



Effective Recruitment Management Strategies For Bengkulu Regional Police Personnel

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How to Cite :

Lastomo., Soleh, A., Febliansa, M, R. (2026). Effective Recruitment Management Strategies For Bengkulu Regional Police Personnel. EKOMBIS REVIEW: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis, 14(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v14i3>

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received [30 May 2026]

Revised [18 July 2026]

Accepted [21 July 2026]

KEYWORDS

Effective Strategy, Recruitment Management, Regional Police Personnel.

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are: 1) to describe and analyze effective recruitment management strategies to produce quality police personnel; 2) to describe and analyze the factors that influence the effectiveness of recruitment management for the Bengkulu Regional Police personnel; and 3) to describe and analyze solutions for overcoming the factors that affect the effectiveness of recruitment management for personnel of the Bengkulu Regional Police. This research is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique in this study used data triangulation based on Miles and Huberman's theory, namely data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusion. The results of this study indicate: the recruitment management strategy for the Bengkulu Regional Police personnel has been directed toward the principles of professionalism, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the local context. The planning stage becomes an important foundation because it determines the alignment between personnel needs and the dynamics of community security and social conditions. Recruitment implementation, marked by the application of digitization, the BETAH principles, and involvement of external stakeholders, demonstrates the seriousness of the National Police in building a selection process that is accountable and open. Meanwhile, the evaluation carried out comprehensively, participatively, and oriented toward continuous improvement makes the recruitment process not only function as a technical selection mechanism but also as an organizational learning tool. The factors supporting the success of the recruitment strategy include national regulations, leadership support, interagency synergy, availability of adequate resources, community involvement, and the quality of the recruitment team and

internal supervisors. However, there are still obstacles such as negative public perceptions of the police profession, limited digital literacy among prospective candidates, technical barriers in implementing computer-based systems, and limited access to information in rural areas. Efforts by the Bengkulu Regional Police to overcome these obstacles are visible through improved public communication quality, provision of adaptive technological solutions, and intensive internal coordination.

INTRODUCTION

The recruitment and selection of prospective members of the Indonesian National Police is not a simple process. Recruitment is a vital function of human resource management because it requires accuracy and careful consideration to obtain personnel who meet the organisation's needs effectively and efficiently (Pramudya, 2021). This concerns not only the quality of personnel but also their quantity. Cloutier emphasised that organisations with an adequate number of personnel are better able to carry out their routine activities. Therefore, an effective management strategy in the recruitment and selection process is essential for attracting the best candidates and selecting individuals who are competent, qualified, and possess strong integrity. This is particularly important because the recruitment process has a direct impact on the quality of police services provided to the public (Kayely et al., 2023). Accordingly, the quality of human resources within the police institution must be properly maintained, and this largely depends on how the recruitment process is managed (Khayat, 2020).

When recruited personnel possess inadequate capabilities, this will inevitably affect police performance and may ultimately damage the institution's public image and credibility (Sewang et al., 2024). Therefore, an effective and efficient recruitment management strategy is essential to produce personnel who not only meet administrative requirements but also possess the moral qualities, ethical standards, skills, and competencies required to address the increasingly complex challenges of police duties. Without a competency-oriented recruitment strategy, the police institution will face difficulties in responding to future challenges (Mintawati et al., 2022). Furthermore, a transparent and competency-based recruitment process may also contribute to improving the public image of the police institution.

The public is more likely to trust the police when the selection process is conducted fairly and is free from corruption or abuse of authority. Consequently, the selected police officers will not only demonstrate professionalism in carrying out their duties but will also possess a high level of integrity. This, in turn, will strengthen positive relations between the police and the community (Widiyanto et al., 2025). Public trust is an essential element that cannot be separated from police duties. In many cases, police effectiveness is determined not only by their performance in the field but also by how they are perceived by the public. Therefore, a transparent, competency-based, and lawful recruitment strategy will contribute to the establishment of a positive image of the police institution, which will subsequently strengthen public trust in the police (Krisna, 2014).

Based on preliminary observations and interviews conducted by the researcher on 28 July 2025 at the Bengkulu Regional Police, the recruitment and selection of police personnel, particularly in Bengkulu City, continue to face various challenges. Several recurring issues include negative public perceptions of the police profession and public doubts regarding the objectivity of the selection system. Another issue concerns the mismatch between the number of candidates recruited and the actual organisational requirements. This often occurs because of the absence of a comprehensive analysis of personnel needs in the field. In addition, information concerning police recruitment has not been disseminated optimally to communities throughout Bengkulu Province, particularly those living in regencies and rural areas. As a result, the number of applicants, especially those from regions outside the provincial capital, remains less than

optimal. There is also a tendency for practices involving corruption, collusion, and nepotism to occur during the recruitment process, which may reduce the quality of the personnel selected.

Within this context, the merit system approach is relevant for further analysis. The merit system is a personnel management system based on individual competence, qualifications, and performance rather than non-objective factors such as seniority, personal relationships, or political intervention (Rizke et al., 2025). The implementation of a merit system in police recruitment is expected to ensure that every stage of the selection process is genuinely based on the abilities and achievements of each candidate. Therefore, the merit system serves not only as a technical instrument but also as an expression of the Indonesian National Police's commitment to the principles of professionalism, fairness, and neutrality.

The implementation of the merit system in police recruitment is fundamentally aligned with the internal reform agenda initiated in recent years. Through this system, the recruitment of police personnel is expected to produce individuals who are not only physically capable but also possess moral integrity, emotional intelligence, and professional skills that are relevant to contemporary demands. Furthermore, the merit system functions as a supervisory mechanism to prevent discriminatory practices and the abuse of authority during the selection process. This is particularly important because public trust in the Indonesian National Police is strongly influenced by the institution's ability to demonstrate transparency and fairness, especially in the recruitment process, which involves broad public participation.

Without effective recruitment management, the Indonesian National Police may experience a gap between organisational needs and the quality of available personnel. Therefore, a carefully formulated recruitment strategy, transparently implemented and systematically evaluated based on merit system principles, is a fundamental requirement for producing police officers who are capable of meeting organisational needs while simultaneously strengthening public trust.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several definitions of strategy, as proposed by experts in their respective works. The word *strategy* originates from the Greek term *strategos*, which is derived from the combination of *stratos*, meaning army, and *ego*, meaning leader. A strategy provides a foundation or framework for achieving predetermined objectives. Therefore, strategy can essentially be understood as a tool for achieving goals (Kusumaningrum et al., 2024). According to Marrus, strategy is defined as a process through which top-level leaders formulate plans that focus on the organisation's long-term objectives, accompanied by the development of appropriate methods or efforts to ensure that those objectives can be achieved (Kharis, 2022). An effective strategy plays an important role in determining an organisation's success in achieving its objectives, including in managing human resources through the recruitment process.

The concept of recruitment is neither new nor unfamiliar, particularly within organisational life. This is understandable because, throughout an organisation's life cycle, recruitment constitutes an integral process that cannot be separated from or disregarded in organisational operations. Many scholars have clearly explained the fundamental meaning of recruitment management. Mathis, for example, defines recruitment management as the process of planning, organising, implementing, and controlling activities aimed at attracting and selecting suitable candidates to meet organisational needs (Andrian et al., 2017). This process is designed to ensure that an organisation acquires employees who not only possess the required technical qualifications but also align with its culture and values. Pynes similarly argues that recruitment is the process of attracting qualified candidates to apply for vacant positions within an organisation (Khayat, 2020).

Conceptually, the merit system is a personnel management system based on the principles of objectivity, competence, transparency, and individual qualifications in the processes of recruitment, promotion, and employee placement (Rizke et al., 2025). This system emphasises that decisions in human resource management should be made on the basis of an individual's abilities, performance, and achievements rather than personal connections, seniority, or political intervention.

According to Keban (2019:87), the merit system is a mechanism in the management of the state apparatus that places qualifications, competencies, and performance as the primary foundations for employee recruitment, promotion, and development. This approach is intended to ensure that every selected official possesses the capabilities required to meet the organisation's needs (Sahambangung et al., 2019).

METHODS

Data Reduction

Data reduction is an integral part of data analysis. Researchers determine which data should be coded, which data should be excluded, how various fragments should be summarised, and how the overall narrative should be developed. These decisions constitute analytical choices. Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, selects, focuses, eliminates, and organises data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified.

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, separating, and transforming raw data contained in written field notes. Therefore, data reduction begins even before data collection is conducted in the field, particularly during the preparation of the research proposal, the development of the conceptual framework, the selection of the research setting, the formulation of research questions, and the determination of the data collection approach. Data reduction is also carried out during the data collection process through activities such as drawing preliminary conclusions, coding, developing themes, forming clusters, categorising data, and writing analytical memos. This process continues after the completion of fieldwork until the final research report has been fully prepared and completed.

Data Presentation (Data Display)

Data display refers to an organised collection of information that enables researchers to draw conclusions and take appropriate action. In everyday life and social interactions, data may be presented in various forms. For example, the presentation of information in one newspaper may differ considerably from that in another. Nevertheless, examining the presentation of data relating to a particular phenomenon can help individuals understand what is occurring and determine the actions that need to be taken. Such an understanding also supports further analysis of the phenomenon concerned. In qualitative research, the most commonly used form of data display is narrative text describing events or occurrences that took place in the past.

Verification and Conclusion Drawing

The next stage involves verification and conclusion drawing. At this stage, initial hypotheses or preliminary conclusions, which are generally tentative, may be revised or modified when they are inconsistent with the conditions and phenomena identified in the field. However, when the hypotheses are consistent with the empirical conditions found in the field, they may be accepted and incorporated into the research report. The conclusions are subsequently presented deductively, moving from general facts towards more specific findings (Sugiyono, 2015).

RESULTS

Implementation of the Merit System in Effective Recruitment Management at the Bengkulu Regional Police

The findings indicate that the Bengkulu Regional Police have implemented the merit system as a strategic approach to developing a professional, transparent, and competency-oriented recruitment process. This system places candidates according to their abilities, qualifications, achievements, and integrity rather than personal relationships, political influence, or other subjective considerations. Its implementation provides equal opportunities for candidates from different social and regional backgrounds to participate in the selection process.

The merit system in police recruitment at the Bengkulu Regional Police is implemented through four main principles: transparency, accountability, competence and qualifications, and the prevention of nepotism and external intervention.

Transparency

Transparency is implemented by openly providing information regarding recruitment requirements, schedules, selection procedures, and final results. Official recruitment information is distributed through the Indonesian National Police's website and the social media platforms of the Bengkulu Regional Police. This approach enables candidates, including those living in regencies and rural areas, to obtain accurate information about each stage of the selection process.

Transparency is also strengthened through the use of information technology, particularly the Computer Assisted Test (CAT) system in academic and psychological examinations. Through this system, candidates can immediately view their scores after completing the examination. The results are automatically recorded in the central system, thereby reducing human involvement and limiting opportunities for score manipulation or unauthorised intervention.

The selection process is also supervised by internal and external parties, including the Professional and Security Division, the Regional Inspectorate, the Ombudsman, local media, and community representatives. This multilayered supervision allows each selection stage to be monitored and evaluated. A public complaint service is also provided during the recruitment period to accommodate reports of suspected irregularities.

These findings demonstrate that transparency has been systematically implemented in the recruitment of police personnel in Bengkulu. The accessibility of information, real-time publication of examination results, technological support, and public supervision have contributed to a more open and objective selection process. These measures have also increased public confidence in the fairness and integrity of police recruitment.

Accountability

Accountability is implemented through systematic reporting, documentation, evaluation, and responsibility at every stage of the recruitment process. Administrative examinations, medical tests, academic examinations, psychological assessments, and physical fitness tests must be documented in official reports. These reports contain candidate data, assessment results, implementation records, and technical notes relating to the selection process.

Each selection unit is required to prepare an accountability report that can be audited by both internal and external supervisors. The reports serve as the basis for a comprehensive evaluation after all selection stages have been completed. This evaluation ensures that the recruitment process has been conducted in accordance with the applicable Standard Operating Procedures.

Digital documentation also enables every decision and result to be traced and verified. Consequently, any procedural violation, irregularity, or deviation can be identified and followed up. External supervision by independent institutions and local media further strengthens the accountability of the recruitment process.

The findings show that accountability is not merely treated as an administrative obligation but also as an institutional responsibility to the public. Every decision made by the selection committee must be justified to both police leadership and the wider community. This approach strengthens the legitimacy and credibility of the recruitment process while demonstrating the institution's commitment to producing qualified and trustworthy police personnel.

Competence and Qualifications

Competence and qualifications are central elements of the merit-based recruitment system. The selection process does not only assess candidates' physical abilities but also evaluates their academic competence, psychological readiness, personality, morality, and integrity. This comprehensive assessment is intended to identify candidates who possess balanced intellectual, physical, emotional, and ethical capabilities.

The Bengkulu Regional Police require candidates to demonstrate critical thinking, decision-making abilities, discipline, responsibility, and the capacity to work under pressure. These competencies are essential because police duties increasingly require officers to respond quickly and appropriately to complex social and security challenges.

The selection committee also considers candidates' readiness to serve in areas with diverse geographical and social characteristics. Adaptability, communication skills, and the ability to provide humane public services are therefore considered important qualifications. Candidates from rural areas, for example, may possess valuable experience in interacting with communities and adapting to field conditions.

Strict competency standards are maintained throughout the selection process without compromising established requirements. The objective is to recruit personnel who are not only physically capable but also intellectually competent, morally responsible, and professionally prepared. The consistent application of these standards supports the development of police personnel who are professional, modern, and trusted by the public.

Prevention of Nepotism and External Intervention

The principles of anti-nepotism and anti-intervention are applied to ensure that the recruitment process remains fair, objective, and free from personal or political interests. The selection committee emphasises that all candidates must be treated equally and that the final results must be determined solely by their performance, competence, and qualifications.

Recruitment officials at all levels are required to maintain integrity and reject pressure, recommendations, or special requests from external parties. Any indication of intervention or reported violation must be investigated and addressed in accordance with applicable regulations. This policy is intended to prevent practices such as favouritism, preferential treatment, and the informal recommendation of particular candidates.

Multilayered supervision involving internal police units, the Ombudsman, the media, and community representatives further reduces opportunities for intervention. Since the selection activities and results are openly documented and recorded in the system, the actions of both the committee and the candidates can be objectively verified.

Overall, the implementation of the merit system at the Bengkulu Regional Police has strengthened the effectiveness of recruitment management. Transparency has improved access to information and public supervision, accountability has ensured that every selection stage can be evaluated and justified, competency-based assessment has supported the selection of

qualified candidates, and strict measures against nepotism and intervention have protected the fairness of the process.

These findings suggest that merit-based recruitment is an important strategy for producing police officers who are competent, professional, ethical, and responsive to community needs. Its consistent implementation also contributes to strengthening public confidence in the recruitment process and in the police institution as a whole.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Merit System in Effective Recruitment Management at the Bengkulu Regional Police

The findings indicate that the Bengkulu Regional Police have implemented the merit system as a strategic approach to establishing a professional, transparent, and competency-based recruitment process. Under this system, candidates are assessed on the basis of their abilities, qualifications, achievements, and integrity rather than personal relationships, political influence, or other subjective considerations. Its implementation also provides equal opportunities for candidates from different social and regional backgrounds to participate in the selection process.

The merit system in the recruitment of police personnel at the Bengkulu Regional Police is implemented through four key principles: transparency, accountability, competence and qualifications, and the prevention of nepotism and external intervention.

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These findings demonstrate that transparency has been implemented systematically in the recruitment of police personnel in Bengkulu. The accessibility of information, real-time publication of examination results, use of technology, and public supervision have contributed to a more open and objective selection process. These measures have also strengthened public confidence in the fairness and integrity of police recruitment.

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The findings show that accountability is regarded not merely as an administrative obligation but also as an institutional responsibility to the public. Every decision made by the selection committee must be justified both to police leadership and to the wider community. This approach strengthens the legitimacy and credibility of the recruitment process while demonstrating the institution's commitment to producing qualified and trustworthy police personnel.

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The selection committee also considers candidates' readiness to serve in areas characterised by diverse geographical and social conditions. Adaptability, communication skills, and the ability to provide humane and community-oriented services are therefore regarded as important qualifications. Candidates from rural areas, for example, may possess valuable experience in interacting with local communities and adapting to field conditions.

Strict competency standards are maintained throughout the selection process without compromising the established requirements. The objective is to recruit personnel who are not only physically capable but also intellectually competent, morally responsible, and professionally prepared. The consistent application of these standards supports the development of police personnel who are professional, modern, and trusted by the public.

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activities and results are openly documented and recorded within the system, the actions of both the committee and the candidates can be objectively verified.

Overall, the implementation of the merit system at the Bengkulu Regional Police has strengthened the effectiveness of recruitment management. Transparency has improved access to information and public supervision; accountability has ensured that every stage of the selection process can be evaluated and justified; competency-based assessment has supported the selection of qualified candidates; and strict measures against nepotism and external intervention have safeguarded the fairness of the process.

These findings indicate that merit-based recruitment represents an important strategy for producing police officers who are competent, professional, ethical, and responsive to community needs. Its consistent implementation also contributes to strengthening public confidence in both the recruitment process and the police institution as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The recruitment management strategy for members of the Indonesian National Police in Bengkulu has been directed towards a system based on merit system principles, with an emphasis on professionalism, transparency, and accountability at every stage. Planning serves as a fundamental element in ensuring alignment between personnel requirements and the social and security conditions of the community.

The implementation of the recruitment process has demonstrated significant progress through the use of digital systems, the application of the BETAH principles—Clean, Transparent, Accountable, and Humane—and the involvement of external stakeholders. Comprehensive and participatory evaluations are also conducted as part of the institution's commitment to continuous improvement. Therefore, recruitment functions not only as an administrative and technical selection mechanism but also as a means of organisational learning aimed at improving system effectiveness and the quality of public services.

The recruitment strategy implemented by the Bengkulu Regional Police reflects the application of the merit system, in which the selection process is based on the competencies, qualifications, and integrity of prospective candidates. Every stage of the selection process upholds the principles of transparency, accountability, anti-nepotism, and freedom from external intervention. Consequently, the selection results can be objectively and professionally justified.

LIMITATION

Future research should further examine recruitment management strategies within the Indonesian National Police by applying more in-depth theoretical perspectives, such as strategic human resource management, talent management, organisational learning, or good governance in the public sector. Subsequent studies are also expected to incorporate additional variables, including candidates' digital literacy, the effectiveness of public communication, the level of public trust, and technological innovation in recruitment, in order to enrich the analysis of the effectiveness of merit system implementation within the Indonesian National Police.

In addition, the use of mixed methods is recommended so that future research can produce more comprehensive, valid, and generalisable findings. Such an approach is expected to provide a stronger analytical basis for the development of more effective recruitment policies in the future.

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