Karjuni Dt Maani**

Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

Email : riskihabib1277@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze strategic management in the management of statistical partners at the BPS Office in Padang Panjang City based on four main management functions: planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. The main problems in partner management include a rushed recruitment process, incomplete training, limited field supervision, and the lack of routine evaluation. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with interviews with key informants, such as BPS officials and statistical partners. The results showed that in terms of planning, the implementation of an annual recruitment system was considered more efficient, although the selection process was not optimal. The management team has been organized, but is still hampered by workload and a lack of human resources. The implementation of tasks by partners refers to an annual contract, but there are still disparities in quality and work motivation. Supervision is not optimal due to the limited number of field supervisors. Internal and external factors such as a lack of BPS human resources and low public trust. Therefore, a comprehensive improvement in management strategy is needed so that the management of statistical partners can run more effectively and sustainably.

INTRODUCTION

Every country requires accurate and reliable data to formulate effective policies across various domains, such as economics, social development, and population management. Valid data serves as the foundation for governments to make strategic decisions aimed at improving public welfare and achieving sustainable development goals. When data is inaccurate, incomplete, or

inconsistent, policy decisions risk being misguided and less effective in addressing societal problems (Muchidin, 2024). For example, incorrect poverty rates could result in misallocated social assistance programs, while unreliable demographic data may hinder urban planning and infrastructure development. Reliable statistical information enables governments to anticipate challenges, allocate resources more efficiently, and evaluate the impact of existing programs. In today's increasingly data-driven governance landscape, the absence of credible information compromises the quality of public policy. Therefore, ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of statistical data is not only a technical requirement but also a strategic necessity for evidence-based policymaking that truly responds to the needs of society and fosters equitable, sustainable progress.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik—BPS), as Indonesia's official statistical authority, carries the mandate of providing high-quality data for national planning and evaluation. Through a combination of surveys and censuses, BPS collects, processes, and analyzes information that reflects the country's socio-economic realities. As stipulated in Law No. 16 of 1997 on Statistics, BPS is responsible for "providing accurate and reliable statistical data to support development planning and evaluation." However, according to Government Regulation No. 51 of 1999, Article 14, the implementation of core statistical activities is not limited to BPS employees but also involves external personnel known as statistical partners. These partners are non-permanent enumerators recruited by BPS to conduct data collection and processing tasks. The quality of survey data heavily depends on their performance (Zahara, 2021). When statistical partners lack proper recruitment, training, and supervision, the risk of data errors increases, undermining the credibility of official statistics and weakening the foundation for effective public policy formulation.

An examination of error rates in the pre-processed and unverified data from the National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas) reveals persistent quality issues. Between 2021 and 2024, error rates in March consistently exceeded those in September for each year. Specifically, March 2021 recorded a 52% error rate compared to 28% in September; March 2022 saw 42% versus 27%; March 2023 reached 47% versus 28%; and March 2024 recorded 49% versus 29%. According to BPS's internal quality standards, enumeration documents from Padang Panjang City should ideally have zero errors to ensure statistical accuracy and reliability. These figures indicate that quality benchmarks are far from being achieved. The persistent gap between actual and expected performance signals underlying problems in the management of statistical partners. Without effective oversight, errors recur across survey cycles, jeopardizing data

credibility and ultimately impacting decision-making processes at local and national levels. This phenomenon underscores the urgency of addressing management inefficiencies to uphold the integrity of Indonesia's official statistical system.

Previous studies have acknowledged the pivotal role of statistical partners in ensuring the quality of survey data. Muchidin (2024) highlights the strategic importance of accurate data in shaping public policy, while Zahara (2021) specifically points to the impact of enumerator performance on data reliability. Research in the field of statistical operations often focuses on technical improvements in survey methodology, data verification systems, or the adoption of digital tools for data entry. While these studies contribute to enhancing operational efficiency, they tend to treat human resource factors—particularly the recruitment, training, and supervision of statistical partners—as secondary concerns. This gap is critical because even the most advanced data collection systems cannot compensate for field-level errors caused by poorly managed enumerators. Moreover, existing literature lacks comprehensive frameworks integrating strategic management principles into the governance of statistical partnerships, leaving a crucial aspect of organizational effectiveness unexplored and inadequately addressed in Indonesia's statistical context.

Other research in public administration and human resource management underscores the significance of structured recruitment, continuous training, and systematic evaluation in enhancing workforce performance, including temporary or contract-based personnel. However, these principles have not been fully applied within the operational framework of BPS statistical partners. Studies from international contexts—such as census operations in other developing countries—demonstrate that inadequate enumerator management leads to increased non-sampling errors, delays in data processing, and reduced trust in official statistics. Yet, there is limited empirical investigation linking strategic management practices directly to statistical data quality outcomes in Indonesia. This lack of targeted research leaves policymakers without a clear, evidence-based roadmap for improving the management of statistical partners. Addressing this research gap is essential for both the theoretical advancement of strategic management applications in the public sector and the practical enhancement of data quality in Indonesia's official statistical activities.

This research offers a novel contribution by positioning strategic management not merely as an administrative function but as a core determinant of statistical data quality. Unlike previous studies that emphasize technical or technological aspects, this study integrates human resource strategies—including targeted recruitment, competency-based training,

continuous supervision, and structured evaluation—into the operational model for managing statistical partners. The state-of-the-art perspective lies in its holistic approach: it examines the interplay between management practices and the accuracy of official data within the unique context of BPS Padang Panjang City. This localized yet systematically analyzed case can provide broader insights applicable to other BPS offices and even similar agencies internationally. By addressing management deficiencies and proposing a structured strategic framework, the study aims to bridge the gap between policy aspirations for "One Data Indonesia" and the practical realities of field-level data collection. Such a framework has the potential to be adapted as a best practice model across the statistical sector.

The primary research problem centers on identifying how strategic management practices can be optimized to improve the effectiveness of statistical partner management at BPS Padang Panjang City. Observations indicate weaknesses in recruitment procedures, with hurried selections and insufficient screening resulting in unprepared enumerators. Training sessions are often short, limiting both theoretical understanding and practical readiness. Supervision is inconsistent, especially in remote areas, allowing errors to persist unchecked. Post-activity evaluations are rarely structured, leading to unclear criteria for re-engagement decisions. These challenges collectively contribute to recurring data quality issues, as evidenced by the high error rates in Susenas documentation. This research argues that without a strategic management overhaul, BPS will struggle to meet its zero-error standard, thereby compromising the credibility of its statistical outputs. The study's findings aim to inform practical reforms that align human resource strategies with national statistical quality goals.

This study contends that effective strategic management—encompassing recruitment, training, supervision, and evaluation—is essential to elevating statistical partner performance and, consequently, the quality of official data. By conducting an in-depth case study of BPS Padang Panjang City, the research seeks to develop a practical, evidence-based framework that addresses both operational and managerial shortcomings. The proposed framework is expected to contribute to the "One Data Indonesia" initiative by ensuring accuracy, standardization, and accountability in data production. Furthermore, it will extend the academic discourse by integrating public sector human resource management theories into the statistical domain, a link seldom explored in prior studies. This dual contribution—practical for BPS operations and theoretical for academic literature—positions the research as a significant step toward improving Indonesia's statistical governance. The ultimate aim is to reinforce public trust in official statistics, which is indispensable for sound

policymaking and sustainable national development.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at exploring and analyzing strategic management practices in the coordination of statistical partners at the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) Padang Panjang City. The research focuses on four core management functions: planning, organizing, implementation, and control. The population includes all internal stakeholders of BPS Padang Panjang City. Samples were selected using a purposive sampling technique, targeting individuals deemed relevant and knowledgeable about the research topic. The sample consists of internal parties such as the Head of BPS, the Head of the General Subdivision, the Head of the Statistical Partner Management Team, field supervisors, field inspection supervisors, and five statistical partners directly involved in operational activities.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, documentation review, and literature study. Primary data were obtained from key informants, including the Head of BPS, the Head of the General Subdivision, field supervisors, and statistical partners. To ensure the credibility of findings, data validity was tested using triangulation techniques—covering source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This process allowed for systematic interpretation of field observations and interview results, ensuring that insights were grounded in both empirical evidence and contextual understanding.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
Strategic Management in the Coordination of Statistical Partners at BPS

According to George R. Terry's Principles of Management (Sukarna, 2011: 10), management encompasses four core functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Field observations and interviews revealed how these functions are applied in managing statistical partners at BPS Padang Panjang City, alongside the challenges encountered.

Planning

The planning strategy at BPS begins with the formation of an internal management team, calculation of partner needs, adjustment of budgets in accordance with the DIPA (Budget Implementation List), and a structural shift

in the recruitment system from an ad-hoc approach to an annual cycle. In the early stages, the management team determines staffing requirements based on activity volume, working area, and survey characteristics, with DIPA as the main reference. Before 2024, recruitment was conducted separately for each activity, often under time pressure, which increased administrative burdens and reduced efficiency. Selection stages were frequently rushed due to staff and time limitations.

In 2024, BPS adopted an annual recruitment model conducted at the end of the preceding year. This change improved efficiency, enhanced selection quality, and allowed more flexible partner deployment across activities throughout the year. Supervisors and partners responded positively, noting greater job security, continuity, and preparation time. Recruitment promotion through social media also broadened outreach. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including perceptions of selection as a mere formality, short preparation periods, and shallow interviews—indicating the need for more rigorous selection procedures.

Organizing

BPS Padang Panjang implements organizing by forming technical teams comprising enumerators (PPL), field inspection officers (PML), and field supervisors. Task allocation is explicitly outlined in employment contracts to prevent role overlap and ensure accountability. Partner placement is conducted selectively using an updated database to optimize task matching and efficiency. Coordination is reinforced through training and technical briefings aimed at aligning understanding before activities commence.

However, organizational challenges persist. Training duration is often insufficient for new partners to gain deep technical proficiency. While the organizational structure is functional, field efficiency can still be improved through more intensive mentoring. Recommendations include extending training sessions, adopting interactive learning methods, and applying continuous monitoring and evaluation systems to make operations more adaptive to field dynamics.

Actuating (Implementation)

The actuating function is carried out through direction, technical training, and on-site supervision to ensure partners perform effectively. This process starts with resource planning and continues with direct assistance during operations, facilitated through online communication groups and in-person supervision. Despite these efforts, implementation remains suboptimal due to limited follow-up guidance and insufficient two-way communication.

Motivation is provided informally through verbal recognition of high-performing partners, although no structured performance evaluation system is in place. Some partners see continued job opportunities as their main incentive. To strengthen actuating, BPS requires a more consistent mentoring approach, real-time communication channels, and a performance-based reward system to align field execution with organizational objectives.

Controlling (Supervision)

Supervision is implemented through hierarchical oversight, daily reports, and activity documentation. Nonetheless, the limited number of supervisors restricts coverage, leaving some work areas without adequate monitoring. Performance evaluation is minimal, often conducted only once a year. Strengthening the supervision framework and implementing systematic post-activity evaluations after each survey are necessary to maintain data quality and accountability.

Internal Challenges in Statistical Partner Management

BPS Padang Panjang faces significant internal constraints, particularly in human resources. The number of permanent staff is insufficient relative to the workload, especially during simultaneous large-scale surveys. This imbalance reduces supervisory effectiveness and overburdens staff. From the partner side, issues include inconsistent quality, with some lacking adequate educational background or field experience. Variations in technical understanding, work discipline, and motivation are notable barriers. Moreover, not all partners demonstrate the integrity and accuracy required for reliable data collection, prompting more intensive mentoring by BPS staff. This additional guidance consumes considerable time and energy, further straining operational capacity.

External Challenges in Statistical Partner Management

Externally, the most pressing challenge is the low level of public awareness and openness toward statistical activities. Some respondents are uncooperative or refuse interviews altogether, perceiving surveys as unimportant or suspecting hidden motives. Such attitudes compel partners to make repeated visits, which not only delays progress but also increases workload and operational costs. Addressing this issue requires stronger collaboration between BPS and local stakeholders to build public trust, encourage participation, and ensure smoother implementation of statistical activities.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that while the management of statistical partners at BPS Padang Panjang City has incorporated all four fundamental management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—significant challenges remain that hinder optimal performance. The introduction of the annual recruitment system since 2024 represents a strategic improvement in the planning function. This change aligns with best practices in human resource management, where structured and anticipatory recruitment has been shown to enhance efficiency, partner readiness, and operational flexibility (Anggraini et al., 2024). However, the persistence of shallow interviews and perceptions of the selection process as a formality indicates that the recruitment strategy is not yet fully rigorous, echoing concerns from previous studies that insufficient screening undermines enumerator quality (Yumhi, 2020).

In the organizing function, the clear delineation of roles through formal work contracts and the use of an updated partner database reflect a systematic approach consistent with organizational management theory (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Nevertheless, limited training duration and uneven partner competence reduce the effectiveness of this arrangement. This supports prior research by Lestari et al. (2024), which emphasizes the critical role of comprehensive training in ensuring consistent performance among statistical partners.

The actuating function has been partially successful, with BPS implementing both direct and remote supervision as well as informal motivation strategies. However, the absence of a structured performance-based reward system limits the potential to improve partner motivation and retention. Similar patterns have been identified in other BPS offices, where the lack of formalized incentives correlates with lower job satisfaction and inconsistent work discipline (Norhidayah et al., 2024).

Supervision, as part of the controlling function, remains constrained by human resource shortages, leading to uneven monitoring coverage. Minimal evaluation frequency—often only once per year—reduces the capacity for timely corrective action. This gap mirrors findings by Khasanah and Rimbano (2021), who noted that without continuous monitoring and feedback loops, data quality issues are more likely to persist across survey cycles. Internal challenges such as limited staffing and partner quality variation exacerbate these issues, highlighting a need for more selective recruitment and skill-based partner allocation. External challenges, particularly low public trust and cooperation, further complicate field operations. As Muchidin (2024) and Zahara (2021) have argued, public perception directly affects the willingness of respondents to provide accurate information, thereby influencing overall data validity.

The study reinforces the argument that strategic management in statistical partner coordination must be approached holistically. Improvements should not only address technical and procedural elements but also focus on human resource strategies, community engagement, and technological integration for monitoring. By aligning these components, BPS can more effectively fulfill the "One Data Indonesia" mandate and enhance the reliability of official statistics for evidence-based policymaking.

CONCLUSION

The management of statistical partners at BPS Padang Panjang City encompasses all four core management functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. Planning has been strengthened through the formation of a dedicated management team and the adoption of an annual recruitment system aimed at improving efficiency. However, limitations in time and human resources have often led to suboptimal selection processes. Organizing has achieved clear role allocation through formal work contracts, yet disparities in partner competence and insufficient training duration persist. Implementation benefits from guidance and on-site assistance, but limited supervision and the absence of a structured incentive system remain obstacles.

The main challenges are twofold: internally, the shortage of permanent staff and variations in partner quality; externally, low public trust in survey activities. Addressing these issues requires a more selective, needs-based recruitment and training approach, reinforced by stronger supervision, digital communication tools, and well-defined standard operating procedures. Technological innovations, such as a dashboard-based monitoring system, would significantly improve partner performance evaluation. Practical, experience-based training and classification of partners by expertise can facilitate more efficient task allocation. Externally, stronger public outreach—engaging community leaders and local officials—can foster trust and ensure smoother implementation of statistical activities.

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