



IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONDENT DATA PROTECTION POLICY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES AT BPS TOMOHON CITY

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Abstract

This study discusses the implementation of respondent data protection policy in the implementation of statistical activities at the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Tomohon City, with a focus on the dimension of data confidentiality as mandated in Law Number 16 of 1997 concerning Statistics and Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection. The purpose of this study is to describe, analyze, and explain the implementation of respondent data confidentiality policy and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the policy at BPS of Tomohon City. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with six informants consisting of leaders, permanent employees, and statistical partners of BPS of Tomohon City, and supported by documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, with data validity testing through triangulation and *member checks*. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of respondent data protection policy at BPS of Tomohon City faces a shift in meaning from normative to pragmatic, especially at the statistical partner level. Although the multi-layered oversight system has been functioning well, the lack of technical Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and standard communication scripts has led to the emergence of "Cultural SOPs" and improvised communication in the field. The main supporting factors are a centralized data processing system and support from local authorities. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include low legal literacy among statistical partners, minimal regulatory outreach, and public resistance dominated by tax concerns and perceived privacy risks, particularly among educated groups.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Respondent Data Protection, Data Confidentiality, BPS Tomohon City,

INTRODUCTION

Respondent data protection is a fundamental and fundamental ethical principle in the administration of official statistics. Public trust in statistical institutions is determined by their ability to ensure that the data they collect is not misused. In the Indonesian context, the Statistics Indonesia (BPS) has a strong legal basis for maintaining the confidentiality of information provided by respondents. This basis is stipulated in Law No. 16 of 1997 concerning Statistics, particularly Article 21, which requires statistical activity managers to maintain the confidentiality of respondent data. This legal protection aims to provide respondents with a sense of security that their privacy is guaranteed when providing their data. This commitment to protecting confidentiality was further strengthened by the enactment of Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection (PDP Law). This new regulation provides a more comprehensive legal framework, affirming that the personal data of data subjects (in this case, survey respondents) is a right that must be protected, both by private sector data controllers and public bodies such as the Statistics Indonesia (BPS). The PDP Law demands higher standards of compliance and governance in statistical data processing. This indicates that the guarantee of confidentiality in statistical activities is no longer only interpreted as a sectoral

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administrative obligation, but rather as a form of respect for citizens' privacy rights guaranteed by the state. As a regional vertical agency, the Tomohon City Statistics Agency (BPS) is a statistics implementation unit that interacts directly with the public (respondents) in various census activities and routine surveys. In its operational structure, BPS Tomohon City is the data collection implementer in the field. Ideally, with a strong legal framework harmonized between the Statistics Law and the PDP Law regarding data confidentiality, respondents in Tomohon City should feel more secure, open, and cooperative when being recorded by officers. This layered confidentiality guarantee is intended to eliminate respondents' doubts about providing honest and accurate data.

However, the reality on the ground often does not align with these normative expectations. In the implementation of several survey activities at the Tomohon City Statistics Agency (BPS), respondents were still found to be *non-responsive* (did not respond/refused to be recorded), as can be seen in Figure 1. In the 2025 Quarterly Construction Survey (SKTR), one out of four respondents was non-responsive. In the 2025 Special Survey for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG), five out of a total of fifty SPPGs were non-responsive. Then, in the 2024 Quarterly Special Survey for Production Balance (SKTNP), one respondent was non-responsive. Responses from a total of 19 respondents. This phenomenon of refusal or *non-response* often occurs not because respondents lack time, but rather because of a lack of public trust in the guarantee of the confidentiality of their personal data. Fear of data leaks or misuse of information for tax purposes or crime is a driving factor in this hesitation. As stated in an institutional study by Pratama (2021) and reinforced by Pramesti and Handayani (2022) at the National Seminar on Official Statistics, public trust in confidentiality assurance by public bodies is significantly positively correlated with respondents' participation rates in government surveys. When perceptions of data protection are low, the refusal rate increases.

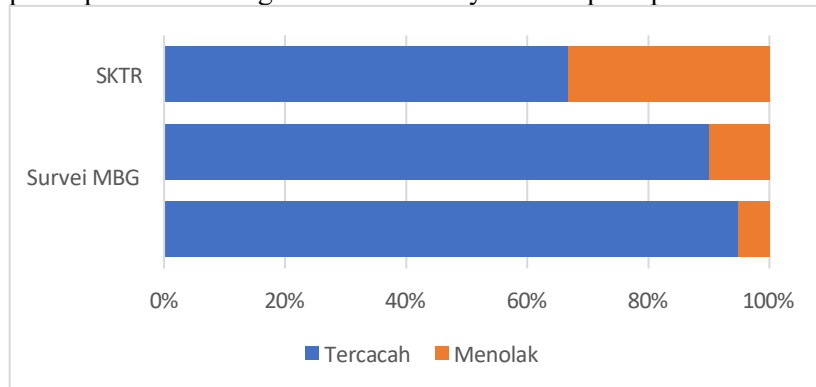


Figure 1.1 Percentage of Non-response with Reason for Refusal in Several BPS Surveys of Tomohon City in 2024-2025

The existence of refusals or high *non-response rates* poses a serious obstacle to statistical data collection. Accurate statistical data relies heavily on sample completeness. If many respondents refuse due to privacy concerns, the resulting data risks bias and unrepresentativeness. The actual population conditions. In fact, the statistical data produced by the Tomohon City Statistics Agency (BPS) is crucial as a basis for formulating targeted regional development policies. Failure to protect data or assure respondents that their data is protected will ultimately lead to poor public policy quality. The correlation between privacy concerns and survey refusal behavior has a strong theoretical basis, as respondents tend to calculate risks before providing personal information. This is confirmed by a study by Wardhani and Purnomo (2021), which found that respondents' perceptions of data security assurances from official statistics providers were the most significant predictor of their willingness to participate. When respondents perceived inadequate security assurances or doubted the institution's credibility in safeguarding their data, fear of misuse of information triggered resistance, leading to interview *refusal*. The issue of personal data protection is currently developing rapidly in line with digital transformation, but a review of the existing literature shows a very strong tendency towards the commercial sector and cyber law at a macro level. The majority of recent academic studies focus more on how consumer data is protected in the electronic transaction and e-commerce ecosystem (Rosadi, 2020), or examine aspects of personal data protection from the perspective of cyber regulations and the ITE Law more broadly (Supancana, 2020). Some sectoral research has been conducted, but is generally limited to very specific industries such as consumer protection. medical record data in the healthcare sector (Fauzi & Saraswati, 2021). Because this perspective dominates, privacy issues tend to be viewed solely as a matter of economic transactions between individuals or simply a matter of consumer protection.

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However, the dynamics of data protection in the context of official government statistics *have* very different characteristics and challenges than those in the private sector. Unlike volunteer-based digital platforms, data collection by state statistics agencies is mandatory for the benefit of national development, as mandated by law (Law No. 16 of 1997). In this context, respondents' perceptions of confidentiality guarantees *are* a key variable determining the level of participation and data quality, given the absence of direct transactional rewards. Literature focused on the business sector often overlooks the unique psychological burden and resistance that arises when the state, through statistical officers, directly requests citizens' private information.

The gap in the literature becomes even more apparent when examining the locus of policy implementation, which remains highly centralized. Previous studies tended to focus solely on policy formulation at the central level, thus failing to capture operational realities at the regional level. To date, there has been no comprehensive research examining how technical implementing units at the district/city level translate rigid data protection regulations into dynamic field operations. Consequently, understanding the constraints real data and rejection mitigation strategies carried out by the spearhead of data collection, such as at the Tomohon City BPS, are areas that have not been well mapped (*uncharted territory*).

Therefore, this study is urgently needed. This research not only measures the extent to which the Tomohon City Statistics Office (BPS) complies with Law No. 16 of 1997, but also explores effective ways to build respondent trust through concrete data protection implementation. It is hoped that the findings of this study can provide input to reduce respondent rejection rates and improve the quality of statistical data in the future. The focus of the problem in this research is on the "implementation of the guarantee of confidentiality of respondent data in the implementation of statistical activities at the BPS of Tomohon City", as mandated in Article 21 of Law Number 16 of 1997 concerning Statistics which requires statistical organizers to keep respondent information confidential. With the aim of the research, namely to describe, analyze and explain the implementation of the respondent data confidentiality policy and the factors that support and inhibit the implementation of the respondent data confidentiality policy at the BPS of Tomohon City.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to explore and understand the meaning behind the implementation of respondent data protection policies that involve complex interactions between regulations, officers, and respondents. The case study design was used because this research is limited to one specific unit of analysis, namely the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Tomohon City, which is seen as having unique characteristics as a statistical implementing unit at the regional level while also experiencing a non-response phenomenon due to data confidentiality issues. The research location was determined at BPS Tomohon City considering the agency's strategic position as the spearhead of data collection, the empirical phenomenon of respondent refusal in several surveys from the 2024-2025 period, and the affordability of access to informants and documents.

Data collection techniques were carried out through two main methods. First, in-depth interviews with semi-structured guidelines with six informants selected by purposive sampling, including the Head of BPS Tomohon City, three permanent employees (Junior Expert Statisticians and First Experts), and two statistical partners who acted as field enumerators. Second, a documentation study of official documents such as questionnaires, training guidelines, and statistical activity reports. Data analysis used an interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana which includes three simultaneous activity flows: data condensation (sorting, focusing, and simplifying data), data presentation in narrative and matrix form, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validity was tested through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as member checks with informants to ensure the suitability of the data obtained.

This study focuses on the implementation of data protection policies within the confidentiality dimension and the factors influencing it. The first focus of this study is the implementation of respondent data confidentiality protection at the Tomohon City Statistics Office (BPS), measured through three indicators. The first indicator is the officers' understanding of data confidentiality, namely how leaders, permanent employees, and statistical partners understand, interpret, and internalize the obligation to maintain respondent data confidentiality, whether viewed as an ethical value, compliance with the law, or simply an administrative rule. The second indicator is the practical mechanism for maintaining confidentiality in the field, which includes officers' actual practices in managing physical survey documents and digital devices during the enumeration, including procedures for securing, storing, handing over documents in stages, and destroying outdated data. The third indicator is

communication and trust-building strategies, namely the persuasive communication methods and social approaches developed by officers to convince respondents who are hesitant or refuse, and how guarantees of data security are conveyed to the public. The second focus is the factors influencing policy implementation, measured through two indicators. The first indicator is supporting factors, including a multi-layered oversight system, the existence of strong laws, integrated business processes, and support from local authorities such as village officials or neighborhood heads. The second indicator is inhibiting factors, which include internal obstacles such as low legal literacy among statistical partners, the absence of specific technical SOPs, and minimal regulation socialization in officer training, as well as external obstacles such as low statistical literacy among the public, respondents' concerns that BPS data is related to tax obligations, high perceptions of privacy risks, and resistance from educated groups who tend to be more protective of personal data such as Population Identification Numbers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Policy Implementation Analysis

A. Analysis of the Meaning of Data Confidentiality

The most crucial first step in analyzing the success of a public policy is to see how the policy is understood by its implementers. The interpretation of data confidentiality at the Tomohon City Statistics Agency (BPS) shows a very interesting gradation phenomenon, where the meaning of the policy shifts from its normative-institutional nature at the top level to pragmatic-functional at the lower level. From the perspective of George C. Edwards III Theory, particularly regarding the Communication variable, the initial instructions from the Tomohon City BPS leadership were transmitted very firmly. Ms. Ika, as the leader, interpreted confidentiality absolutely and ensured that this value was instilled through staff training. This *top-down* interpretation was successfully absorbed perfectly by BPS functional employees at the center of the bureaucracy. Mr. Reyf R. Kumontoy viewed it as a professional obligation that must be learned, while Ms. Isna was able to internalize and identify Law Number 16 of 1997 with precision and specificity. At this level, the Communication and Disposition variables of Edwards III functioned ideally because the instructions were understood completely within the legal corridor.

However, implementation analysis found a transmission distortion phenomenon when instructions began to move towards field implementers. This phenomenon began to become apparent. Functional staff like Susana, who understands the importance of confidentiality, are beginning to lose their legal literacy, as they don't memorize the law numbers and must rely on written reminders on questionnaires. This decline in understanding is even more evident at the Statistics Partner level. Mr. Rafael recognizes the importance of protecting respondents' personal data, but is completely unaware of the specific regulations governing it. The widest communication gap is confirmed by Ms. Suzan, who frankly admitted that her knowledge of the data protection law came by chance through BPS social media posts, not from the official partner training curriculum. This demonstrates that formal outreach mechanisms have not fully reached the frontline implementers in the field.

Herein lies the most interesting field anomaly to examine. The weak legal literacy of Statistics Partners apparently does not necessarily lead them to disregard confidentiality. This phenomenon can be sharply explained using Michael Lipsky's *Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory*. Lipsky argues that front-line bureaucrats (*street-level bureaucrats*) tend to reconstruct or reinterpret state policies to suit the realities of their daily work. Ms. Suzan's interpretation is perfect empirical evidence of Lipsky's thesis. She maintains public privacy, among other things, to maintain respondents' trust, thus facilitating the data collection process for subsequent surveys and ensuring respondents' continued willingness to accept it. policies have shifted from mere compliance with state laws to strategies for securing fieldwork targets.

This shift in meaning from normative to pragmatic aligns with a study by Fauzi and Saraswati (2021), which found that honorary officers or freelance partners in the public service sector tend to focus more on achieving daily technical targets than memorizing macro-regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, Statistics Partners' pragmatic motivation to maintain confidentiality for the smooth running of future surveys validates Pratama's (2021) theory of governance. The study asserts that at the *street level*, *public* trust is more often maintained by situational ethics and personal initiative from field officers, rather than by adherence to rigid bureaucratic hierarchical manuals.

B. Analysis of Practical Mechanisms for Maintaining Confidentiality

The physical security of documents and digital data at the Tomohon City Statistics Office (BPS) demonstrates an interesting dynamic between the institution's formal structure and informal initiatives in the field. Based on George C.

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Edwards' Theory III on the Bureaucratic Structure variable, successful implementation is largely determined by the existence of clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide implementers. However, field findings revealed that the Tomohon City Statistics Office did not have a written SOP document that specifically and technically regulated confidentiality maintenance tactics at the interview location. From an institutional perspective, the Head of BPS considered that a separate SOP was unnecessary. This is because security mechanisms are embedded in business processes and the multi-layered oversight hierarchy mandated by law. This reality is supported by the hierarchical document handover system, from Field Enumerators (PCL) to Supervisors (PML), then ultimately to the processing department, which has proven quite effective in preventing data leaks.

Although the macro system operates orderly, the absence of rigid technical guidelines at the micro level creates a vacuum in operational procedures for officers who interact directly with citizens. To analyze this phenomenon, Michael Lipsky's *Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory* once again provides a sharp scalpel. Lipsky states that when frontline officials are faced with field demands but are not equipped with rigid guidelines, they will use their discretion *to* formulate their own defense mechanisms or rules of the game (*coping mechanisms*). This theory was empirically validated through the initiative of implementers at the Tomohon City Statistics Office (BPS), who independently created "Cultural Standard Operating Procedures" to patch this structural gap. Functional employees like Ms. Susana, for example, implemented the practice of gently expelling village officials from the interview room to ensure the sterilization of verbal information from respondents. Among the statistical partners, Mr. Rafael took multiple security measures by guarding CAPI devices, separating special bags for paper documents, and blurring respondents' faces in documentation photos. The pinnacle of this field discretion was demonstrated by Ms. Suzan, who proactively archived documents in special plastic bags and biometrically locked her device. (fingerprints), isolating information from fellow enumerators, and even destroying obsolete documents by burning them without any formal administrative instructions.

The presence of "Cultural SOPs," born purely from the ethical initiative of these officers, enriches public policy discourse, particularly regarding data security management. This phenomenon is highly relevant to research by Fauzi and Saraswati (2021), which demonstrated that weaknesses in standardized operational procedures at *the street-level bureaucracy* often create blind spots *in* government bureaucracy, where citizen data security is ultimately secured by the empirical experience and personal ethics of officers rather than by formal institutional systems. Furthermore, the flexibility of these independent security practices reinforces Pratama's (2021) conclusion on governance. The fact that field officers are able to maximize technological resources, such as independently utilizing the time-*locked feature* in the FASIH application, demonstrates that the effectiveness of policy implementation at the grassroots level depends heavily on the tactical innovation of lower-level officials in translating abstract bureaucratic guarantees into tangible protection.

C. Communication Strategy Analysis and Trust Building

The success of physical data protection will be meaningless if these guarantees fail to be communicated to the public to reduce non-*response*. An analysis of the communication strategy at the Tomohon City Statistics Office (BPS) reveals a dynamic interaction between institutional directives and the negotiating skills of officers. Based on George C. Edwards III's theory, the leadership BPS has provided a clear line of communication, using a persuasive and educational approach, and avoiding coercion of respondents' rights. At the functional bureaucratic level, this directive was translated normatively by Ms. Isna, who directly conveyed the guarantee of legal protection to residents at the initial meeting. However, the lack of a standardized communication script *makes* it difficult for field officers to rely solely on normative rhetoric, especially when dealing with skeptical respondents.

"The research results concluded that the ineffective and inefficient socialization, the lack of communication between implementers, and the lack of a strong attitude and commitment to support policy implementation were the main inhibiting factors." (Rarumangkay, Lumingkewas, & Tumbel, 2021, p. 21) When formal structures didn't provide sufficient tactical guidance, field officers again demonstrated the discretion of *street-level bureaucracy*, as conceptualized by Michael Lipsky. Field officers modified their treatment and communication methods (*client-processing tactics*) to break the deadlock of rejection. Mr. Rafael and Mr. Reyf chose a relational approach by first building emotional closeness to defuse suspicion, before delving into the survey questions. Meanwhile, Ms. Susana used logical rationalization by explaining that BPS only publishes aggregate figures, not individual names, and utilized social references from figures known to respondents to provide a sense of security. The pinnacle of this communication improvisation was demonstrated by Ms. Suzan, who no longer argued using words, but instead provided a visual

demonstration by showing the FASIH application's access time limit (30 days) directly from her smartphone screen, coupled with the argument of human forgetfulness that it is impossible for him to memorize all the respondent data.

The emergence of various negotiation tactics by these officers becomes very reasonable when analyzed using the Environmental Context (Target Group Compliance) variable from Merilee S. Grindle's Implementation Theory. Grindle emphasizes that the characteristics of the target environment are crucial in determining the acceptance of a policy. Field analysis shows that resistance from Tomohon City residents is dominated by tax phobia, boredom due to being a repeated survey sample (*panel*), and apathy that their data is unimportant. The collective illusion that links the BPS survey with tax bills forces officers to rack their brains to clarify the boundaries of agency authority. This hybrid communication dynamic between verbal and visual empirically validates the findings of Pramesti and Handayani (2022). The research confirms that the refusal rate *in* national data collection is strongly influenced by officers' communication skills, where guarantees of protection accompanied by concrete and visual evidence prove far more effective in breaking down respondents' walls of rejection than mere verbal promises from state officials.

2. Analysis of Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Implementation

The successful implementation of respondent data protection at the Tomohon City Statistics Office (BPS) is the result of a complex trade-off between the strength of the institutional system architecture and the vulnerability of socio-cultural literacy. From a theoretical perspective, According to George C. Edwards III on the Bureaucratic Structure and Resources variables, this implementation is supported by a well-established systemic foundation. Law Number 16 of 1997 acts as a *lex specialis*, providing full legitimacy and binding all business processes of the Tomohon City Statistics Agency (BPS). Ms. Ika, as the head, emphasized that the tiered oversight system embedded in the institution's governance is the main shield that successfully maintains a track record without data leaks. This systemic success is very much in line with the concept of data governance from Pratama (2021), who argues that institutions with centralized data processing *have* a much stronger ability to suppress third-party intrusions. In addition to internal strengths, this implementation is also driven by external factors in the form of local authority involvement. The practice of coordinating with village officials before officers go into the field has proven to be a very effective leverage. Within the framework of Merilee S. Grindle's Theory, this apparatus support serves as a catalyst for the Environmental Context variable, bridging the formation of initial trust to increase compliance of target groups in the community.

Despite strong system support, this implementation is hampered by multiple obstacles stemming from literacy gaps, both internally and externally. Internally, the fundamental weakness lies in the Resources variable (Edwards III), where the frontline service, Statistics Partners, suffer from a regulatory knowledge deficit. The partners' lack of familiarity with the details and legal basis for data protection was openly acknowledged by BPS leadership as a key stumbling block. the highest risk of vulnerability for institutions. Using *the Street-Level Bureaucracy perspective* (Michael Lipsky), this lack of formal literacy underscores the vulnerable position of lower-level bureaucrats. Without a comprehensive understanding of regulations from formal training, these frontline implementers operate like independent agents whose data security is largely determined by the personal ethics of each individual, not the reliability of the bureaucratic system. This finding directly confirms research by Fauzi and Saraswati (2021), which highlights that the greatest vulnerability of government data protection policies often lies not in software gaps, but in the low legal literacy of officers who interact directly with citizens.

Research by Kolengkongan, Bogar, and Mandagi (2021) also shows that communication between related organizations has been running well, but inadequate human resources and infrastructure remain the main obstacles to policy implementation in Tomohon City. (Kalengkongan, Bogar, & Mandagi, 2021, p. 43)* Externally, the implementation deadlock becomes even more apparent when analyzed using Merilee S. Grindle's Theory, specifically the Responsiveness and Compliance indicators of Target Groups. The most persistent and formidable obstacle is the collective illusion that BPS data collection is linked to determining tax obligations. This unfounded fear, coupled with high levels of citizen boredom due to repeated panel sampling, creates a massive wall of resistance. More interestingly, anomalous field findings indicate that highly educated respondents actually exhibit much more aggressive, protective resistance when asked for sensitive population data such as National Identity Numbers (NIK). This phenomenon of educated resistance provides strong empirical evidence for the conclusions of Wardhani and Purnomo (2021) and Rosadi (2020). These studies emphasize that in the information society era, privacy risk perception *has* become the most significant barrier. dominant. The target environment no longer blindly obeys the arrival of state officials, but rather critically demands concrete and transparent data security guarantees before they are willing to participate.

CONCLUSION

1. Implementation protection data in BPS City Tomohon has walk effective in a way systemic blessing supervision Which attached on agency business processes. However, at the operational level, this implementation relies heavily on the discretion and personal initiative of field officers due to the lack of operational technical guidance. This dynamic is demonstrated through three main aspects:
 - A. The policy's interpretation of data confidentiality shifted from normative to pragmatic. Leaders and employees remained compliant with Law Number 16 of 1997, while statistical partners interpreted it functionally to maintain respondent trust and ensure the smooth running of subsequent surveys.
 - B. Practical security mechanisms. The lack of technical SOPs has given rise to officers' independent initiatives, such as locking devices, blurring respondents' photos, and destroying outdated documents.
 - C. Communication and trust-building strategies faced challenges due to the lack of a standard script. Officers improvised with visual demonstrations of the application, rationalized publication of figures, and a relational approach to overcome respondent resistance due to tax phobia and survey fatigue.
2. Factors that influence the implementation of respondents' data protection policies, namely: 39
 - A. supporting factors, namely conditions or elements that help smooth implementation, both those originating from within the organization such as a multi-layered supervisory system, the existence of strong laws, and integrated business processes, as well as from outside the organization such as support from local authorities (sub-district officials or neighborhood heads) who help bridge initial trust between officers and the community.
 - B. Inhibiting factors, namely conditions or elements that hinder the optimization of implementation, include internal obstacles such as low legal literacy of statistical partners, the absence of specific technical Standard Operating Procedures, and minimal socialization of data protection regulations in officer training, and external obstacles such as low statistical literacy of the public, respondents' concerns that BPS data is related to tax obligations, high perceptions of privacy risks, and resistance from educated groups who tend to be more protective of personal data such as Population Identification Numbers.

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