

**Paper Presentation on
Best Practices in Statistical Operation: LaMPPara Style**

by

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BACKGROUND

NCR District 6 is at the southern most part of Metro Manila. It comprises the highly urbanized cities of Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Parañaque and Pasay.

Las Piñas City, awarded as the Most Urbanized city in the Philippines, has a total population of 472,780, bounded on the north and northeast by the City of Parañaque, on the east and southeast by the City of Muntinlupa, on the south by the Municipality of Imus, Cavite on the southwest and west by the Municipality of Bacoor, Cavite and on the northwest by the scenic Manila Bay. It has 20 Barangays and has a land area of 41. 54 sq. km.

Muntinlupa City is located at the southwestern part of Metro Manila, bounded on the north by Taguig, Northwest by Parañaque, on the west by Las Piñas, southwest by the Province of Laguna and on the east by Laguna de Bay. It has 9 Barangays and a land area of 43.7 sq. km. with a population of 379,310.

Pasay is the third smallest political subdivision in NCR. It is adjacent to the city of Manila and bounded to the south by Parañaque, northwest by Makati City and Taguig to the west. It has 201 Barangays, a land area of 13.9 sq. km. and with population of 354,908.

Parañaque lies some 9.7 km. south of Luneta Grandstand bounded by Pasay City on the north, Muntinlupa on the southeast, Las Piñas on the southwest and Manila Bay on the west. It has 16 Barangays, a land area of 46.63 sq. km with a population of 449,811.

INTRODUCTION

Statistical operations refer not only to data collection (on household and establishment based survey) but all processes undertaken which includes preliminary and post censuses or survey activities including the management of resources like men, money, materials, machine, methods, Management Information System (MIS) and minute management. Decisions on these elements have a direct impact on the outcome of the project.

PERSONNEL COMPLEMENT and COMPOSITION

The District is composed of 26 employees with 19 regulars (including 4 District Statistics Officers), 6 casuals and 1 contractual janitor. Of this total, 2 personnel are with the accounting unit and 5 employees serves as the Provincial staff. In cases of surveys and censuses that require additional manpower, statistical researchers/enumerators are hired to supplement manpower deficiency.

The breakdown of the personnel composition is as follows:

- 1 PSO
- 2 Statistician II (1 vacant and 1 designated as District Statistics Officer of Las Piñas)
- 2 SCO II (designated as DSO of Pasay and Muntinlupa)
- 3 SCO I (1 SCO designated as Provincial Statistician and 1 SCO as DSO of Parañaque)
- 1 Statistician I
- 5 Assistant Statistician (1 Asst. Statistician designated as Bookkeeper)
- 1 Data Encoder Machine Operator II (designated as Disbursing Officer)
- 1 Statistician Aide
- 1 Clerk II
- 1 Clerk I
- 2 Utility Worker I
- 6 Emergency Employees
- 1 Contractual Janitor

WORKLOAD

Workload distribution to each province varies in size and number. Following are some of the surveys or census undertaken by District VI in the year 2002 whereby the office was able to rank **3rd** in statistical operation during the Field Awards from 2001's **65th** place:

January, April, July and October Labor Force Survey (LFS)	3,396 HH/year
2002 Census of Agriculture and Fisheries	4 cities 210 ea maps
2002 Maternal and Child Health Survey	924 HH
Annual Poverty and Indicator Survey	924 HH
Listing Operation of Households	
Daily Survey of Prices	2,112 commodities
Weekly Consumer Price Index (CPI) Market Basket:	8,400 commodities
⇒ Weekly CPI (food items, beverages and tobacco)	25,728 commodities
⇒ Bi-Monthly CPI	40,512 commodities

Retail Price Index (RPI) ⇒ Bi-Monthly ⇒ Bi-Monthly CPI	14,880 commodities 19,440 commodities
Monthly surveys of Prices of commodities for the CPI	
Retail/Wholesale Prices of commodities for the General Prices of Commodities	
Wholesale Price of Construction Materials	252 const'n mat'ls
Rebasing of CPI	
Monthly Surveys of 1. House Rentals 2. Producers Price Survey (PPS) 3. Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries (MISSI) 4. Monthly Survey of Production (MSP) 5. Decentralized Vital Statistics System (DVSS) Manual Encoding 6. Building Permit	264 HH 444 establishments 816 establishments 408 establishments Approx. 16,000 docus Various
Quarterly Survey of Philippine Business and Industry (QSPBI)	492 establishments
Annual Survey of Philippine Business and Industry (ASPBI)	1,634 establishments
Annual Survey Construction Project of the Local Government (ASCPLG)	4 cities

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Conducting survey is not an easy undertaking especially when the covered localities have higher number of samples being a highly urbanized area and with big number of establishments. The challenge lies heavily on data collection, in honing the expertise of enumerators in handling interviews, coordination as well as financial and management organization.

Data collection is indeed a very delicate task to perform. It needs hard work, convincing power and lots of patience. As we face the challenges of getting a timely, accurate and reliable data, we encounter different problems during enumeration that really affect the outcome of the project.

The lack of knowledge of the statistical researcher to explain the importance and objectives of the survey is one of the primary reasons why a respondent refuses to be interviewed. Likewise, the household's being a sample for years coupled with the respondent's lack of knowledge or interest in statistics is also a contributing factor to why there are refusals.

Most of the time the responsible household member is not at home during the visit. This will result to callbacks and delay in the submission of the questionnaires.

We also come across establishments who cannot submit their reports on time for reasons that the one making the report is already overloaded with work and the management do not allow overtime to its personnel.

General or common addresses of the sample households especially in the depressed areas occasionally slow down the enumerator. Back outs produces enormous problem related to timely submission of questionnaires and delayed payments of SR's wages generally resulted to the decrease of the number of seasoned and tried SR's who are in the priority list of the district.

STRATEGIES/BEST PRACTICES

For every research work, a detailed plan of action is already enumerated in the annual Gantt chart e.g. training, enumeration, supervision, data processing and tabulation among others. But doing research calls for a much deeper understanding of the elements involve in such undertaking.

Planning - In every census and survey, there are strategies and best practices that are being adopted by the district from previous experience to ensure the success of every operation. Planning is always a part of the initial preparation performed by the district prior to the start of the project. The district discusses proper and effective administration of resources. We always emphasize prevention rather than correction of delays.

Partnership and Linkages - Soliciting support and assistance of the different government agencies including LGU's, NGO's and Homeowners associations is an essential part of our preparatory stage. Courtesy calls and distribution of letters to the Barangay officials informing them of the survey and meetings with the officers of the plush villages and purok leaders establishes good start for an excellent working relationship. Coordination of this kind minimizes refusal and callbacks. Purok leaders usually help the enumerators in locating the sample households when there are common addresses. Providing services in form of correct advises and contact person's request with regards to their civil registry problems and documents ascertained a good functional relationship with them, which usually resulted in the timely collection of accomplished survey forms.

Staffing/Education/Timetable – A person works best and accomplishes most when he is given a definite job to be completed in a given time. The work being of a nature for which he is mentally and physically suited. The broad application of this principle is demonstrated in selective employment, we always select the person best filled for the work taking into consideration the training and experience of each applicant and his/her individual effectiveness. Our district office sees to it that SR's are thoroughly trained for them to be truly effective, fully familiar not only with the procedures and instructions presented in the manual of operation but also on concepts, objectives and importance of the survey. Learning correct methods and sequences of work enables the

worker to do the work accurately, quickly and economically thus eliminating back outs. We likewise stress to them that interviewing is an art and should not be treated as a mechanical process. Through the conduct of mock interviews, the researchers developed their skills and attitude in interviewing. We also maintain specific target dates of completion for each project or activity much earlier than the national timetable. Strict adherence to the given timetable of operation is of utmost importance.

Operational Control - One method employed is to maintain a master list for each project/activity containing specific deadlines and posting of an updated status of collection in a conspicuous place for monitoring of performance. Close supervision by the DSO's and the Provincial staff is required to ensure that first-rate, precise and dependable data are gathered. Submissions of itinerary of travel of all statistical researchers and employees are mandatory for spot-checking purposes. Staff meetings are also conducted religiously to thresh out possible problems and corrective measures undertaken if necessary. **All activities should be reported and documented for submission to the concerned Division and/or Department.**

Financial Management – Cost estimates were carefully studied. The amount of TEV's to be paid to the regular field workers were discussed to them and according to their workloads & outputs. In cases of the delay in the remittances of the allocated funds for the project from the Central Office to the Regional to the Provincial office, the PSO devised ways to pay the wages or at least the TE's of the enumerators like using the savings coming from other projects, payment for overtime of the regular employees were deferred to be used as payment for the services rendered by the SR's. Oftentimes, the PSO and the supervisors lend their own money for SR's use.

Quality Control – To ensure that the data collection activities meet acceptable standards, the following activities are undertaken:

- ⇒ Spot checking
- ⇒ Review of accomplished questionnaires
- ⇒ Editing
- ⇒ Random Re-Interviews
- ⇒ Verification
- ⇒ Modification
- ⇒ Machine Edit and error Listing
- ⇒ Completeness checking

LESSONS LEARNED/CONCLUSION

It is very clear that organized operation produces good census or survey results. With an agency whose mandate is to conduct regular survey among households and various establishments, a strong sense of management control over its personnel, approaches and strategies, communication system, meager financial resources, time management, among others is very important and must never be compromised.

Monotonous it may seem, conducting regular surveys can still be perceived as challenging for its result are used in the formulation of plans and responsive national policy.

Ensuring good sense of readiness among implementers and partners prior to the start of any project is a key element for a healthy working relationship. Staff involve must thoroughly understand the relevance of what they are doing for them to truly contribute to the success of the project. The feeling of appreciation that he/she has done his/her part heightens commitment thus, being more effective and efficient in their line of work.

Varied situations require different approaches in dealing with issues that may arise. Some problems can be easily responded by field supervisors while others need direct intervention of the PSO. In both cases, quick response is a must to avoid severity of the situation.

What we have presented are simple strategies that other Provincial Offices might have also employed. There is nothing extraordinary with what we have done. We continue to struggle and strive to give our best for reliable, accurate and timely information as what our agency have envisioned.