



# Examining the Roles of Police Investigators in Criminal Investigation of Missing Persons, Human Remains Identification, and Crime Documentation: Basis for Policy Recommendation

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## Abstract

*This study examines the demographic profile, existing operational guidelines, investigative roles, encountered challenges, and overall effectiveness of police investigators involved in cases related to missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation across five police districts. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were gathered from 25 respondents spanning various ranks, units, and years of service, complemented by qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of operational realities. The findings indicate that while police investigators generally have access to clear and comprehensive guidelines, the implementation of these protocols is hindered by moderate challenges, including insufficient resources, limited forensic technology, difficulties with inter-agency coordination, and gaps in training. Investigators are actively engaged in critical functions, including interviews, site processing, forensic coordination, and crime scene documentation, with investigative skills playing a crucial role in the successful resolution of cases. Statistical analysis reveals a strong and significant positive relationship between adherence to standardized operational guidelines and the effectiveness of investigations. To address the identified gaps, respondents recommend enhancing and regularly updating guidelines, institutionalizing continuous scenario-based training, investing in forensic infrastructure, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and promoting community awareness and engagement.*

**Keywords:** Police Investigations, Missing Persons, Human Remains Identification, Crime Documentation, Operational Guidelines, Investigative Roles, Forensic Technology, Inter-agency Collaboration, Investigative Challenges, Law Enforcement Policy, Capacity Building, Criminal Justice.

## INTRODUCTION

In the intricate world of criminal investigation, the work of police investigators is undeniably critical and demanding, especially in the areas of missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation. These facets of law enforcement are some of the most emotionally charged, legally sensitive, and socially impactful. The role of the investigator in such cases goes beyond technical procedures; it involves forensic precision, procedural integrity, and an empathetic understanding of the human dimension of every case (Mallillin, 2023, pp. 1-17). Ensuring the integrity of evidence, maintaining objectivity in highly emotional scenarios, and systematically documenting findings are all essential elements that define successful investigative work. These responsibilities reflect not only on the resolution of cases but also on the overall credibility of the justice system.

From a legal perspective, the framework remains anchored

in Republic Act No. 10353, the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2012. Although legislated earlier, its relevance has been reinforced in contemporary investigative practice, particularly as agencies adapt protocols to align with evolving contexts since 2021. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has further operationalized its responsibilities through the Missing Persons Case Desk Protocol, which mandates timely reporting, comprehensive documentation, and inter-agency collaboration. These measures are intended to enhance accountability, transparency, professionalism with investigative operations Mallillin, & Lopez, (2024, pp. 97-108) which remain essential in the country's human rights and criminal justice agenda (Commission on Human Rights, 2021)

The issue of missing persons and unidentified human remains has also gained renewed urgency at the international and regional levels due to factors such as armed conflict, natural

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disasters, irregular migration, and human trafficking. Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, reflects these broader patterns. Reports indicate that the number of missing person cases has been increasing in urban areas, yet resolution rates remain inconsistent (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Data accessibility, however, is fragmented, with updated national statistics from 2021 onwards often limited in public release. This gap highlights the ongoing challenges in generating reliable and comprehensive records that can inform policy and practice more effectively (Mallillin, & Caday, n.d., pp.86-99).

Scholarly and institutional literature since 2021 highlights that systematic and operational barriers persist in Philippine investigative practices. Inconsistencies in the application of standardized protocols, insufficient inter-agency coordination, and inadequate forensic resources continue to be significant impediments (Asia Foundation, 2021; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2023). Investigators in rural and resource-limited jurisdictions are particularly disadvantaged, as they frequently operate without access to advanced technologies or structured training opportunities. Mallillin, et al. (2025) international research further points to the detrimental effects of non-standardized investigative approaches, which can lead to fragmented procedures and inaccuracies in handling sensitive cases (UNODC 2023).

Despite an established legal and procedural foundation, the gap between policy and implementation persists, hindering effective outcomes. Investigators often face constraints, including outdated technologies, limited access to forensic tools, and insufficient institutional readiness. Mallillin, et al. (2020) to adopt emerging scientific advancements. This disjunction between legal frameworks and operational realities directly affects the resolution of missing persons cases, the identification of human remains, and the overall quality of crime documentation (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2022). Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reforms that emphasize capacity building, technological integration, and institutional accountability.

This research seeks to critically assess these persistent challenges, identifying both structural and procedural limitations that influence investigative effectiveness. By doing so, it aims to provide insights that can inform reforms in training, policy enforcement, and the integration of forensic technologies. The broader objective is to ensure that investigative practices in the Philippines, particularly in the period following 2021, remain consistent with the principles of justice, transparency, and public trust.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study aims to examine the role of police investigators for cases of missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation as a basis for policy recommendations.

Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of
  - 1.1. age,
  - 1.2. gender,
  - 1.3. rank/position,
  - 1.4. years of service,
  - 1.5. current unit/assignment and
  - 1.6. estimated number of cases handled?
2. What are the existing operational guidelines used by police investigators in conducting investigations related to
  - 2.1. missing persons,
  - 2.2. human remains identification, and
  - 2.3. crime documentation?
3. What are the roles of police investigators in criminal investigations related to:
  - 3.1. missing persons;
  - 3.2. human remains identification, and
  - 3.3. crime documentation?
4. What challenges do police investigators encounter in the implementation of these operational guidelines concerning
  - 4.1. missing persons investigations,
  - 4.2. human remains identification, and
  - 4.3. crime documentation?
5. How do the respondents describe potential solutions to overcome these challenges in the investigation of
  - 5.1. missing persons cases,
  - 5.2. human remains identification, and
  - 5.3. crime documentation?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the use of standardized operational guidelines by police investigators and the effectiveness of criminal investigations involving missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation?

## **Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between the use of standardized operational guidelines by police investigators and the effectiveness of criminal investigations involving missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively examine operational guidelines, the challenges encountered by police investigators, and their skill sets in handling cases related to missing persons and the identification of human remains. The integration of these methods was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than either approach could achieve independently, allowing for both statistical generalization and in-depth exploration of the investigator's experiences.

Mixed-methods research is defined as a systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation to address a research question more fully. Creswell and Creswell (2022) describe mixed-methods as a methodology that draws upon the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative traditions to generate broader, more insightful interpretations. It is especially valuable in applied social research where complex human behavior and organizational systems interact, as it allows for triangulation, enhances data validity, and supports the development of evidence-based interventions.

In the qualitative component of this study, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with active police investigators directly involved in missing persons and human remains investigations. These interviews explored their personal experiences, perceptions of operational guidelines, availability of institutional resources, and individual competencies. The qualitative method was selected to uncover contextual nuances and provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and decision-making processes that investigators encounter. This approach also captured the limitations of procedural implementation, the informal strategies used to cope with systemic constraints, and the subjective interpretations of role expectations and responsibilities.

Simultaneously, quantitative data were collected through the administration of structured survey questionnaires to a broader sample of police personnel.

These surveys measured the frequency and prevalence of specific operational challenges, assessed the extent of adherence to investigative protocols, and evaluated the perceived effectiveness of training and resource allocation. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed to analyze the quantitative data, enabling the identification of trends, patterns, and relationships across the variables under study.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative data enabled a comprehensive examination of the research problem. Qualitative findings provided explanatory insights that enriched the interpretation of the quantitative results, while

the quantitative data validated the broader relevance of the themes and concerns expressed in the interviews. This convergence of data sources allowed for a multifaceted analysis of the operational realities, institutional constraints, and performance capacities of police investigators.

Through this mixed-methods design, the study aimed to produce a more holistic and empirically grounded understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of criminal investigations involving missing persons and human remains. The findings from both methodological strands will inform the development of targeted training programs, enhance operational procedures, and support policy reforms aimed at strengthening investigative capacity and institutional responsiveness.

## **Population and Sampling Technique**

The population of this study consisted of police investigators assigned to Metro Manila who were directly involved in investigating missing persons cases, identifying human remains, and documenting crimes. Metro Manila was chosen as the study locale due to the high volume of these types of cases in the region and the availability of specialized investigative units within its law enforcement agencies. As the country's administrative and urban center, Metro Manila provided a strategically relevant setting for capturing diverse investigative practices and institutional structures across multiple jurisdictions.

To ensure the inclusion of respondents with operationally relevant expertise, purposive sampling was employed. Participants were selected based on their recent and direct experience in handling cases involving missing persons and unidentified human remains within the last three years. This criterion ensured that all participants possessed current field knowledge and firsthand insights into investigative processes, challenges, and adherence to procedures.

A stratified purposive sampling technique was applied to achieve representation across various police units and geographic jurisdictions. The population was divided into five strata, namely: the Western Police District (WCPD), Parañaque Police Office, Mandaluyong Police Office, Scene of the Crime Operations (SOCO), and Taguig Police Office. From each stratum, five police investigators were purposively selected, resulting in a total sample size of twenty-five (25) respondents.

This stratified sampling approach ensured that the sample reflected a broad spectrum of professional experiences, operational assignments, and institutional contexts. It allowed for the collection of data from investigators assigned to both general investigative divisions and specialized forensic units. While the sample size was limited, it was deemed sufficient for this mixed-methods study, which combined the depth of qualitative insights with the breadth

of quantitative analysis. The selection process ensured that the perspectives obtained were representative of the operational realities and investigative challenges prevalent in the metropolitan policing environment.

### Respondent of the Study

The respondents consisted of 25 police investigators, representing a range of ranks and levels of experience within the police force. This group included senior examiners with extensive backgrounds in high-level investigations, as well as junior officers who brought recent procedural knowledge and innovative approaches to investigative work. Additionally, investigators from specialized units, including Missing Persons, Forensics, Crime Scene Investigation, and General Investigation, were included to provide a comprehensive perspective across different operational functions.

The participants were also drawn from multiple police districts to ensure geographic diversity and varied jurisdictional insights. The criteria for selecting these respondents focused on their active involvement in cases related to missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation. The sample was purposely diverse in rank and years of service, ranging from those with less than five years of experience to those with more than a decade, to capture both fresh perspectives and seasoned expertise. The inclusion of investigators from specialized units enabled the study to reflect the specific challenges and practices unique to each domain. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were chosen based on their availability and willingness to share their experiences. By selecting participants from multiple districts and units, the study ensured a balanced and representative sample that provided a well-rounded understanding of the operational realities and challenges faced in these investigations.

### Research Instrument

A mixed-methods data collection approach was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Quantitative data will be collected using a standardized questionnaire with Likert scale items to assess the investigators' adherence to operational protocols, the difficulties they face during investigations, and their capability in performing investigative procedures. This will facilitate statistical testing of trends and relationships that pertain to the study topics. To supplement the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews will be used with the same group of twenty-five respondents. The interviews will be guided by an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions designed to elicit vivid accounts of their experiences, difficulties, resource limitations, coping strategies, and views on investigative procedures. The use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools allows for a thorough investigation of investigative effectiveness by triangulating quantifiable data with detailed narrative information.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### What is the Demographic Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age.

**Table 1.1.** Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30 To 39 Years Old	10	40.00
40 To 49 Years Old	8	32.00
50 Years Old and Above	7	28.00
TOTAL	25	100.00

The age distribution presented in Table 1.1 illustrates a strategically composed workforce within the investigative units, reflecting a blend of youth, experience, and seniority that contributes to organizational effectiveness. Respondents aged 30 to 39, comprising 40% of the sample, represent early to mid-career investigators who are typically more adaptable to evolving investigative technologies and digital platforms. This age group often exhibits high levels of engagement, technological proficiency, and field responsiveness—qualities essential in modern investigative tasks such as geolocation tracking, digital forensics, and real-time crime analysis (O'Neill et al., 2022).

Respondents within the 40 to 49 age bracket, accounting for 32% of the total, likely possess substantial field experience and occupy roles involving operational planning and supervisory responsibilities. These investigators serve as crucial conduits for organizational knowledge and contribute to the standardization of procedures. According to Singh and Alexander (2023), mid-career officers play a crucial role in enforcing structured investigative practices, maintaining discipline in documentation, and mentoring younger personnel through leadership by example. The 28% of respondents aged 50 and above represent senior members of the force who provide institutional memory and advanced professional judgment. Their extensive exposure to various cases enhances decision-making accuracy and fosters an environment conducive to mentorship. As emphasized by Tan and Ramil (2021), the presence of experienced personnel supports case integrity, particularly in sensitive investigations such as the identification of human remains and the handling of forensic evidence. Their mentorship role ensures that institutional protocols are preserved and that junior officers are guided through established best practices. Such intergenerational composition aligns with the theoretical construct of situated learning, wherein operational knowledge is embedded in social participation and shared experiences. According to Guzman and Enriquez (2022), this dynamic supports knowledge retention and promotes continuous learning, especially in high-stakes environments such as police investigations. The diversity in age enhances not only functional capacity but also reinforces team stability, adaptability, and strategic foresight.



**Table 1.2.** Frequency Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	13	52.00
Female	12	48.00
TOTAL	25	100.00

Table 1.2 reflects a nearly equal gender distribution among police investigators, with male respondents constituting 52% and female respondents 48%. This near parity in representation marks a significant development in the composition of investigative teams, indicating an inclusive institutional culture that values gender diversity in law enforcement. Such a balance enables the integration of varied perspectives, which is essential in managing the complexity of cases involving missing persons, human remains identification, and crime documentation.

Research underscores that gender-diverse investigative teams are more adept at adopting a wide range of communication styles, empathetic engagement, and strategic decision-making processes. Mendoza and Salazar (2022) emphasize that female officers often contribute heightened emotional sensitivity and interpersonal communication skills, which can be particularly valuable when interacting with victims and their families. These qualities support trauma-informed approaches in investigation, improving both the quality of service and community trust. Male investigators, on the other hand, bring essential contributions to operational structure and enforcement protocols. Dela Cruz and Montano (2023) note that a gender-balanced team enables the integration of both relational and task-oriented competencies, which can significantly enhance investigative outcomes and inter-team collaboration. This equilibrium not only improves internal coordination but also increases the credibility of investigative units among the communities they serve.

The near-equal gender composition observed in the study reflects the growing efforts of law enforcement agencies to adopt gender-responsive policing frameworks. As highlighted by Santos and Villanueva (2021), such institutional changes promote fairness, reduce bias, and encourage equitable participation across ranks and roles. Gender inclusivity within investigative units contributes to the holistic development of the force, enabling it to respond effectively to diverse scenarios with professionalism, emotional intelligence, and procedural integrity.

**Table 1.3.** Frequency Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Rank/Position

Rank/Position	Frequency	Percentage
Patrol Officer	6	24.00
Investigator	9	36.00
Supervisor	6	24.00
Forensic Specialist	4	16.00
TOTAL	25	100.00

Table 1.3 presents the distribution of respondents by rank or position, revealing a composition that emphasizes operational functionality and interdisciplinary collaboration within investigative units. Investigators constitute the largest group at 36%, suggesting that a significant portion of the respondents are directly responsible for conducting in-depth inquiries, collecting evidence, and interviewing witnesses. This concentration reflects the central role of investigators in managing the core activities of cases involving missing persons, human remains, and crime documentation. According to Ramos and De Jesus (2022), investigators serve as the operational backbone of law enforcement units, often navigating the intersection of fieldwork, forensic coordination, and legal documentation.

Patrol Officers and Supervisors each account for 24% of the sample, representing both frontline responders and managerial personnel. Patrol Officers often serve as the initial point of contact in criminal incidents and missing persons cases, playing a critical role in preserving scenes and initiating protocols (Bautista & Lumibao, 2023). Supervisors, on the other hand, are crucial for ensuring procedural compliance, coordinating resources, and making strategic decisions across teams. Their presence in the sample underscores the importance of leadership roles in upholding investigative integrity and operational efficiency.

Forensic Specialists, making up 16% of respondents, provide the technical expertise required for evidence processing and scientific validation. As noted by Carreon and Valerio (2021), forensic specialists are indispensable in the chain of evidence, especially in cases involving the identification of human remains, where accuracy, contamination prevention, and scientific rigor are critical. Their inclusion in the investigative process contributes to a multidisciplinary framework that enhances case resolution and accountability.

The rank distribution captured in these data points indicates a well-integrated investigative workforce that leverages diverse professional roles and expertise. Such diversity in position supports collaborative problem-solving, encourages knowledge-sharing, and strengthens the overall investigative capacity. Each role whether operational, supervisory, or technical contributes unique competencies that collectively address the multidimensional demands of criminal investigations.

**Table 1.4.** Frequency Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Years of Service

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage
Less Than 5 Years	8	32.00
6 to 8 Years	6	24.00
9 to 11 Years	6	24.00
12 Years and Above	5	20.00
TOTAL	25	100.00

Table 1.4 outlines the distribution of respondents based

on years of service, highlighting a workforce composed of varying levels of tenure and experience. The highest proportion, at 32%, comprises personnel with less than five years of service. This indicates a significant presence of early-career investigators who are in the initial stages of professional development and are actively building foundational competencies in criminal investigation. According to Mercado and Panganiban (2022), the presence of newly appointed investigators is essential for institutional renewal, as they bring fresh perspectives, adaptability to emerging technologies, and a willingness to adopt new investigative frameworks.

Respondents with 6 to 8 years and 9 to 11 years of service each account for 24% of the sample, signifying a strong mid-career segment within the investigative force. These individuals are likely to have moved beyond basic training and are now applying accumulated knowledge and procedural expertise in more complex investigative scenarios. Studies show that mid-career officers often serve as key operational leaders in team-based investigations, balancing field execution with analytical assessment (Lopez & Dizon, 2023). Their engagement enhances institutional consistency and supports peer learning within investigative teams. Those with 12 years or more in service represent 20% of the respondents, indicating a presence of senior investigators who contribute institutional memory, leadership experience, and critical decision-making capabilities. According to Garcia and Ventura (2021), long-serving investigators play a vital role in mentoring less experienced personnel and ensuring procedural integrity, especially in high-stakes cases involving human remains and missing persons. Their expertise is particularly crucial for guiding younger officers through complex protocols, judicial coordination, and evidence management.

The diversity in years of service observed in this distribution supports a layered structure of expertise within investigative units. Such a composition facilitates effective knowledge transfer, sustained mentorship, and operational flexibility. It enables the integration of theoretical understanding with experiential knowledge, ensuring that investigative processes are carried out with both innovation and discipline. This balance enhances the overall capacity of law enforcement teams to manage sensitive and multifaceted cases with professionalism and resilience.

**Table 1.5.** Frequency Percentage Distribution Of The Respondents According To Current Unit

Current Unit	Frequency	Percentage
Missing Persons Unit	5	20.00
Forensics Unit	5	20.00
Crime Scene Investigation Unit	5	20.00
General Investigation Unit	5	20.00
Others	5	20.00
TOTAL	25	100.00

Table 1.5 presents an equal distribution of respondents across five distinct investigative units: the Missing Persons Unit, Forensics Unit, Crime Scene Investigation Unit, General Investigation Unit, and other related divisions. Each unit comprises 20% of the total respondents, indicating a deliberately structured and proportionally balanced sample. This distribution enhances the representativeness of the data, ensuring that perspectives are drawn from a broad spectrum of operational roles within the investigative framework of the police force.

The presence of respondents from specialized units such as Forensics and Crime Scene Investigation reflects the technical dimension of criminal investigations. These units are responsible for evidence collection, scientific validation, and scene reconstruction tasks that demand precision, procedural discipline, and inter-agency coordination. As emphasized by Cruz and Hernandez (2021), forensic and crime scene personnel contribute significantly to the reliability and admissibility of investigative findings, particularly in cases involving unidentified human remains and violent crimes.

The inclusion of respondents from the Missing Persons Unit highlights the importance of targeted investigative approaches tailored to disappearance cases. Officers in this unit engage in data triangulation, community coordination, and family liaison efforts, which are critical in time-sensitive investigations (Dela Peña & Caranto, 2022). Their specialized insights provide valuable information on procedural gaps, inter-agency dynamics, and victim-centered practices.

General Investigation Units and those categorized under “Others” represent broader casework responsibilities that span theft, assault, and routine criminal complaints. Their participation ensures that findings are applicable across a range of investigative contexts, thereby enriching the generalizability of the study. According to Valencia and Tolentino (2023), drawing on multiple investigative units enables a more comprehensive understanding of investigative practices, challenges, and resource constraints, which may vary depending on the assignment.

**Table 1.6.** Frequency Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Estimated Number of Cases Handled

Estimated Number of Cases	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 10 Cases	7	28.00
11 to 20 Cases	6	24.00
21 to 50 Cases	6	24.00
More than 50 Cases	6	24.00
TOTAL	25	100.00

Table 1.6 outlines the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents based on the estimated number of investigative

cases handled over the past three years. The largest group, accounting for 28% of the respondents, reported managing between 1 and 10 cases, which may suggest a segment composed of newly assigned personnel, investigators working in specialized roles, or those with limited exposure due to jurisdictional constraints. Investigators handling fewer cases often focus on quality-intensive approaches or may be in units with narrower investigative scopes. According to Mendoza and Alviar (2022), limited caseloads are common among officers transitioning into investigative roles or those in divisions that emphasize forensic precision over quantity.

The remaining respondents are evenly spread across the categories of 11 to 20, 21 to 50, and over 50 cases, each representing 24% of the sample. This indicates a strong presence of mid- to high-volume case handlers within the sample. Investigators in these groups are more likely to have developed routine familiarity with investigative protocols,

evidence processing, and inter-agency coordination, particularly in high-stakes cases such as missing persons and human remains identification. As highlighted by Reyes and Dizon (2023), higher caseload experience enhances procedural efficiency, decision-making under pressure, and adaptability to evolving case complexities.

The distribution reflects a balanced investigative workforce in terms of caseload exposure. Such variation allows for the inclusion of both novice and experienced perspectives in the assessment of investigative practices. A sample that captures a range of operational experience enriches the study's capacity to identify gaps in training, resource allocation, and procedural standardization across different levels of investigative maturity. Bautista and Marquez (2021) argue that mixed-experience samples are critical for developing institutional policies that are responsive to the needs of both early-career and veteran investigators.

What are the existing operational guidelines used by police investigators in conducting an investigation?

Table 2.1.Existing Operational Guidelines Used by Police Investigators in Conducting Investigations

Category	Operational Guidelines	No. of Respondents (Out of 25)	Result of Summary
2.1 Missing Persons	2.1.1 Immediate reporting and registration of missing persons cases within 24 hours of notification.	20	80% follow strict protocol to register cases immediately to preserve lead quality.
	2.1.2 Conduct initial interviews with family, friends, and witnesses to gather vital information and leads.	22	88% actively conduct thorough interviews early in the investigation.
2.2 Human Remains Identification	2.2.1 Secure and preserve the crime scene to prevent contamination of evidence.	24	96% report following strict scene preservation protocols to maintain evidence integrity.
	2.2.2 Collaborate with forensic experts for proper collection and documentation of human remains.	21	84% regularly coordinate with forensic specialists to ensure proper handling and identification.
2.3 Crime Documentation	2.3.1 Maintain detailed and accurate documentation of all investigative activities and evidence gathered.	23	92% ensure documentation meets departmental standards for accuracy and completeness.
	2.3.2 Use standardized forms and digital systems for recording case progress and reports.	19	76% use standard templates and digital tools, though some rely on manual methods.

The findings in Table 2.1 demonstrate the level of adherence by police investigators to establish operational guidelines across three critical areas of criminal investigation: missing persons, identification of human remains, and crime documentation. These results underscore both the operational strengths of investigative units and the systemic gaps that require further intervention.

In the context of missing persons investigations, the 80% adherence to the guideline requiring immediate reporting and registration within 24 hours aligns with global best practices emphasizing early intervention.

As noted by Santos and Del Rosario (2022), the timeliness of initial response significantly influences case solvability rates, as the early hours are critical for gathering actionable intelligence and minimizing lead degradation. The remaining 20% of non-compliance, however, may indicate structural limitations, such as delayed communication protocols, insufficient staffing, or a lack of immediate access to registration systems. This reflects the findings of Gutierrez and Navarro (2021), who identified logistical and technological gaps as barriers to prompt case intake in Philippine law enforcement agencies.

The strong compliance reported in conducting interviews with relatives and witnesses (88%) highlights the centrality of human intelligence gathering in early investigative phases. Interviewing those within the victim's social sphere remains a foundational step in constructing event timelines and identifying potential leads. According to Alcaraz and Fontanilla (2023), the qualitative depth of these interviews often sets the trajectory for investigative direction, particularly in the absence of physical evidence.

High adherence rates are also observed in protocols involving the identification of human remains. With 96% of respondents indicating they preserve and secure crime scenes, there is a demonstrated institutional emphasis on forensic integrity. Scene preservation is a prerequisite for reliable evidence analysis and ensuring the legal admissibility of evidence. This practice aligns with the standards discussed by Villamor and Peñalosa (2021), who emphasized the importance of evidence preservation in ensuring the scientific validity of forensic conclusions. Additionally, 84% of investigators reported collaborating with forensic essential practice for accurate identification and documentation. The remaining 16% gap underscores the need for improved inter-agency coordination and the availability of forensic services, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas.

### What are roles of Police Investigators among the Respondents

**Table 3.1.** Roles of Police Investigators Related to Missing Persons

Task	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Conduct interviews of family and witnesses	3.55	0.48	Always
Coordinate search efforts with other agencies	3.31	0.45	Often
Prepare reports and maintain documentation for missing persons cases	3.42	0.46	Often
Overall Weighted Mean	3.43	0.46	Often

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Always, 2.50-3.49 – Often, 1.75-2.49 – Sometimes, 1.00-1.74 – Never

Table 3.1 presents the roles of police investigators specifically related to missing persons cases across five police districts: Southern Police District (SPD), Manila Police District (MPD), Eastern Police District (EPD), Northern Police District (NPD), and Quezon City Police District (QCPD). The data reveal a consistent pattern of moderate to high engagement in critical tasks essential for locating missing individuals.

The task of conducting interviews with family and witnesses is rated as “Always” performed by respondents from SPD (WM = 3.60, SD = 0.49), MPD (WM = 3.55, SD = 0.50), EPD (WM = 3.70, SD = 0.50), and QCPD (WM = 3.50, SD = 0.41), suggesting this is a fundamental activity in their investigative protocol. Only NPD rated this task as “Often” (WM = 3.40, SD = 0.49), though the score still reflects strong compliance. This indicates that across districts, initial information gathering through interviews remains a priority and is considered a routine and crucial step in building leads during the early stages of investigation.

In the field of crime documentation, 92% of investigators affirm the importance of maintaining detailed and accurate records. This reflects institutional recognition of the importance of traceability, transparency, and accountability. However, only 76% report utilizing standardized forms or digital platforms for record-keeping, suggesting that a portion of investigators still operate using manual documentation systems. According to Espiritu and Lozano (2022), the transition to digital investigative tools is a critical step in improving data integration, report consistency, and long-term case management. The persistence of traditional methods may hinder institutional efficiency, complicate data sharing, and introduce errors in reporting.

The results collectively affirm a generally high level of procedural compliance among investigators, but simultaneously point to areas that require targeted reforms. Improving the consistency of digital documentation, expanding forensic collaboration, and mitigating logistical constraints through strategic investment and training are essential to reinforcing investigative capacity. As emphasized by Reyes and Calizo (2023), standardized operational frameworks supported by adequate resources lead to improved investigative outcomes, reduced procedural errors, and enhanced public trust in law enforcement institutions.

In terms of coordinating search efforts with other agencies, all districts rated this as “Often” practiced, with the highest weighted mean observed in EPD (WM = 3.45, SD = 0.41), followed by SPD and QCPD (WM = 3.35), MPD (WM = 3.30), and NP (WM = 3.10). While the practice is frequent, the slightly lower scores suggest there may be logistical or procedural gaps in multiagency coordination, potentially related to jurisdictional challenges, limited manpower, or inconsistent communication protocols.

Report preparation and documentation for missing persons cases garnered higher ratings, particularly from SPD (WM = 3.50, SD = 0.43) and EPD (WM = 3.55, SD = 0.44), both of which interpreted this task as “Always” performed. In contrast, MPD (WM = 3.40), NP (WM = 3.20), and QCPD (WM = 3.45) interpreted the task as “Often” conducted. The findings show that while documentation is acknowledged as important, it is not uniformly emphasized across all jurisdictions, which



could have implications for case monitoring and legal accountability.

The overall weighted mean for each district reflects a generally consistent pattern of engagement: EPD scored highest (WM = 3.57, VI = Always), followed by SPD (WM = 3.48), QCPD (WM = 3.43), MPD (WM = 3.42), and NP (WM = 3.23), all with a verbal interpretation of “Often.” These results suggest that while investigators frequently perform their roles in missing persons investigations, consistency and standardization across all districts may be further improved, especially in coordination and documentation.

This analysis aligns with findings by Huey et al. (2022), who emphasized the central role of frontline officers in gathering actionable information and the importance of standard operating procedures in missing persons investigations. Additionally, studies such as those by Shalev Greene and Pakes (2021) have noted that gaps in documentation and inter-agency cooperation often hinder the resolution of missing persons cases. The data reinforce the argument that while commitment among investigators is evident, institutional support and structural standardization are necessary to enhance efficiency and outcomes.

**Table 3.2.** Roles of Police Investigators Related to Human Remains Identification

Task	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Secure and process the discovery site of human remains	3.14	0.48	Often
Coordinate with forensic experts for identification	3.27	0.44	Often
Document findings and maintain chain of custody for human remains	3.32	0.46	Often
Overall Weighted Mean	3.24	0.46	Often

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Always, 2.50-3.49 – Often, 1.75-2.49 – Sometimes, 1.00-1.74 – Never

Table 3.2 outlines the roles of police investigators in handling tasks associated with the identification of human remains across the five police districts: Southern Police District (SPD), Manila Police District (MPD), Eastern Police District (EPD), Northern Police District (NPD), and Quezon City Police District (QCPD). The data reveal that all key tasks under this domain are interpreted as being performed “Often” by investigators, highlighting regular yet potentially inconsistent practices across jurisdictions.

Securing and processing the discovery site of human remains is rated “Often” in all districts, with weighted means ranging from 2.90 in NPD to 3.30 in EPD. The relatively lower rating in NP (WM = 2.90, SD = 0.49) may point to operational limitations such as delayed response times, resource constraints, or geographic challenges in securing perimeters. Conversely, EPD’s higher rating (WM = 3.30, SD = 0.41) reflects a stronger adherence to protocol, suggesting effective scene preservation strategies.

Coordination with forensic experts for identification also received “Often” ratings across the board. The highest rating came from EPD (WM = 3.40, SD = 0.41), followed by SPD (WM = 3.33, SD = 0.49) and QCPD (WM = 3.30, SD = 0.41). NPD scored the lowest (WM = 3.05, SD = 0.49), indicating potential gaps in access to or communication with forensic teams.

These findings suggest that, although interdepartmental coordination is institutionalized, its consistency and efficiency vary across districts.

In documenting findings and maintaining the chain of custody, all districts once again reported “Often” as their level of practice, with EPD achieving the highest score (WM = 3.45, SD = 0.44). This suggests that EPD places significant importance on legal compliance and the preservation of evidence. NPD again lags slightly (WM = 3.10, SD = 0.47), indicating the need for improved training or administrative systems to support secure documentation.

The overall weighted means across the five districts range from 3.02 in NP to 3.38 in EPD, with all falling within the “Often” category. The slight disparity in mean scores suggests variability in procedural execution and resource availability among districts. EPD’s highest overall mean (WM = 3.38, SD = 0.42) indicates relatively stronger operational implementation, while NPD’s lower average highlights an opportunity for targeted improvements.

These findings are supported by the literature, which emphasizes the procedural and technical demands of human remains investigations. According to Byrd and Adams (2020), the successful recovery and identification of human remains depend heavily on scene management, forensic coordination, and meticulous documentation. Moreover, Blau and Ubelaker (2019) argue that uniform training and inter-agency collaboration are critical in maintaining the chain of custody and ensuring reliable identifications. The study’s results underscore the need to enhance technical capacity, communication protocols, and standardized procedures across police districts to strengthen the integrity of human remains identification processes.

**Table 3.3.** Roles of Police Investigators Related to Crime Documentation

Task	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Document crime scenes thoroughly using photographs, sketches, and notes	3.48	0.46	Often
Collect and preserve evidence following protocols	3.4	0.46	Often
Interview witnesses and suspects and document their statements	3.48	0.47	Often
Overall Weighted Mean	3.45	0.46	Often

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Always, 2.50-3.49 – Often, 1.75-2.49 – Sometimes, 1.00-1.74 – Never

Table 3.3 presents the roles of police investigators in crime documentation across the five police districts: the Southern Police District (SPD), the Manila Police District (MPD), the Eastern Police District (EPD), the Northern Police District (NPD), and the Quezon City Police District (QCPD).

The tasks assessed include documenting crime scenes, collecting and preserving evidence, and interviewing witnesses and suspects while documenting their statements. The overall results reflect a strong performance in crime documentation, with most districts achieving “Always” ratings for at least two of the three tasks, though variations remain among districts.

SPD and EPD both show consistent and exemplary performance in documenting crime scenes, with weighted means of 3.53 (SD = 0.43) and 3.60 (SD = 0.50), respectively, rated as “Always.” QCPD, MPD, and NPD similarly exhibit regular practice. However, NPD’s lower mean (3.25, SD = 0.50) falls under the “Often” category, suggesting occasional limitations in thorough scene documentation, which may be due to equipment availability or workload pressures.

In collecting and preserving evidence following protocols, SPD and QCPD reported mean scores of 3.47 (SD = 0.49) and 3.45 (SD = 0.50), both interpreted as “Often.” At the same time, EPD is the only district rated “Always” with a mean of 3.55 (SD = 0.41). This distinction points to EPD’s consistent application of evidence handling procedures. NPD scored the lowest (WM = 3.15, SD = 0.50), which may indicate procedural inconsistencies or gaps in adherence to protocol.

For interviewing witnesses and suspects and documenting

their statements, the three district police departments, SPD, MPD, and EPD, each achieved “Always” ratings with weighted means of 3.53 (SD = 0.47), 3.50 (SD = 0.44), and 3.60 (SD = 0.44), respectively. In contrast, NPD reported only “Often” with a mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.49), revealing potential issues in maintaining consistent documentation or challenges in investigative workloads.

The overall weighted means reinforce these observations. EPD leads with the highest overall mean (3.58, SD = 0.45), indicating consistent, high-level performance across crime documentation tasks. SPD (3.51), MPD (3.47), and QCPD (3.48) also show strong adherence to protocols, while NPD lags behind slightly with a mean of 3.22 (SD = 0.50), falling under the “Often” category.

These results align with the literature, which emphasizes the critical role of meticulous crime documentation in the criminal justice process. According to Roux et al. (2022), comprehensive documentation practices including photography, sketching, and narrative reports are essential for preserving the integrity of crime scenes and supporting successful prosecution. The study by Siegel and Saukko (2021) further underscores the importance of training and equipping investigators with standardized methods to ensure consistency and reliability in evidence gathering and reporting. Hence, the findings suggest that although most districts uphold a high standard in documentation, efforts should be directed toward improving the practices in lower-scoring districts to establish uniform excellence in investigative procedures.

## What are the challenges of Police Investigators

**Table 4.1.** Challenges of Police Investigators in Terms of Missing Persons

Task	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Difficulty gathering complete and timely data	2.97	0.42	Moderate Challenge
Lack of coordination with other agencies	2.9	0.42	Moderate Challenge
Insufficient resources and personnel	2.82	0.4	Moderate Challenge
Inadequate training on operational guidelines	2.94	0.37	Moderate Challenge
Overall Weighted Mean	2.91	0.4	Moderate Challenge

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Highly Challenged, 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Challenge, 1.75-2.49 – Mildly Challenged, 1.00-1.74 – Not Challenged

These findings are consistent with recent research emphasizing institutional capacity-building for effective policing. According to the study of Tan and Santiago (2023), missing persons investigations demand not only technical expertise but also well-established collaborative networks among law enforcement units, social services, and the community. Similarly, the work of Alonto and Ramirez (2021) highlights that without structured coordination protocols and continuous training, even well-intentioned investigators may struggle to respond adequately to time-sensitive cases involving missing persons. These insights affirm the need for improved operational frameworks and capacity development within Philippine police organizations.

The data in Table 4.2 reveal that police investigators across all five districts uniformly encounter moderate challenges in handling cases involving human remains. The South Police District (SPD) yielded an overall weighted mean of 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.35, indicating a moderate challenge with relatively consistent responses. Similarly, the Manila Police District (MPD) recorded a slightly lower overall weighted mean of 2.93 (SD = 0.39). At the same time, the Eastern Police District (EPD) reported the highest perceived

challenge, with a weighted mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 0.42. The Northern Police District (NPD) had the lowest average among the five districts, with a weighted mean of 2.78 (SD = 0.40), and the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) followed closely with a mean of 2.95 (SD = 0.39). These consistent moderate scores suggest systemic operational barriers rather than isolated difficulties.

Among the three listed challenges, limited access to forensic technology and equipment, inter-agency collaboration, and insufficient training on identification procedures limited access to technology ranked highest across all districts. This was most evident in EPD, which recorded a weighted mean of 3.30, suggesting a significant obstacle in utilizing scientific tools essential for accurate human remains identification. Difficulty in inter-agency collaboration was registered at the lowest means across districts, with NPD posting the lowest at 2.65, suggesting that coordination remains a persistent yet slightly less severe concern. Insufficient training was also consistently rated as a moderate challenge, with minimal variation across districts, indicating a general need for enhanced capacity-building programs in forensic procedures.

**Table 4.2.** Challenges of Police Investigators in Terms of Human Remains

Task	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Limited access to forensic technology and equipment	3.18	0.37	Moderate Challenge
Difficulties in inter-agency collaboration	2.81	0.4	Moderate Challenge
Insufficient training on identification procedures	2.86	0.4	Moderate Challenge
Overall Weighted Mean	2.95	0.39	Moderate Challenge

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Highly Challenged, 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Challenge, 1.75-2.49 – Mildly Challenged, 1.00-1.74 – Not Challenged

These findings are supported by research from Cruz and Herrera (2022), who emphasize the critical role of forensic readiness in law enforcement operations, particularly in identifying human remains. Without adequate tools and inter-agency coordination, the potential for misidentification or evidence degradation increases. Furthermore, a study by Ramos and Dizon (2021) suggests that the lack of structured forensic training in local policing units in the Philippines contributes to investigative bottlenecks, particularly in rural or resource-limited areas. These studies collectively underscore the need for sustained investment in forensic infrastructure and training to enhance the efficacy of human remains investigations.

Table 4.3 presents the challenges faced by police investigators in relation to crime documentation across the five police districts. All districts reported a consistent level of moderate challenge, as indicated by their overall weighted means: SPD (2.90), MPD (2.80), EPD (3.03), NPD (2.68), and QCPD (2.88). These values reflect a shared perception that while crime

documentation procedures are generally implemented, significant barriers still exist that hinder their full efficiency and accuracy.

The most consistently cited challenge across all districts is maintaining the chain of custody during evidence handling, with the highest weighted mean recorded in EPD (3.10), followed by SPD (3.00) and QCPD (2.95). This finding signals that procedural lapses or a lack of procedural clarity in safeguarding evidence from contamination or misplacement remains a substantial concern. Similarly, insufficient training on documentation protocols received moderate challenge ratings across the board, suggesting a widespread need for refresher courses or technical capacity-building on standardized documentation procedures. Notably, a lack of proper documentation equipment also surfaced as a persistent challenge, particularly in the EPD (3.00) and SPD (2.85), revealing potential limitations in the availability of cameras, evidence kits, and other recording tools crucial for maintaining accurate and admissible case files.

**Table 4.3.** Challenges of Police Investigators in Terms of Crime Documentation

Task	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Limited access to forensic technology and equipment	3.18	0.37	Moderate Challenge
Difficulties in inter-agency collaboration	2.81	0.4	Moderate Challenge
Insufficient training on identification procedures	2.86	0.4	Moderate Challenge
Overall Weighted Mean	2.95	0.39	Moderate Challenge

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Highly Challenged, 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Challenge, 1.75-2.49 – Mildly Challenged, 1.00-1.74 – Not Challenged

These findings align with the study of Gonzales and Medina (2021), which emphasized that crime documentation is a critical yet often overlooked component of the investigative process. Their research highlighted that inadequate equipment and weak procedural training compromise the evidentiary value of reports, reducing the chances of a successful prosecution. Furthermore, De Vera and Almazan (2023) argue that maintaining the integrity of the chain of custody is crucial to ensuring due process and judicial credibility, emphasizing the importance of investing in forensic documentation technology and providing continuous training to law enforcement officers. These insights support the present findings and highlight the pressing need to address these moderate but recurring challenges in crime documentation.

The challenges identified underscore the urgent need for digital transformation, enhanced legal training, and organizational reforms to support timely, accurate, and legally sound documentation. Strengthening the documentation process not only ensures evidentiary integrity but also promotes accountability and efficiency throughout the investigative and judicial continuum.

The results presented in Table 6 illustrate the extent to which police investigators across five districts Southern Police District (SPD), Manila Police District (MPD), Eastern Police District (EPD), Northern Police District (NPD), and Quezon City Police District (QCPD) perform specific roles aligned with investigative protocols.

The overall weighted mean scores reveal that, in general, investigators “Often” perform these roles, with the exception of the EPD, which recorded an “Always” interpretation with an overall weighted mean of 3.52. This suggests that EPD personnel are more consistent in executing their investigative responsibilities compared to personnel in other districts.

Notably, roles such as conducting interviews with family and witnesses, preparing documentation, and thoroughly documenting crime scenes were marked as “Always” performed by most districts, reflecting high engagement in fundamental investigative procedures.

Among the tasks, conducting interviews received the highest mean ratings across all districts, with EPD at 3.70 and SPD at 3.60, suggesting a strong prioritization of information gathering at the onset of investigations. In contrast, the lowest ratings were observed in the role of securing and processing discovery sites of human remains, particularly in NPD (2.90), which, although still categorized as “Often,” may indicate operational or logistical challenges in handling complex scenes. Coordination with forensic experts and inter-agency search efforts was also rated slightly lower across all districts, suggesting areas where interprofessional collaboration could be improved. Despite the overall “Often” performance level, the standard deviations (ranging from 0.41 to 0.50) indicate a relatively consistent implementation of tasks among investigators, with minimal variation in role execution across personnel within each district.

The results highlight the operational strengths of the police investigators, particularly in direct field actions such as interviewing, evidence documentation, and crime scene processing.

However, there remains a need to reinforce protocols that involve collaboration with external agencies and experts, which are essential for a multidisciplinary approach to complex investigations such as human remains identification. The slightly lower mean scores in these areas suggest opportunities for capacity building and cross-agency coordination, which are critical in ensuring holistic and efficient investigative procedures.

**Table 5.** Respondents Describe Potential Solutions to Overcome these Challenges in the Investigation

**Key Informant No. 1**

Verbatim Response

Kailangan po talaga namin ng updated at malinaw na mga guidelines para mas mapadali ang trabaho namin. Marami pa pong kailangang isama tulad ng mga bagong teknolohiya sa forensic.

English Translation

We really need updated and clearer guidelines to make our work easier. Many things still need to be included, such as new forensic technologies.

Theme

Need for Updated Forensic Guidelines



**Key Informant No. 2**

Verbatim Response

Hindi po sapat ang kasalukuyang training na ibinibigay. Sana po magkaroon ng mas maraming practical sessions at workshops para sa mga investigators.

English Translation

The current training provided is insufficient. We hope there will be more practical sessions and workshops for investigators.

Theme

Insufficient Practical Training for Investigators

**Key Informant No. 3**

Verbatim Response

Dapat po mas kilalanin ang papel ng barangay bilang community liaison para mas maging maayos ang pagtutulungan ng pulis at mamamayan.

English Translation

The role of the barangay as a community liaison should be recognized more so that police and community cooperation can improve.

Theme

Recognizing Barangay Role in Community Policing

**Key Informant No. 4**

Verbatim Response

Kailangan po ang mas malalim na pag-intindi sa mental health ng mga biktima pati na rin ng mga imbestigador para maiwasan ang burnout.

English Translation

A deeper understanding of mental health for both victims and investigators is needed to prevent burnout.

Theme

Mental Health Awareness for Victims and Investigators

**Key Informant No. 5**

Verbatim Response

Dumarami po ang kaso ng cybercrime kaya mahalaga na matutunan namin ang digital forensic skills

English Translation

Cybercrime cases are increasing, so it is important that we learn digital forensic skills

Theme

Rising Need for Digital Forensic Skills

**Key Informant No. 6**

Verbatim Response

Ang problema po namin ay mabagal ang proseso dahil sa sobrang dami ng dokumento at koordinasyon sa iba't ibang ahensya.

English Translation

Our problem is slow processing because of the many documents and coordination needed between different agencies.

Theme

Slow Processing Due to Bureaucratic Burdens

**Key Informant No. 7**

Verbatim Response

Kulang po kami sa mga kagamitan at kagamitan sa forensic lab na kailangan para sa mabilis na pagsusuri ng mga ebidensya.

English Translation

We lack the equipment and facilities in the forensic lab needed for quick evidence analysis.

Theme

Lack of Forensic Equipment and Facilities

**Key Informant No. 8**

Verbatim Response

Minsan po nagkakaroon ng hindi pagkakaintindihan sa pagitan ng mga ahensya na nagiging dahilan ng pagkaantala sa kaso.

English Translation

Sometimes misunderstandings between agencies cause delays in case handling.

Theme

Agency Miscommunication Causing Delays

**Key Informant No. 9**

Verbatim Response

Napakahirap po sa urban area dahil sa dami ng tao at traffic na nagpapabagal sa pag-access sa crime scene.

English Translation

It is very difficult in urban areas because of the population density and traffic, which slow down access to crime scenes.

Theme

Urban Logistics Hindering Crime Scene Access

**Key Informant No. 10**

Verbatim Response

Maraming tauhan ang na-e-experience ang emotional fatigue kaya kailangan po namin ng counseling at suporta.

English Translation

Many personnel experience emotional fatigue, so we need counseling and support.

Theme

Need for Counseling and Emotional Support

**Key Informant No. 11**

Verbatim Response

Para po mapabilis ang trabaho, mas maganda po kung may mga espesyal na task force na tututok sa mga komplikadong kaso.

English Translation

To speed up work, it would be better if there were specialized task forces focusing on complex cases.

Theme

Creation of Specialized Task Forces

**Key Informant No. 12**

Verbatim Response

Kailangan po naming ng mas modernong forensic equipment para sa mas maayos na pag-aanalisa ng ebidensya.

English Translation

We need more modern forensic equipment for better evidence analysis.

Theme

Need for Modern Forensic Equipment

**Key Informant No. 13**

Verbatim Response

Sana po ay magkaroon ng standardized na proseso para sa dokumentasyon ng mga kaso para hindi malito ang lahat ng ahensya.

English Translation

Hopefully, there will be standardized processes for case documentation so all agencies won't be confused.

Theme

Standardization of Case Documentation

**Key Informant No. 14**

Verbatim Response

Mahalaga po ang koordinasyon sa pagitan ng mga ahensya para maiwasan ang duplicate na trabaho at delays.

English Translation

Coordination among agencies is important to avoid duplicated work and delays.

Theme

Interagency Coordination to Avoid Duplication

**Key Informant No. 15**

Verbatim Response

Ang teamwork po ay susi sa matagumpay na paglutas ng kaso kaya dapat palakasin ang pagtutulungan.

English Translation

Teamwork is key to successful case resolution, so cooperation should be strengthened.

Theme

Enhancing Teamwork in Investigations

**Key Informant No. 16**

Verbatim Response

Mahusay na paghawak ng ebidensya ang isa sa pinakamahalagang kasanayan para maiwasan ang contamination.

English Translation

Proper evidence handling is one of the most important skills to prevent contamination.

Theme

Proper Handling to Prevent Evidence Contamination

**Key Informant No. 17**

Verbatim Response

Kailangan ng mahusay na interview skills para makakuha ng tama at kumpletong impormasyon mula sa mga testigo at suspek.

English Translation

Good interviewing skills are needed to obtain accurate and complete information from witnesses and suspects.

Theme

Improving Interviewing Techniques

**Key Informant No. 18**

Verbatim Response

Mahusay na koordinasyon sa forensic team ang nakakatulong para mas mapabilis ang proseso ng pagsisiyasat.

English Translation

Good coordination with the forensic team helps to speed up the investigation process.

Theme

Coordination with Forensic Team to Expedite Cases

**Key Informant No. 19**

Verbatim Response

Kailangang maging flexible at adaptable ang mga imbestigador sa pagharap sa mga bagong sitwasyon.

English Translation

Investigators need to be flexible and adaptable in facing new situations.

Theme

Investigator Adaptability to Emerging Situations

**Key Informant No. 20**

Verbatim Response

Laging pag-aralan ang mga bagong pamamaraan sa imbestigasyon para manatiling epektibo.

English Translation

Always study new investigation methods to remain effective.

Theme

Commitment to Updated Investigative Techniques

**Key Informant No. 21**

Verbatim Response

Mas mahalaga ang continuous training para hindi tayo maiwan sa mabilis na pagbabago sa teknolohiya.

English Translation

Continuous training is more important so we don't get left behind by rapid technological changes.

Theme

Importance of Continuous Training in Technology



**Key Informant No. 22**

Verbatim Response

Ang pagkakaroon ng updated na kaalaman sa forensic science ay makakatulong nang malaki sa paglutas ng kaso.

English Translation

Having updated knowledge in forensic science greatly helps in case resolution.

Theme

Updated Forensic Knowledge Aids Case Resolution

**Key Informant No. 23**

Verbatim Response

Dapat po palaging may oportunidad ang mga imbestigador na mag-upskill at matuto ng bagong teknolohiya.

English Translation

Investigators should always have opportunities to upskill and learn new technologies.

Theme

Upskilling Opportunities for Investigators

**Key Informant No. 24**

Verbatim Response

Sa tuloy-tuloy na pag-aaral, mas nagiging handa kami sa mga komplikadong kaso.

English Translation

Through continuous learning, we become more prepared for complex cases.

Theme

Ongoing Education for Complex Case Preparedness

**Key Informant No. 25**

Verbatim Response

Ang pagsasanay at pag-develop ng skills ay susi sa pagiging epektibong imbestigador.

English Translation

Training and skill development are keys to becoming an effective investigator.

Theme

Training and Skill Development for Investigator Effectiveness

**Table 6.** Relationship between the Use of Standardized Operational Guidelines by Police Investigators and the Efficiency of Criminal Investigations Involving Missing Person, Human Remains Identification, and Crime Documentation

Investigation Area	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value (Significance)	Sample Size (n)	Interpretation
Missing Persons Investigations	0.78	0.000	25	Strong positive, significant
Human Remains Identification	0.72	0.001	25	Strong positive, significant
Crime Documentation	0.81	0.000	25	Very strong positive, significant

Table 6 presents the statistical analysis examining the relationship between the use of standardized operational guidelines by police investigators and the effectiveness of criminal investigations across three key areas: missing persons investigations, human remains identification, and crime documentation.

The Pearson correlation coefficients indicate a strong positive relationship for all three investigation areas. Specifically, missing persons investigations show a correlation of 0.78, human remains identification 0.72, and crime documentation 0.81. These values suggest that as the use of standardized operational guidelines increases, so does the effectiveness of the investigations.

All correlations are statistically significant with p-values less than 0.05 (specifically 0.000 or 0.001), which confirms that the observed relationships are unlikely due to chance. The sample size of 25 respondents provides sufficient data to support these conclusions within the context of the study. The very strong correlation observed in crime documentation ( $r = 0.81$ ) highlights that standardized guidelines are especially critical in ensuring thorough, accurate, and legally compliant documentation processes, which directly impacts case outcomes.

**Table 7.** Contribution Of Investigative Skills

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Missing persons investigations	3.46	0.43	High Contribution
Human remains identification	3.29	0.40	High Contribution
Crime documentation and evidence handling	3.42	0.40	High Contribution
Overall Weighted Mean	3.39	0.41	High Contribution

Legend: 4.00-3.25 – Very High Contribution, 2.50-3.49 – High Contribution, 1.75-2.49 – Moderate Contribution, 1.00-1.74 – No Contribution

The data presented in Table 7 reflect the perceived contribution of investigative skills across three core operational areas: missing persons investigations, human remains identification, and crime documentation and evidence handling. Investigators from the five police districts Southern Police District (SPD), Manila Police District (MPD), Eastern Police District (EPD), Northern Police District (NP), and Quezon City Police District (QCPD) uniformly assessed their skills as having high to very high contribution to the effectiveness of their work. The overall weighted mean values confirm this perception, with EPD scoring the highest at 3.52, indicating a very high level of perceived contribution, followed closely by SPD and MPD. NPD reported the lowest score at 3.18, which still falls under the high contribution category, suggesting that while all districts value investigative competencies, differences in implementation or resource availability may slightly affect perceived performance.

In terms of specific tasks, missing persons investigations received the most favorable evaluations. EPD scored the highest at 3.60, while SPD and MPD also reported very high contributions. NP and QCPD rated this area slightly lower at 3.25 and 3.40, respectively, though still within the high contribution range. This highlights the investigators' recognition of the importance of their skills in initiating leads, interviewing witnesses, and coordinating initial response actions. Human remains identification, while also rated highly, received slightly lower mean values across districts, possibly reflecting the technical challenges and resource demands associated with this task. Crime documentation and evidence handling showed strong ratings across all districts, with EPD once again leading at 3.55, suggesting that meticulous record-keeping and evidence preservation are widely valued and routinely practiced. The standard deviations, which range from 0.38 to 0.46, indicate a relatively consistent perception among investigators regarding their skill contribution. This suggests institutional alignment in training and expectations, although slight variations may reflect differences in district resources, specialization, or caseloads. The consistency in

high ratings across all areas and districts demonstrates a strong foundation in investigative practices

These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Ortega and Dela Rosa (2022), who emphasized that the effectiveness of police investigations is closely linked to the development and application of key investigative competencies. Their study concluded that investigators with strong foundational skills in interviewing, evidence management, and inter-agency coordination significantly increase the chances of successful case resolution. Moreover, regular capacity-building programs and support mechanisms were identified as critical in enhancing investigators' confidence and performance, which aligns with the generally high contribution levels reflected in this table

## CONCLUSIONS

The researcher presents the following conclusions of the study:

1. The investigative workforce is demographically diverse, enhancing the strength and flexibility of investigative operations.
2. Operational guidelines, while effective, require continuous improvement and context-based training.
3. Investigators effectively fulfill core responsibilities, yet moderate challenges remain due to gaps in resources, coordination, and training.
4. Adherence to standardized procedures significantly improves investigative outcomes.
5. Investigative competencies are critical to resolving cases and require systematic development.
6. Overcoming structural and operational constraints demands investment in tools, inter-agency systems, and personnel development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the conclusions, the researcher gives the following recommendations:

1. Conduct periodic reviews and digital dissemination of operational guidelines.
2. Develop continuous, scenario-driven training programs covering trauma-informed and role-specific approaches.
3. Establish formal inter-agency collaboration through joint task forces and communication platforms.
4. Upgrade forensic laboratories and databases to ensure accessibility across units.
5. Provide resources for specialized teams, mental health support, and logistical reinforcement.
6. Implement standardized digital crime documentation platforms with integrated auditing.
7. Promote community policing and education to encourage early reporting and cooperation.
8. Institutionalize regular professional development through certifications, seminars, and cross-training initiatives.

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