

Workworld of Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators in Norppo, Philippines

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500838>

Received: 18 May 2026; Accepted: 23 May 2026; Published: 15 June 2026

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of police officers serving as Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators within the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NOrPPO). The study placed particular emphasis on how these investigators navigate the complexities of handling sensitive cases, seeking justice for vulnerable sectors, and performing their duties within a specialized legal and social framework.

This study employed a phenomenological–transcendental research design to capture the distinct features of the informants' lived experiences as specialized investigators. Ten (10) WCPD investigators served as informants and were chosen through purposive sampling, satisfying the predetermined qualifications of the study. Of these, six participated in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), while four took part in an In-Depth Interview (IDI). The research was conducted across selected stations under the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NOrPPO). The research instruments included an informed consent form, a transmittal letter, and a validated interview guide.

The study identified nine (9) emergent themes categorized into three core areas of the informants' professional lives. The Positive Experiences were encapsulated in the themes: Deriving Satisfaction from Justice and Achieving Professional Success Milestones. In contrast, the Negative Experiences and obstacles faced were defined by: Victim Hesitancy Barriers and External Intimidation Pressures. To address these challenges, the investigators relied on Coping Mechanisms categorized under: Family Support Systems and Professional Emotional Objectivity. Finally, the Aspirations of the informants to improve service quality centered on three themes: Advanced Trauma-Informed Training, Inter-Agency Collaboration Linkages, and Consistent Legal Refreshers.

The study recommends that the Philippine National Police (PNP) prioritize the institutionalization of trauma-informed investigative protocols and provide regular legal symposiums to keep investigators abreast of evolving jurisprudence. It further advocates for the strengthening of multi-sectoral partnerships (DOH, DSWD, and NGOs) to mitigate victim hesitancy and the establishment of dedicated mental health programs for investigators to maintain emotional objectivity. Moreover, the study underscores the need for localized support systems within NOrPPO to shield investigators from external pressures, ensuring the integrity of the "work world" for those protecting women and children.

Keywords: Work World, WCPD Investigators, Phenomenological-Transcendental Research Design, Negros Oriental Police Provincial Office, Negros Oriental

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Introduction Rationale

Historically, societal structures have positioned women in domestic roles, creating environments where domestic violence could flourish unchecked. While the 1987 Philippine Constitution established fundamental equality,

specific legal protections remained absent until the establishment of the Women's and Children's Protection Desks (WCPD) in 1998 and the enactment of Republic Act No. 9262 in 2004. This legislative evolution transitioned domestic violence from a "private issue" to a multifaceted law enforcement priority.

Despite institutional progress, the "policing realities" for WCPD investigators are characterized by extreme complexity and high job demands. These officers navigate a high-stress environment where they must manage the psychological instability of victims while facing their own risk of "secondary traumatic stress" and burnout. Furthermore, female police officers face a unique intersection of "gender roles" and professional duty; they are not only public servants but also daughters, wives, and mothers who must balance oath-taken responsibilities with personal endeavors.

The emotional toll is often exacerbated when victims choose not to pursue cases due to conflicting loyalties, leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness among investigators. By exploring the lived experiences and aspirations of WCPD investigators in Dumaguete City, this study aims to address the knowledge gap regarding how these women thrive amidst high-stress scenarios. This research provides insights necessary to create strategies that support the resilience and mental health of those serving at the frontlines of women and children's protection.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This qualitative research is anchored on Self-Efficacy Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) and is supported by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model by Bakker and Demerouti (2007).

Self-efficacy, a fundamental idea introduced by Albert Bandura, involves a person's confidence in their ability to carry out tasks and navigate situations successfully. Bandura suggests that individuals with a high level of self-efficacy are more inclined to tackle difficult challenges, remain persistent despite obstacles, and bounce back quickly from failures. This belief system influences how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and act. In educational, professional, and therapeutic environments, self-efficacy has proven to be a significant predictor of achievement and resilience.

Bandura identifies four main sources that contribute to self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Mastery experiences, which refer to previous achievements, are deemed the most impactful; when people accomplish tasks, their self-efficacy grows. Watching others (vicarious experiences) can also boost an individual's confidence in their abilities, especially when the model has similar traits to the observer. Verbal persuasion, such as support from others, can inspire individuals to take on challenges, while positive emotional states reinforce a greater belief in self-efficacy.

The Self-Efficacy Theory plays a crucial role in studies focusing on personal initiative, motivation, and performance. It emphasizes that individuals' belief in their capabilities can impact not only their behaviors but also their emotional responses and decisions. As a foundational theory, self-efficacy aids research into how internal convictions shape external actions, establishing it as essential in examining academic achievement, career growth, behavioral modifications, and health-related programs.

The JD-R model complements Self-Efficacy Theory by providing a framework for understanding the interaction between professional stressors and available support. This model posits that every occupation has risk factors associated with job stress, categorized into Job Demands (e.g., heavy caseloads, secondary traumatic stress, and emotional labor) and Job Resources (e.g., organizational support, specialized training, and personal resilience). While high job demands can lead to burnout, job resources—specifically the personal resource of high self-efficacy—can stimulate personal growth and mitigate the physiological and psychological costs of the work.

The establishment and functioning of the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) are based on various Philippine laws. Republic Act No. 9262, also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, requires the safeguarding of women and children from maltreatment. Republic Act No. 7610, referred to as the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act, offers extensive protection for minors. These legislations call for specialized units within the Philippine National Police (PNP) to manage cases involving these vulnerable populations (Philippine Information Agency).

In Dumaguete City, the city government has bolstered these national directives by setting up programs and facilities designed to safeguard women and children. The establishment of the Child Protection Unit (CPU) and the Women's Crisis Center showcases the city's dedication to enforcing these laws and offering thorough assistance to victims (*Dumaguete LGU, Consuelo Foundation Launch Child Protection Unit*, 2013).

These legal structures establish the obligations of WCPD investigators and serve as the foundation for their training, resource distribution, and operational methods. It is crucial for investigators to grasp these laws in order to carry out their responsibilities efficiently and adhere to the legal system's constraints (De Lana et al., 2024).

A research paper titled "Training Needs Assessment (TNA) of the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators: Basis for a Proposed Enhancement Program," authored by De Lana, Tanigue, and Villa (2024), underscores the importance of ongoing training for WCPD staff. The study reveals shortcomings in areas such as psychosocial support, administrative management, and the deployment of human resources. It suggests creating comprehensive training initiatives to remedy these gaps and enhance service delivery (De Lana et al., 2024).

In the Cordillera Administrative Region, Anamong-Davis (2013) conducted a study assessing the execution of programs and services for WCPD. The findings indicated that although police officers had confidence in their ability to deliver services, clients viewed the level of satisfaction as only moderate. Identified challenges included a shortage of staff, insufficient specialized training, and limited resources. The study emphasizes the necessity for improved training, increased personnel, and enhanced resource distribution to elevate the quality of services (Bitonio, 2014).

Dumaguete City has implemented several initiatives to support women and children. The establishment of the Child Protection Unit (CPU) and the Women's Crisis Center provides victims with access to comprehensive services, including legal assistance, counseling, and temporary shelter. These facilities demonstrate the city's proactive approach to addressing violence against women and children and highlight the importance of local government support in enhancing WCPD operations (*League of Cities of the Philippines - Providing Safe Spaces for Women and Children in Cities*, n.d.).

In the study by De Guzman and Frank (2004), many policewomen have experienced difficulties adapting to a predominantly male-dominated organization. He further stated that in a traditionally male-dominated workplace, the police force can be a challenging environment for female officers. In a patriarchal culture, women face disadvantages due to gender-related issues that can occur in the workplace.

In the study of Prenzler and Sinclair (2013), gender-based challenges, lack of recognition, and operational barriers affect women in policing – insights for understanding female investigators at the WCPD were discussed. The study highlights that, globally, women are underrepresented in police forces, which is more pronounced in senior ranks and specialized units. Additionally, women officers are often assigned to roles that align with traditional gender norms, such as handling cases involving children, domestic violence, or sexual abuse. The research also identifies several obstacles hindering women's career advancement, including discriminatory recruitment practices, lack of mentorship, and organizational cultures that favor male officers. This study also points out the lack of comprehensive data on gender representation in policing, which hampers the development and assessment of effective gender equality strategies.

Another study relevant to this research is Violanti and Aron's (1995) study, titled "Police Stressors: Variations in Perception among Police Personnel." This study provides a detailed examination of stress factors affecting law enforcement officers, with particular relevance to units like the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD). This research involved 103 officers from a large New York State police agency, achieving a 93% response rate through voluntary and confidential surveys. The study's findings included the primary stressors, which included the act of killing someone in the line of duty and organizational stressors, such as administrative burdens and perceived lack of support.

In the study entitled "Physical Evidence of Police Officer Stress" by Anderson, Litzenberger, and Plecas (2002), a comprehensive analysis of the physiological and psychological stress experienced by police officers during their duties. The research in this study utilized heart rate monitoring and observational data from 76 full-shift

ride-alongs, providing empirical evidence that distinguishes between physical and psychosocial stressors in policing. The key findings of the study relate to the anticipatory stress exhibited through elevated heart rates at the beginning of the officers' shifts. Coping mechanisms were also emphasized in this study, and it was found that officers employing problem-focused or approach-oriented coping mechanisms tended to manage stress better than those using avoidance strategies.

In the study of Bakker and Demerouti (2007), titled "The Job Demands-Resources Model: State of the Art", which presents a comprehensive framework for understanding employee well-being and performance across various occupational settings. This model is particularly relevant for high stress professions, such as investigative roles within Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), where balancing job demands and available resources is crucial. The core concepts of this study present the job demands wherein physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job require sustained effort and are associated with physiological and psychological costs; and job resources which refers to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that help in achieving work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth and development.

Further, Policewomen who are investigating women and children cases suffers secondary traumatic stress, burnout and has adapted a specific coping strategies in order to continue doing their job. According to Alagos, Peralta, & Uy (2022), most of the policewomen handling cases are highly sensitive with clients, experiences fear, anxiety, have some intrusive thoughts, heightened awareness and sleeplessness. They also explored that these policewomen suffer exhaustion, anger and irritability at home or work, demotivation, susceptibility to physical illness or problems. Furthermore, they have explained the coping strategies employed by their informant such as seeking social support, balancing professional and social life, finding positivity at work, self-efficacy, smoking and alcohol consumption, and stress eating. The findings of their study suggested that constant exposure to traumatized populations can prompt secondary traumatic stress development and burnout, but several coping strategies can help alleviate its possible development.

The work of police officers has many occupational stressors and exposures that can lead to increased risk for mental health morbidities. Officers regularly encounter individuals in pain or distress, face threats to their own safety, manage intense emotions under provocation, and bear the weighty responsibilities of carrying firearms and safeguarding the public. These factors have all been identified as major contributors to occupational stress. Moreover, police actions are consistently observed and evaluated due to the high societal and political expectations placed on public service roles (Purba&Demou, 2019).

Police officers are tasked primarily with policing which is a stressful occupation that harms police officer's mental and physical health, performance, and interactions with citizens. According to Queiros, Passos, Bartolo, Marques, Silva & Pereira (2020), police officers are regularly exposed to the trauma and suffering of the victims and survivors, which can take a toll on their emotional well-being.

Sometimes, the cause of stress are the victims themselves, whenever they choose not to pursue in filing of cases. Female police officers frequently encounter various emotional stressors when victims decide against filing a case (Nisar & Rasheed, 2020). Victims are sometimes anxious with their decisions since it involves with their partners, and Police officers are deeply committed to supporting victims and seeking justice on their behalf, so when cases are not pursued, they may feel a sense of frustration, disappointment, or helplessness (Sherwood, Hegarty, Vallieres, Hyland, Murphy, Fitzgerald & Reid, 2019).

Women police officers are essential in building trust, especially when equipped with trauma-informed and gender-sensitive training. Nonetheless, they face obstacles such as victim's conflicting loyalties and fear of reprisal, highlighting the importance of emotional resilience. According to the study of Torres, et. al (2024), states that, in order for the officer's cope with stress, they rely on family support, professional strategies like emotional compartmentalization, self-care routines including mindfulness and physical activity.

Accordingly, exploring the plight and aspirations of Women and Children Investigators in Dumaguete City aims to address the knowledge gap by providing valuable insights regarding the experiences of WCPD investigators so that strategies and recommendations may be created to address the problems the informants face.

This study will explore the experiences of WCPD investigators in Dumaguete City, provide a deeper understanding, and create ways to support our police women in order for them to continue serving with the best versions of themselves.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

This research study explored the workworld of Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators assigned to the Negros Oriental Police Provincial Office in Negros Oriental, Philippines.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What are the experiences of the informants in the performance of their duties?
2. How do the informants address the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties?
3. What are the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their services?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study benefited the following persons or institutions:

Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators. The findings of this study contributed significantly to the formulation of practical solutions and policy recommendations aimed at enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness in the performance of their duties.

Dumaguete City Police Station (DCPS). The findings of this study assisted the City Police Station by providing a viewpoint on the possible strategies or recommendations in order to improve the services provided under the WCPD section.

Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NORPPO). The results of this study helped the Provincial Level in managing and crafting programs and projects that could help improve the services provided by the WCPD personnel of each station.

Police Investigators (PI)- The findings of this study helped police investigators in navigating the complexities of handling cases involving women and children.

Philippine National Police (PNP). The results of this study provided the institution on deeper understanding of the challenges faced by WCPD investigators in handling cases against women children. Furthermore, these findings served as a basis or reference for the improvement of policies, protocols and resource allocation in strengthening the WCPD units.

National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM). The findings of this study helped in identifying key areas for crafting policies and programs that could improve the services of the PNP personnel, especially the WCPD personnel.

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The findings of this study provided the local government unit to have a deeper understanding on the tasks and responsibilities of WCPD personnel and served as a guide in crafting policies and programs that could help them in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Local Government Units (LGU). The findings of this study assisted LGUs to enhance their support programs, such as improving the operations of Barangay VAWC Desks, strengthening the inter-agency coordination for the protection and welfare of the victims.

Other Law Enforcement Agencies. The result of this study offered other law enforcement agencies by providing a framework for inter-agency collaboration, ensuring a more unified and efficient response to VAWC cases.

Prosecutors. The results of the study assisted prosecutors in identifying gaps in case handling, streamlining the filing process of VAWC cases, and promoting victim-sensitive approaches during investigation and litigation.

Courts. The findings of the study guided the courts in adopting more efficient case management strategies for VAWC cases, ensuring timely issuance of protection orders, and enhancing the sensitivity of judicial officers to the needs of victims.

Department of Social and Welfare Development (DSWD). The results of this research provided insights that were used to improve the services provided by DSWD, their shelter services, and the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the institution in addressing domestic violence cases.

Victims of Domestic Violence. The results of this research benefitted from the improved policies and practices derived from this study, such as faster response time, better access to support services, and more empowering environment for reporting abuse.

Barangay Officials. The findings of this study assisted the Barangay officials in proper handling of VAWC cases with proper documentation and providing a much deeper understanding in order to serve the victims with an empowering environment.

The Community. The results of this study highlighted the importance of community involvement in preventing domestic violence by fostering awareness, reducing stigma against victims, and encouraging a culture of reporting and intervention.

Researcher. As a researcher, the result of this study aided in providing a valuable source on issues related to violence against women and their children (VAWC). This study offered an empirical data and real-world insights that could be used as a foundation in research and study.

Future Researchers. The outcome of this study contributed as reference material for future researchers who wish to explore the challenging work of WCPD Investigators. Moreover, this study provided a venue for further research on policy development, intervention programs and innovative investigation techniques that would enhance the justice system in terms of domestic violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study focused on the plight and aspirations of the WCPD Investigators by exploring their lived experiences through a phenomenological study. To effectively capture the depth and intricacy of their personal and professional situations, a qualitative research approach was utilized as the most fitting, specifically through a phenomenological study.

A qualitative study is a form of naturalistic investigation focused on comprehending specific phenomena within their natural environments. The researcher employed a phenomenological approach, based on Husserl's (1970) framework, which requires collecting descriptions of experiences before reflecting on them.

A phenomenological approach was utilized, based on the philosophical ideas of Edmund Husserl (1970). Phenomenology focuses on examining and illustrating how individuals perceive a specific phenomenon, without presuming or generalizing about those perceptions. It necessitated that the researcher "bracket" or set aside their own biases and preconceptions to understand the phenomenon from the participants' viewpoints. By employing this method, the researcher sought to uncover the core of the WCPD investigators' work environment, including their feelings, motivations, challenges, and sense of purpose. Phenomenology involves the philosophical exploration and characterization of conscious experiences in their diverse forms, independent of the question of the objective reality of what is experienced. The focus of a phenomenological study was on individuals' experiences related to specific phenomena and how they understand the encounters they have had.

In phenomenology, the primary focus is on consciousness and the experiences of individuals, how they perceive, feel, think, and act in relation to the world around them. Thus, this study aimed not just to observe outward actions or quantify performance, but to comprehend the significance behind those actions from the perspective of the investigators themselves. This entailed conducting in-depth interviews, employing reflective listening, and performing thematic analysis, which facilitated detailed and rich descriptions of the phenomenon. Ultimately, the phenomenological approach enabled the researcher to understand the core essence of being a WCPD investigator in Dumaguete, how they manage their responsibilities, balance justice with compassion, and derive meaning from their work despite societal and institutional challenges.

The most appropriate approach for this study was phenomenological research, as it explored the “whys”, “hows”, and “wherefores” of women investigators by providing a deeper understanding of their work in a specialized law enforcement unit.

Research Environment

This research study was conducted in the Negros Oriental Police Provincial Office (NOrPPO), concentrating specifically in the areas of Dumaguete City, Bacong, and Dauin. The choice of these research locations was influenced by the existence of active Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) at their corresponding Municipal or City Police Stations, which acted as essential sources of data for this phenomenological study.

The Negros Island Region (NIR), also referred to as Region 18, was officially reestablished as an administrative region in the Philippines on December 31, 2024. This region includes the provinces of Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor, forming a unified socio-political and geographical unit. NIR is made up of 19 cities, 44 municipalities, and 1,353 barangays, with a cumulative population of 4,760,340 according to the 2020 Census. The creation of NIR was viewed as a tactical decision aimed at improving administrative effectiveness, fostering economic growth, and strengthening regional identity throughout Negros Island and its surrounding areas.

This study was specifically conducted in Dumaguete City, the Capital City of Negros Oriental, Bacong, and Dauin. Dumaguete City ranked third on the income class among the cities and municipalities with a population of 134,103 (2020 Census). The city is composed of 30 barangays, located on the southeastern coast of Negros Island, near the mouth of the Banica River. It is known for its peaceful atmosphere and is famously referred to as the “City of Gentle People”.

The informants of this study were all assigned at Dumaguete City Police Station located at Dr. V. Locsin St., Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental. This Police Station is currently headed by P/LTC Don Richmon Conag. The Women and Children Protection’s Desk (WCPD) is headed by P/CPT Teejay Rochelle Asok. A group discussion was conducted with six (6) WCPD investigators from this unit, as they are vital informants whose shared experiences contributed to a thematic comprehension of the WCPD work environment in an urban context.

The Municipality of Bacong is situated immediately south of Dumaguete City and is part of the first congressional district of Negros Oriental. As a 4th class municipality with a population of 41,207 according to the 2020 census, Bacong is recognized for its historical importance and its developing local economy.

The Bacong Municipal Police Station (MPS) carries out local mandates regarding peace and order and also serves as a site for data gathering. The personnel from the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) stationed here are tasked with handling cases related to women and children within the municipality. Two (2) individual informants from Bacong MPS, assigned to the WCPD, took part in this study by participating in one-on-one in-depth interviews. Their perspectives will provide a comparative analysis between the operations of WCPD investigators at the municipal level and those at the city level.

Dauin is a coastal town situated south of Dumaguete City, renowned for its ecological tourism sites and marine protected areas. With a population of 30,018 according to the 2020 Census, it is categorized as a 4th class municipality and plays a significant role in the province’s tourism industry.

The Dauin Municipal Police Station (MPS) is responsible for law enforcement in the area and has a functioning Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) that addresses cases involving vulnerable groups. Similar to Bacong, Dauin is included in this research for comparative analysis. Two (2) personnel from the WCPD at Dauin MPS acted as individual informants, engaging in detailed interviews to delve into their unique work experiences within a more rural and tourism-focused environment.

Research Informants

The respondents of this study were the women investigators assigned to the Dumaguete City Police Station in Dumaguete City, Bacong Municipal Police Station and Dauin Municipal Police Station, in Negros Oriental, who expressed their willingness, commitment, and interest in participating in this study. Thus, the researcher carefully and circumspectly chose ten (10) participants who disclosed their individual experiences, including the challenges of being a woman and a children's investigator.

To guarantee the depth and significance of the data, only individuals possessing five (5) years in service, two (2) years of experience as WCPD investigators, who have undergone the Criminal Investigation Course (CIC) and WCPD trainings, specialized courses and other related investigation course, are deemed eligible for involvement. This criterion was established to leverage their extensive background in fieldwork, case handling, and the institutional obstacles encountered when investigating cases related to women and children.

Under this qualitative research, the ten (10) participants were classified into two sets. The first set consisted of four (4) informants who participated in-depth interviews individually, which came from Bacong Municipal Police Station and Dauin Municipal Police Station. This approach enabled a more thorough examination of their personal stories, emotional reactions, and individual viewpoints regarding their work. The second set comprised six (6) informants who will participate in a focus group discussion which will be coming from Dumaguete City Police Station. This approach aimed to promote open conversations, shared insights, and collective understanding about their experiences within the unit.

Research Instrument

For this research, the researcher designed an interview guide, which was reviewed by the adviser, in a manner that allows the researcher to identify the experiences and challenges of the informants. The interview guide was developed to guarantee consistency with the authorized Statement of the Problem and underwent through a thorough validation process by the advisor, as well as received approval from the panel members before it is utilized.

To ensure the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the interview guide, the researcher submitted an initial draft of the questionnaires to be assessed by the panel of experts. The panel of experts provided feedback on the revisions and refined the provided questions to enhance their accuracy and depth in capturing important details.

The interview guide utilized in this research aimed to collect comprehensive, personal, and thoughtful responses from WCPD Investigators about their experiences while carrying out their responsibilities. The researcher introduced the guidelines and informed the informants on voluntariness and confidential nature of their responses. Right after the introduction, the researcher conducted the interview based on the three (3) key thematic sections, which are grounded in the research's Statement of the Problem. The first part is the plights in the performance of duties, which explores hardships, challenges, and emotional burdens experienced by the informants. The second part is on how the informants cope with, manage, and respond to various difficulties they face in the line of their duties. The final section is the aspirations for service improvement which focuses on the informants' hope, goals, and visions for themselves and the improvement of WCPD services.

Research Procedures

Upon approval of the research topic, the researcher conducted an initial field visit to identify potential informants. After the pre-determination stage, the researcher returned to formally sought the informants' consent to participate in the study. Before the interviews, each informant was provided with an informed consent form

explaining the purpose, process, and voluntary nature of the study. Only those who agreed and signed the form were included in the data collection.

Data Collection. The data collection method utilized in this research consisted of in-depth interviews with each respondent. Prior to the actual interviews, the researcher explained the study's objectives and assured the informants of strict confidentiality. Group Discussion was conducted in the Pink Room of Dumaguete City Police Station (DCPS), which lasted for 30 to 40 minutes. The structured interview guide was used to prompt informants, and follow-up questions were asked to elicit deeper insights into their experiences as WCPD investigators. The researcher ensured to record the audio transcript of the respondents during the interview. The researcher used an audio recorder and the recordings were transcribed verbatim before the data was analyzed.

Data Analysis. The data analysis method used in this study was the phenomenological approach. According to Meyers (2019), Colaizzi's distinctive seven-step process provided a clear and thorough understanding of the phenomenon being explored, grounded in the accounts of those who had directly experienced it. This analysis relied heavily on the detailed descriptions shared by the informants.

Furthermore, this study employed Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method to analyze the interview transcripts of WCPD Investigators. As demonstrated by Shosha (2012), this approach involved a systematic seven-step process: initially, the researcher reads and rereads all verbatim transcripts to gain an overall understanding of the phenomenon. The second step involved identifying key statements or phrases from the informants' responses. Third, these significant statements were analyzed to derive their underlying meanings. In the fourth step, these meanings were organized into clusters of themes, which then developed into broader emergent themes. The fifth step entails crafting a comprehensive and detailed description of the phenomenon. The sixth step includes integrating any new or relevant insights obtained through validation from the participants. Finally, the seventh step sought to align the findings with the authentic lived experiences of the informants.

Verbatim remarks were recorded, listened to, and then translated into English by the researcher personally. The researcher actively listened to each informant's audio recording three times and read each transcript multiple times in order to get a feel of how each person describes their lived experiences. The researcher visited the participants to present them the transcript of their conversation before studying and examining the transcripts extensively. After all, each snippet was assigned a line arrangement and code. Significant statements were extracted and given formulated meanings. The researcher acknowledged the statements that preceded and followed each major statement to form the core meaning for each significant statement. The formulated core meanings served as the foundation for the emerging themes.

Ethical Considerations. To mitigate ethical issues, this study implemented various safeguards. Additionally, protections were put in place to ensure the privacy of study informants. Honesty and transparency were maintained in the handling of information and communication linked to the research investigation. Transcripts were made available to informants, but all other study data, including informants' identities and other observations, were kept confidential. The following considerations were implemented:

Beneficence. The researcher took into account the welfare of all research respondents. Accordingly, all possible steps were taken to avoid harm or injury while performing the research activity. Appropriate rewards or tokens of appreciation were provided to each respondent.

Non-maleficence. The researcher ensured that each step of the activity did not cause harm to the participants. A review of procedures and protocols was undertaken.

Justice. Fairness and equity were ensured during the data collection activity. The welfare of the research subjects was prioritized at all times, while discrimination, bigotry, and hatred were avoided. A culture of empathy must prevail in any research activity.

Autonomy. The principle of autonomy was maintained by guaranteeing that participation is voluntary and founded on informed consent. Each participant received complete information regarding the study's purpose, scope, and procedures, including their right to decline or withdraw at any point without any repercussions. Before

taking part, a signed informed consent form were collected. This ensures that participants are making a voluntary, informed, and unpressured choice to join the study. In addition, their opinions and decisions were honored throughout the research process.

Trustworthiness. The truth value or trustworthiness of these informants were maintained in this study. Credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability were present. To acquire the informants' trust, these four elements were established before and after the interview. As a result, the informants participated and answered the questions honestly.

Credibility. This refers to the degree to which the study accurately captures the real meanings of the research informants, also known as the "truth value," is referred to as credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher ensured that integrity was observed during data collection. The researcher ensured that no pertinent information was left out and no extraneous information was included.

Transferability. Transferability, a type of external validity, refers to the degree to which the phenomenon or findings described in one study are applicable or useful to theory, practice, and future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), that is, the transferability of the research findings to other contexts. To address transferability, the researcher provided an in-depth analysis of the theories that underpinned the research, as well as the environment in which it was conducted. The researcher ensured that the data were well-described, so that anyone applying the findings to a new context would be responsible for determining whether or not it was appropriate to do so.

Confirmability. Ramsey (2010) provides more support for this, stating that confirmability refers to how effectively other sources corroborate the results. Suter (2012) supports this claim by emphasizing the need to apply impartiality and limit researcher bias in research studies. In order to prevent data from being distorted, the researcher put aside his own beliefs, presumptions, and judgments in order to address the study's confirmability. One technique guaranteed by confirmability was to employ audio-recorded interviews, note-taking, and journals consistently throughout the research.

Dependability. Time series data must be consistent across circumstances for research. Ramsey (2010) claims that dependability is a criterion that is seen as being identical to reliability and sharing a similar interest in the outcomes' stability over time. Colaizzi's approach of treating the data employing the seven (7) stages was used by the researcher to maintain consistency during the data collection and analysis in order to establish the dependability of the study. The study was trustworthy as a result.

Bracketing and Reflexivity. The researcher remained conscious that personal perspectives as a Police Officer and prior knowledge could influence the interpretation of the experiences shared by the WCPD investigators in this phenomenological study. To uphold neutrality during data processing and analysis, the researcher intentionally set aside any assumptions or preconceived notions regarding the roles, challenges, coping strategies and aspirations of WCPD Investigators.

Recognizing the potential bias, the researcher critically examined personal viewpoints throughout the research process. To promote transparency and impartiality, a reflective journal was maintained to document thoughts, reactions, and insights during the study. Through the consistent application of bracketing and reflexivity, the researcher ensured that the data was interpreted from a neutral standpoint while remaining aware of and addressing any potential influence of personal biases on the research findings

Definition Of Terms

For a better understanding of the study, the following terms are operationally defined:

Experiences of the Informants in the performance of their duties. As used by the researcher, it pertains to the methods employed by the informants in addressing the challenges related to their responsibilities and how they manage difficulties encountered in carrying out their duties.

Addressing the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties. This addresses the objectives for enhancing their role as WCPD investigators and what aspirations they may have for the advancement of their service to the community, particularly concerning women and children.

Aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their services. As used by the researcher, it refers to the individual experiences of WCPD investigators that pertain to their duties and responsibilities, particularly negative experiences and challenges in the performance of their duties.

Presentation And Analysis of Data

This chapter dealt with the presentation and analysis of data.

Presentation of Data

The data gathered was thoroughly analyzed to arrive at well-detailed evaluation of the lived experiences of the informants. Significant statements were extracted from the informant's transcripts pertaining directly to the research phenomena. Formulated ideas were constructed from the significant statements and arranged into cluster themes. Cluster themes were then regrouped and which evolved into emergent themes.

The following are the emergent themes that addressed the sub-questions, organized as follows:

I. Experiences of the Informants in the Performance of their Duties

A. Positive Experiences

1. Deriving Satisfaction from Justice
2. Achieving Professional Success Milestones

B. Negative Experiences

1. Victim Hesitancy Barriers
2. External Intimidation Pressures

II. Addressing the Challenges Encountered in the Performance of Duties

1. Family Support Systems
2. Professional Emotional Objectivity

Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of their Services

1. Advanced Trauma-Informed Training
2. Inter-Agency Collaboration Linkages
3. Consistent Legal Refreshers

The results were analyzed and presented to comprehensively delineate the workworld of Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators.

Experiences of the Informants in the Performance of their Duties

This research question seeks detailed, descriptive narratives that capture the personal lived experiences of WCPD investigators. It aims to reveal both the positive and negative aspects of their roles, encompassing moments of professional growth and success alongside the challenges, obstacles, and significant hardships they face.

Positive Experiences

Deriving Satisfaction from Justice. The first theme emerged from the informants' reflections on their professional growth and specialized training. They highlighted a comprehensive approach to development that integrated technical investigative skills with trauma-informed and ethical practices. This combination of

procedural proficiency and legal awareness prepared for the complexities of WCPD work while fostering a deeper understanding of their responsibilities towards victims. Ultimately, this holistic development covering both legal knowledge and operational readiness built a strong sense of competence and confidence, ensuring they were not only technically capable but also ethically sensitive in their pursuit of justice.

The informants shared their rewarding experiences as WCPD investigators, highlighting how their specialized role provides a deep sense of purpose. In-Depth Interview 1 said:

Gidasig ko sa kahigayonan nga makapanalipod ug makatabang sa mga babaye ug kabataan, masiguro ang ilang kaluwasan, ug makatabang sa paghatag kanila og hustisya.(IDI1:SS1). (I am motivated by the opportunity to protect and support women and children ensure their safety and help providing them justice)

In-Depth Interview 2 added that their specialized roles give a deep sense of purpose and professional satisfaction. She states:

Ang nagdasig nako sa pagtrabaho sa WCPD mao ang pagtabang ug paggiya sa mga biktima sa pang-abuso, ilabi na kadtong mga nahadlok o nagduhaduha sa pagsulti(IDI2:SS2). (what motivates me in performing my duties at the women and children protection desk is being able to help provide support and guidance to the victims of abuse, especially those who are afraid or hesitant to speak).

In-Depth Interview 3 emphasized that professional satisfaction stems from mastering the specialized procedures required to protect the vulnerable. She said:

Ang pagtabang sa mga biktima sa pang-abuso, ilabi na sa mga biktima sa lugos (rape), maoy nagdasig nako sa pagbuhat sa akong trabaho isip investigator sa WCPD (IDI3:SS1). (Helping victims of abuse, especially rape victims, is what motivates me to perform my duties as a WCPD investigators).

Informant 6 added that their motivation stems from a deep, personal connection to their role as protectors. They view their work not just as a legal duty, but as a moral responsibility rooted in their own identities. Focus Group Discussion 1 shared:

Para nako ang maka motivate ko as wcpd investigator usa naman gud ko nga inahan at the same time babaye pd ko. Silbi naa npod sa akong pagkatawo, naa koy responsibilidad nga muprotektar sa mga bata tungod kay naa naman koy anak. naa koy responsibilidad nga muprotektar sa mga bata, at the same time,daghan kaau pa ang magpulis, so why not be grateful, nga naa naman ta ani nga trabaho, akong tarungan akong trabaho, nahimo kung pulis ug nahimo ko nga wcpd investigator (FGD1:SS12). (For me, what motivates me is that I am also a mother and a woman. It is part of my nature to feel a responsibility to protect children because I have a child of my own).

Achieving Professional Success Milestones. The second theme illustrates how investigating and supporting survivors of child sexual abuse through a victim-centered approach transforms the lives of investigators on personal and professional levels. Working in an environment that fosters collaboration, mutual support, and encouragement provides investigators with the opportunity to develop critical leadership, communication, and strategic skills required to work effectively on sensitive investigations. A strong commitment to justice and human rights creates an emotional attachment to the values inherent to professionalism, and equips investigators with the necessary emotional and operational resources to perform at peak levels over an extended amount of time. Further, emphasizing a victim-centered approach to investigations provides a sense of purpose and community within the investigative unit, allowing the investigators to build confidence and, ultimately, hold offenders accountable while providing a safer environment for women and children. The informants shared that their professional drive is deeply rooted in their mastery of the legal and ethical frameworks that protect the vulnerable. Focus Group Discussion 2 shared:

Ang akong motivation as a WCPD investigator, kaning mga challenges nga mga datu ug pobre, kalagmitan mga datu, dapigan man jud or mga politiko pero diri nakahatag nako ug nagdugay ko diri , SWAT biya ko, pero nganung naa mn ko diri. Maybe naa koi mission, ang panalipdan ang mga tawo nga dli maka protektar sa ilang mga kaugalingun. especially mga bata ug kababainhan, kinahanglan kung naay mga complainant kay naa may

balaud, naa usab tay protocols, atong mga gipnagsunod. Kabalo ta unsay balaud nga nagprotektar kanila, dako kaau ug tabang nko nga makatabnag ka , mura ug dako kaau ug grasya,nga naa koy nahimo. like for example, naay usa dri nga gamhanan kaau sa tanan, nangayu ang akong usa ka kauban, pero gihadlok pako sa dagkong tawo, pero naa man atong chief of police,wala pd sya nidapig, akong gifile ang kaso, bisan pa ug nag ingun sya nga pusasan ko niya, sya maoy akong gipusasan. dili ko ganahan nga ingun anaun, bastusun, tungod kay ubos ra kaau, mao nay makahatag kanako ug motivation kada adlaw nganung naa ko diri (FGD2:SS7). (My motivation as a WCPD investigator comes from the challenges involving the rich and the poor. Often, the wealthy or politicians are the ones being favored. But this is why I have stayed here for so long; I used to be SWAT, yet here I am. Perhaps I have a mission: to protect those who cannot protect themselves, especially women and children. When complainants come forward, we have the law and we have protocols that we must follow. Knowing the laws that protect them allows me to help, and being able to help feels like a great blessing, knowing I've actually done something meaningful. For example, there was a very powerful person involved. My colleague was asked for a favor, and I was even threatened by these influential people. But my Chief of Police didn't take their side. I filed the case anyway. Even though that person threatened to handcuff me, in the end, I was the one who handcuffed him. I don't want people to be treated that way or disrespected just because they are considered 'lowly.' That is exactly what motivates me every day to stay in this role).

In-Depth Interview 3 also shared that by helping victims of abuse increase her capability as a WCPD Investigator. She shared:

Sa akong unang adlaw isip assistant sa WCPD, nagduha-duha ko ug wala koy kompiyansa sa kaugalingon kay paminaw nako dili pa ko andam o kulang pa ko sa kahibalo para sa maong mga responsibilidad. Pero samtang nagkadugay, pinaagi sa mga eksperyensya nga akong naagian, anam-anam nga nilambo ang akong kompiyansa. Kani nga mga eksperyensya nakatabang nako nga mas mamahimong takos sa akong trabaho, ug nakapahimo sab niini nga mas makalingaw ug makapatagbaw (IDI3:SS4). (During my 1st day as an assistant WCPD, I was hesitant and lacked confidence because I felt that I was not fully equipped or ready to handle the responsibilities. However, as time passed and through the experiences I encountered, my confidence gradually improved. These experiences helped me become more capable in my work and made my work interesting and fulfilling).

In-Depth Interview 4 also shared that by dealing with various cases allows her to be resilient and capable of solving the issue as WCPD Investigator. She noted:

Usa sa mga halangdon nga kaso nga akong nadumala naglambigit sa usa ka menor de edad nga giabusohan sa iyang kaugalingon nga amahan. Malampuson nakong nalatid ang mga legal ug pamaagi nga kinahanglanon aron maseguro ang positibong resulta alang sa biktima. Nadiskubrihan ang pag-abuso sa dihang misalig ug mitug-an ang biktima sa iyang inahan, kinsa daling midala kaniya sa among opisina sa WCPD aron mangayo og tabang ug hustisya batok sa sad-an. Sa ilang pag-abot, nakig-istorya ko sa biktima ug sa iyang inahan, diin isog nga gipaambit sa biktima ang mga detalye sa pag-abuso. Gipahayag niya ang iyang tinguha nga mapriso ang iyang amahan. Miadto dayon mi sa nahimutangan sa suspek, diin gitudlo siya sa biktima isip iyang tig-abuso. Ang suspek gidakop, gipasabot sa iyang mga katungod, ug gidala sa opisina para sa proseso. Ang biktima gi-refer ngadto sa Multi-Disciplinary Team alang sa forensic interview ug medical examination. Sa katapusan, ang suspek gidala sa korte alang sa husay, nga nagtimaan sa usa ka mahinungdanong lakang padulong sa hustisya alang sa biktima. (IDI4:SS2). (One notable case I handled involved a minor who was sexually abused by her father. I successfully navigated the legal and procedural requirements to ensure a positive outcome for the victim. The abuse came to light when the minor confided in her mother, who immediately took her to our WCPD office seeking help and accountability for the perpetrator. Upon their arrival, I spoke with the victim and her mother, and the victim bravely shared the details of the abuse. She expressed her desire to have her father arrested. We promptly proceeded to the suspect's location, where the victim identified him as her abuser. The suspect was apprehended, informed of his rights, and taken to the station for processing. The victim was referred to the Multi-Disciplinary Team for a forensic interview and medical examination. Ultimately, the suspect was brought to court for trial, marking a significant step towards justice for the victim).

Negative Experiences

Victim Hesitancy Barriers. One of the major barriers to pursuing justice through the WCPD for sexual assault

victims and/or their families, is that they do not want to pursue legal action, this is the first theme emerged from the negative experiences of the informants. While these barriers may not be physical or administrative, there is a significant emotional and social component to this barrier. The WCPD investigators are affected greatly due to the emotional stress they feel when a case is unable to go forward in the legal process because of the victim's indecisiveness or because of external pressures placed on the victim to not pursue the case. A lack of cooperation on the part of the victim and/or family is a significant hindrance to the WCPD investigators' ability to achieve their intended purpose of obtaining justice.

The informants shared how this refusal to file serves as a major source of professional frustration. They noted that even after explaining the benefits of filing, many victims remain hesitant. In-Depth Interview 1 shared:

Sa akong pag-imbestigar, naay mga pamilya nga dili kaayo mokooperar kay nahadlok sila o ba kaha kaila ra nila ang suspetsado. Ang akong gibuhay, gipasabtan nako sila og tarong bahin sa balaod, gipasaligan nako sila nga dili mugawas ang ilang mga gisulti, ug naningkamot ko nga makuha ang ilang pagsalig pinaagi sa maayong pakig-istorya (IDI1:SS9). (Yes, some family members were uncooperative due to fear or personal ties. I addressed by explaining legal processes, ensuring confidentiality, and building trust through proper communication).

Focus Group Discussion 1 also shared her negative experience on her clients. As she stated:

Usa sa dako nga hagit nga akong giatubang sa pagpangolekta og ebidensya o pag-andam sa kaso para sa mga biktima sa abuso mao ang kadelay sa pag-report. Kasagaran, ang mga nahitabo dugay na kaayo, ug ang mga biktima balik-balik nga giabusohan. Posible nga gihulga sila sa suspect maong gihilom sila, ug tungod ana, maglisod sila sa pagsulti sa mga detalye sa nahitabo kanila. Makababag gyud ni sa imbestigasyon, pero naningkamot ko nga maghimo og sitwasyon diin mobati sila nga naay nagsuporta nila aron mahimo silang komportable sa pagpaambit sa ilang nasinati, ug aron mas mapalig-on nato ang kaso (FGD1:SS8). (One significant challenge I face in gathering evidence or building a case for abuse or exploitation victims is dealing with delayed reporting. Often, the incidents occurred long ago, and the victims were subjected to repeated abuse. They may have been silenced by threats from the suspect, making it harder for them to disclose details of the abuse. This can hinder the investigation, but I work to create a supportive environment where victims feel comfortable sharing their experiences, helping to build a stronger case.).

In-Depth Interview 3 also express her experience in gathering witnesses for the case. She noted:

Naa gyuy mga higayon nga ang mga pamilya mobalibad nga mahimong saksi ug dili mohatag sa ilang mga pamahayag. Ang akong buhaton, mangita na lang ko og laing mga saksi ug uban pa nga mga ebidensya (IDI3:SS30). (Yes, sometimes family members refused to become witnesses and give their statements. I just find other witnesses and other evidence).

External Intimidation Pressures. This thematic area examines the external constraints and ethical dilemmas that WCPD Investigators face when dealing with cases involving suspects who are high-profile. Within the WCPD work environment, “power dynamics” typically manifest themselves in the form of direct threats or as attempts to utilize politically affiliated connections to undercut investigations. These attempts at intimidation create an opportunity for investigators to test their professional integrity and mental fortitude; in doing so, investigators are required to balance the possibility of incurring personal retribution due to their adherence to the rule of law.

Investigators noted that while conducting investigations on subjects with a large social and political status, investigators frequently are subjected to attempts made to manipulate or harass them. In-Depth Interview 3 shared their experience with influential individuals:

Ang mga kliyente nga wala pay klarong desisyon, usahay inig abot nila sa opisina, ang WCPD investigator maoy mahimong tigpaminaw sa tanan nilang mga mulo ug problema. Naghunahuna sila nga ang pulis maoy direktang mosulbad sa ilang mga problema, bisan pa nga kaming mga investigator naa man sab miy kaugalingong kinabuhi ug mga problema. Dugang pa niana, ang uban nga mga complainant ug respondent mogamit sa ilang impluwensya batok sa mga police officers. Kung ang mga kliyente o complainant dili

matagbaw sa tabang nga among gihatag, mogamit sila og laing pamaagi para hadlokong ang mga investigator para lang masunod ang ilang personal nga tinguha (IDI3:SS12). (Client who were undecided, sometimes when they arrived at the office, the WCPD investigator will be the one who will hear all their sentiments and problems, they think that the police will be the one who would directly solve their problem considering that we investigators also had personal life and problems as well. Additionally, some complainants and respondents will use their influence against the police officers, if clients/complainants were not satisfied with your assistance provided for them, they will use other means to intimidate the investigators just for the fulfillment of their own personal interest).

In-Depth Interview 4 shared the same experiences. As she said:

Posible nga gihunongan sila o gihulga sa suspect, maong maglisod sila og sulti sa mga detalye bahin sa pag-abuso. Makababag gyud ni sa imbestigasyon, pero naningkamot ko nga maghimo og sitwasyon diin mobati sila nga naay nagsuporta nila. Gusto nako nga mahimong komportable sila sa pagpaambit sa ilang nasinati aron mas mapalig-on nato ang kaso (IDI4:SS35). (They may have been silenced by threats from the suspect, making it harder for them to disclose details of the abuse. This can hinder the investigation, but I work to create a supportive environment where victims feel comfortable sharing their experiences, helping to build a stronger case).

In-Depth Interview 1 also shared her struggles with clients. She stated:

Usa sa pinaka-komon nga babag samtang nag-andam sa kaso mao ang pamilya sa matag kampo. Lawom pa gihapon ang 'stigma' o ang dautang pagtan-aw sa kinsay biktima sa lugos, diin giisip kini nga kauwawan sa pamilya. Tungod niini, ang pamilya mismo ang kasagaran nga unang mupugong o mupaluya sa biktima nga mupasaka og kaso (IDI1:SS23). (One of the most common obstacles during case build-up involves the families of the parties concerned. There remains a strong stigma surrounding rape, wherein being a rape victim is viewed as a disgrace or a source of embarrassment to the family. As a result, families are often the first to discourage the filing of a case).

Addressing the Challenges Encountered in the Performance of Duties

When faced with the emotionally taxing and difficult situations inherent in WCPD work, investigators employ specific coping mechanisms to manage the daily hardships of their roles. This section elaborates on how informants navigate the mental strain and pressure of investigating sensitive cases. Understanding these strategies is crucial for recognizing their resilience and the personal boundaries they establish to maintain professionalism in a demanding environment.

Family Support Systems. The first theme regarding how investigators address the difficulties of their work revolves around the use of family as a sanctuary for emotional recovery. Rather than relying on tactical survival skills, WCPD investigators draw their inner resilience from their roles as parents and providers to endure the rigorous emotional demands of their duties. By anchoring themselves in their personal lives, they develop the mental toughness necessary to process the trauma they witness daily, allowing them to return to work with a renewed sense of purpose.

The informants shared a consistent mindset: their children and families are the primary motivators that help them overcome professional exhaustion. As In-Depth Interview 3 shared:

Siyempre mam, human sa stress nga adlaw, ilabi na kung naay biktima sa pang-abuso nga nag-report og kaso sa akong opisina, mangita gyud ko og paagi nga maka-relax human maminaw sa reklamo. Usahay manawag ko sa akong anak para makuha akong stress, ug huna-hunaon sab nako nga kinahanglan nako ning trabahoa para masuportahan nako akong pamilya sa pinansyal nga aspeto (IDI3:SS30). (Of course mam, after a stressful day, especially if there was a victim of abuse reported a case in my office, I always find ways to relax after listening the complaint, and sometimes I call my daughter to relieve my stress and I also think that I need this work so that I can financially my family).

In-Depth Interview 2 also shared:

Ang pagdumala sa mga kaso sa pang-abuso makapabug-at gyud sa emosyon, maong nag-atiman ko sa akong kaugalingon pinaagi sa pag-practice og self-care sama sa meditation, pagpaminaw og kanta, panagsa nga ehersisyo, ug paggahin og oras sa akong pamilya—ilabi na sa akong anak, nga dako og tabang sa pagkuha sa akong stress (IDI2:SS24). (Handling abuse cases can be emotionally challenging so i cope with myself by practicing self-care like meditation, listening to music, exercise sometimes, and spending time with my family, especially spending time with my daughter, which helped me relieve stress).

In-Depth Interview 1 emphasized that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for survival in such a demanding environment, stating:

Gidala nako ang stress pinaagi sa saktong pagdumala sa oras, suporta gikan sa akong mga kauban sa trabaho, regular nga pagpahulay, ug paghatag og importansya sa akong pisikal ug mental nga kaayohan aron magpabilin nga epektibo sa trabaho (IDI1:SS17). (I manage stress through proper time management, peer support, regular rest, and focusing on physical and mental well-being to stay effective at work).

Professional Emotional Objectivity. The second theme under the coping mechanism focuses on the professional strategies used to remain impartial and effective despite the emotional gravity of WCPD cases. Unlike the physical teamwork found in tactical training, the workworld of WCPD investigators relies on psychological solidarity and internal reflection to manage the emotional toll of their work. By seeking guidance from colleagues and consciously separating personal feelings from their official duties, investigators ensure that their judgement remains clear and their service remains professional.

The informants highlighted that peer support and self-care practices are vital lifelines in surviving the mental pressures of the office. They emphasized that knowing when to step back and reflect allows them to handle hostile or uncooperative individuals with continued respect. In-Depth Interview 3 shared:

Gidala nako ang stress pinaagi sa saktong pagdumala sa oras, suporta gikan sa akong mga kauban sa trabaho, regular nga pagpahulay, ug paghatag og importansya sa akong pisikal ug mental nga kaayohan aron magpabilin nga epektibo sa trabaho (IDI3:SS17). (I manage stress through proper time management, peer support, regular rest, and focusing on physical and mental well-being to stay effective at work).

Focused Group Discussion 4 elaborated on the importance of internal emotional management:

Gipabilin nako ang akong pagka-propesyonal pinaagi sa pagbulag sa akong personal nga pagbati gikan sa akong mga responsibilidad sa trabaho, pagpamalandong sa akong kaugalingon (self-reflection), pagpangayo og giya gikan sa akong mga supervisor, ug ang estrikto nga pagsunod sa mga pamaagi ug protokot nga napatuman (FGD4:SS25). (I maintain emotional objectivity by separating personal feelings from professional responsibilities, practicing self-reflection, seeking guidance from supervisors, and adhering strictly to established procedures and protocols).

In-Depth Interview 2 elaborated on the importance of work-life balance with the support of the family:

Aron ma-mentinar ang balanse sa trabaho ug kinabuhi, mokaon ko og mga sustansyadong pagkaon ug mopahulay usab og gamay. Isip usa ka police officer, gamay ra jud ang panahon nga makuha nako para sa akong pamilya, mao nang kanang gamay nga oras, mangita jud ko og paagi nga maka-bonding nako akong anak (IDI2:SS13). (To maintain a healthy work-life balance, I eat healthy food and take some time to relax. As a police officer, I have very little time to spend with my family, so I make sure to find ways to bond with my child during whatever small window of time I have).

Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of their Services

This section focuses on the informants' perspectives regarding how the WCPD unit can be strengthened to better serve survivors of abuse. It explores their desires for a more specialized and professionalized workworld,

including the need for advanced facilities, legal support and continuous education. The insights shared by the investigators reflect their hope for an organizational culture that is supportive of both the victim's recovery and the investigator's long-term welfare. This is crucial in highlighting areas for enhancement and shaping the future policy changes to improve investigative efficiency and public trust.

Advanced Trauma-Informed Training. The first theme to emerge regarding the aspirations of the informants is the professionalization of the WCPD through specialized education. The informants recognize that standard police training is insufficient for the delicate nature of cases involving women and children. They aspire to move beyond general enforcement toward a victim-centered approach, where the investigator is equipped with the psychological and technical skills to handle sensitive disclosures without causing further harm to the survivor.

The informants shared that their current gaps in knowledge, particularly in handling the psychological needs of victims and complex legal procedures, make specialized refresher courses a top priority. As In-Depth Interview 2 shared:

Regular nga advanced training, pagpuno sa mga personahe o staff, ug mas lig-on nga koordinasyon tali sa nagkalain-laing ahensya sa serbisyo sa panglawas ug social services (IDI2:SS15). (Regular advanced trainings, increased staffing, and stronger inter-agency coordination with health and social services).

In-Depth Interview 4 emphasized that mandatory training in trauma-informed care is the key to increasing case success rates and building victim trust, stating:

Palig-onon ang mga imbestigasyon nga victim-centered (nakatutok sa biktima) ug trauma-informed (naghunahuna sa kaayohan sa biktima). Pauswag ang pagdokumento sa mga kaso, pagdumala sa mga ebidensya, ug ang saktong panahon sa paglihok niini. Pauswag usab ang koordinasyon tali sa mga piskal, LGU, ospital, ug mga NGO. Siguraduhon ang kaayohan sa mga investigator aron malikayan ang pagkapoy sa lawas ug huna-huna (burnout)(IDI4:SS27). (Strengthen victim-centered and trauma-informed investigations. Improve case documentation, evidence handling, and timelines. Enhance coordination with prosecutors, LGUs, hospitals, and NGOs. Ensure investigator welfare to prevent burnout).

In-Depth Interview 1 emphasized that mandatory training in trauma-informed care is the key to increasing case success rates and building victim trust, stating:

Palig-onon ang mga imbestigasyon nga victim-centered (nakatutok sa biktima) ug trauma-informed (naghunahuna sa kaayohan sa biktima). Mandatory nga training sa trauma-informed investigation, aron mapalig-on ang pagsalig sa biktima, mamenosan ang pagbalik sa trauma (re-traumatization), makakuha og mas kasaligan nga mga pamahayag (statements), ug mapataas ang tsansa nga magmalampuson ang kaso(IDI1:SS18). (Mandatory trauma-informed investigation training, to improve victim trust, reduce re-traumatization, obtain more reliable statements, and increase case success rates).

Inter-Agency Collaboration Linkages. The second theme under aspirations highlights the investigators' recognition that justice for women and children cannot be achieved by the police alone. In the WCPD workworld, cases are often delayed by slow responses from external offices, such as medical clinics for medico-legal exams or social welfare offices for victim custody. The informants aspire for a more seamless system where various government agencies and NGOs work in synchronized harmony. By strengthening these links, they believe they can reduce the red tape that often discourages victims from continuing their cases.

The informants emphasized that a unified approach is the only way to ensure the holistic recovery of a survivor. Focus Group Discussion 5 noted:

Pauswag usab ang koordinasyon tali sa mga piskal, LGU, ospital, ug mga NGO. Siguraduhon ang kaayohan sa mga investigator aron malikayan ang pagkapoy sa lawas ug huna-huna (burnout) (FGD5:SS45). (Enhance coordination with prosecutors, LGUs, hospitals, and NGOs. Ensure investigator welfare to prevent burnout).

In-Depth Interview 4 also further elaborates that barangay capabilities should be enhanced. She stated:

Dako kaayo ang kuwang sa pagpalambo sa abilidad sa mga personnel, tungod kay ang PNP mas nag-focus man gud sa mga operasyon batok sa ilegal nga droga, samtang gamay ra ang pagtagad nga gihatag sa WCPD. Isip usa ka importante nga seksyon sa imbestigasyon, dapat hatagan og patas nga atensyon ang WCPD tungod kay ang mga kaso sa kababayan-an ug kabataan mas nahimong komplikado karon, ilabi na tungod sa impluwensya sa media ug teknolohiya. Gawas pa niana, dapat lig-onon sab ang abilidad sa mga VAWC desk sa barangay, tungod kay sila man ang pinaka-unang modawat ug moresponde sa mga kaso nga ingon ani (IDI4:SS35). (There is a huge gap in terms of enhancement of personal capability, the PNP remains heavily focused on illegal drug operations, while relatively less attention is given to the WCPD. As a section under the investigative function, the WCPD should receive equal attention, as cases involving women and children have evolved and become more complex, particularly due to the influence of media and technology. In addition, the capabilities of barangay-level VAWC mechanisms should be strengthened, as they serve as the first line of response in cases involving women and children).

In-Depth Interview 1 also further elaborates that building trust with the communities and the marginalized sector can contribute to the organization's success. She elaborated:

Pagtukod og pagsalig sa mga komunidad nga napasagdan o wala mahatagi og igong serbisyo pinaagi sa pagbansay sa matinahuron ug trauma-informed nga komunikasyon, pagmintinar sa presensya pinaagi sa community outreach, pagsiguro sa pagkapribado (confidentiality), ug dinaliang pagtubag sa mga mulo sa makiangayon nga pamaagi aron ikapakita ang pagkamakanunayon ug pagkamay-panubag (accountability) (IDI1:SS19). (Building trust with marginalized or underserved communities by practicing respectful, trauma-informed communication, maintaining visibility through community outreach, ensuring confidentiality, and responding promptly and fairly to concerns to show consistency and accountability.).

Consistent Legal Refresher. The final theme under aspirations underscores the investigators' commitment to legal excellence. In the ever-evolving landscape of Philippine jurisprudence, particularly regarding gender-based violence and child protection, WCPD investigators recognize that being up-to-date is not optional; it is a requirement for justice. They aspire for a systematic schedule of refresher courses to ensure that no case is dismissed on technicalities or outdated legal interpretations. This focus on continuous learning reflects their desire to provide a service that is both legally sound and professionally superior.

The informants shared that as laws change and new protocols are introduced; constant education is the only way to remain effective. In-Depth Interview 1 emphasized:

Sa akong opinyon mam, ang mga personahe sa WCPD kinahanglan gayud nga hatagan og saktong pagbansay sa tanang balaod nga among gidumala... ang makanunayon nga 'refresher' training bahin sa mga kasamtangang balaod gikinahanglan aron mapadayon ang de-kalidad nga serbisyo sa imbestigasyon (IDI1:SS17). (In my opinion mam, the WCPD personnel should be given proper training in all the laws that we are handling... consistent 'refresher' training on current laws is necessary to maintain high-quality investigative services).

Focus Group Discussion 2 also shared that capability enhancement training should be given to all women personnel of the organization, given that the cases handle by these personnel are becoming complex. Focus Group Discussion 2 stated:

Tungod kay nagkalisod ug nagkadaghan na ang mga kaso karon, dapat mahimong prayoridad sa WCPD ang kanunay nga pagpahigayon og capability-enhancement training. Kinahanglan mag-focus kini sa mga importante nga abilidad sama sa case management, paghimo og mga affidavit, ug ang saktong pag-record sa blotter. Sa pagkakaran, ang PNP naghatag ra og Criminal Investigation Course para sa tanang imbestigador ug ang WCPD Specialized Course. Kini nga mga programa panagsa ra mahitabo ug limitado kaayo tungod kay 50 ra ka tawo ang pwede mo-apil sa tibukod rehiyon—buot pasabot, murag usa ra ka trained nga personnel sa matag istasyon. Bahin usab sa pagtabang sa mga biktima, ang mga WCPD investigators andam kanunay mosuporta; apan sa tinuod lang, ang dako nga parte niini nga trabaho gihimo sa mga social workers ug sa mga hingtungdan nga LGU (FGD2:SS24). (Given the increasing complexity of cases and the rising volume of incidents, the key priority for the WCPD should be consistent capability-enhancement training. This should focus on essential skills such as case management, drafting affidavits, and proper recording in the blotter. Currently,

the PNP provides only the Criminal Investigation Course for general investigative training and the WCPD Specialized Course. These programs are irregular and limited in scope, accommodating only 50 participants for the entire region, which amounts to roughly one trained personnel per station. In terms of victim support, WCPD investigators are always supportive of victims; however, much of this role is primarily carried out by social workers and the concerned local government units).

In-depth Interview 3 also shared her aspirations on how to improve the services of the unit. She stated:

Isip usa ka WCPD Investigator, nagtuo ko nga dako og tabang ang pag-apil og mga refresher seminar aron masiguro nga updated ko sa bisan unsang kausaban sa balaod. Pinaagi niini, makahatag ko og mas epektibo nga suporta ug makasunod sa mga bag-ong regulasyon, nga makapauswag gyud sa akong abilidad sa pag-imbestigar (IDI3:SS40). (Given my experience as a WCPD Investigator, I believe attending a refresher seminar would be beneficial to ensure I'm updated on any changes in the law. This would enable me to provide the most effective support and stay current with evolving regulations, ultimately enhancing my investigative skills).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

A Colaizzi's phenomenological inquiry and approach was used for analyzing data in the present study. Therefore, the emergent themes were thus constructed to describe the workworld of the informants as WCPD investigators.

The qualitative research is anchored on Self Efficacy Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) and supported by the Performance theory by Richard Schechner and the Motivation theory by Abraham Maslow.

Self-efficacy theory explains that an individual's belief in their own capability is the primary driver of how they approach goals, tasks, and challenges. For WCPD investigators, self-efficacy is not static; it is built through mastery experiences and continuous learning.

In this study, Bandura's theory highlights how the informants' confidence is bolstered by their aspiration for consistent refresher trainings and specialized skills like trauma-informed care. When investigators feel they have mastered the legal and psychological complexities of their roles, their self-efficacy increases, allowing them to persist through the emotional rigors and high-pressure environments of the WCPD workworld. It emphasizes that their effectiveness is a result of their perceived ability to produce a desired legal outcome for the victims they serve.

Performance theory, as proposed by Richard Schechner, views professional roles as a series of restored behaviors or specialized performances that individuals adopt within a specific social context. This theory is vital in understanding the WCPD workworld, as it frames the investigators' need for emotional objectivity as a professional performance.

The informants do not merely do their jobs; they perform the role of an objective, professional law enforcer to maintain the integrity of their investigations. This theory explains the process of separating personal feelings from professional responsibilities, where the investigator adopts a specific persona to handle sensitive disclosures and hostile offenders effectively. By viewing their duties through the lens of performance, the study captures how these women navigate the boundary between their personal empathy and their official mandate.

The research is further supported by Motivation Theory, specifically Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This theory provides the framework for understanding the fuel that keeps investigators going despite the trauma they witness. Maslow suggests that human behavior is driven by the desire to satisfy a hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic survival to self-actualization.

In the WCPD context, the informants' motivation is deeply tied to their family's security, which addresses their foundational physiological and safety needs. Furthermore, the act of seeking peer support and spending time with children satisfies the need for belongingness and love, which acts as a vital coping mechanism. Finally, successfully achieving justice for a victim leads to a sense of self-actualization, where the investigator finds

profound personal meaning and purpose in their specialized service, motivating them to continue despite the threat of burnout.

Experiences of the Informants in the Performance of their Duties

Positive Experiences

Deriving Satisfaction from Justice. A profound sense of emotional and professional fulfillment emerges when WCPD investigators successfully facilitate the recovery and justice of abuse survivors. In the specific workworld of the WCPD, the metric of success shifts from physical or tactical proficiency to the tangible restoration of a victim's dignity and the successful navigation of the legal system.

Informants shared that witnessing a survivor's transition from a state of acute trauma to one of safety fosters a sense of mission that transcends the grim nature of their daily duties. This transformative experience allows officers to reframe their police work, moving it from a standard occupation to a vocational calling where empathy is utilized as a strategic tool for empowerment rather than a professional liability. The act of securing a Protection Order or successfully filing a case serves as a mastery experience, as defined by Bandura, which reinforces the investigator's belief in their specialized role.

Moreover, the investigators recognized that their role is pivotal in breaking the cycle of violence. They emphasized that the intrinsic satisfaction of holding perpetrators accountable provides an emotional counterweight to the bureaucratic and environmental stresses of the office. Through a phenomenological lens, it is evident that these officers derive deep personal meaning by reflecting on the positive impact of their presence on the lives of vulnerable women and children. This reflection ultimately reinforces their professional identity and strengthens their overarching sense of duty, transforming the investigative process into a vehicle for social healing.

This phenomenon is supported by the study of Miller (2011), who researched "The Emotional Labor of Policing." Miller found that specialized units handling sensitive cases often develop a caring-professional identity, where the ability to provide emotional support is viewed as a high-level skill equal to traditional law enforcement tactics.

Achieving Professional Success Milestones. Beyond the emotional relief of helping a victim, WCPD investigators experience a distinct sense of professional mastery when their technical work culminates in the successful prosecution and conviction of offenders. In the rigorous "workworld" of criminal investigation, a conviction serves as the ultimate validation of an investigator's competence, proving that their evidence collection, affidavit preparation, and procedural adherence were flawless. The informants expressed that the legal win is a critical milestone that justifies the long hours of meticulous documentation and the mental toll of managing high-stakes cases.

The WCPD investigators recognize that while empathy is essential, the technical ability to navigate the judicial system is what ensures long-term safety for the community. Securing a conviction is viewed as the finality of justice, where the investigator's efforts are officially recognized by the state. From a phenomenological perspective, this theme illustrates how investigators build their professional self-esteem; the courtroom victory is not just a legal outcome but a powerful affirmation of their specialized skills and their efficacy as law enforcement officers in a traditionally male-dominated field.

This theme is deeply anchored in Richard Schechner's Performance Theory. The investigator's performance in the investigation and on the witness stand is validated by the verdict. A conviction confirms that the officer performed their role with the necessary legal and ethical precision to meet the court's standards.

Furthermore, this aligns with Self-Efficacy Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). Successfully prosecuting a perpetrator acts as a mastery experience that increases the investigator's belief in their ability to handle future, more complex cases. According to Stinson and Titus (2015) in their research on investigative outcomes, the

successful closure of cases is the most significant factor in reducing learned helplessness among specialized police units and increasing overall job commitment.

Additionally, a study by Schafer (2010) on effective police leadership and performance notes that the achievement of tangible results, such as convictions, is a primary source of motivation and professional pride for officers dedicated to specialized crimes.

Negative Experiences

Victim Hesitancy Barriers. One of the most taxing aspects of the WCPD "workworld" is the frequent encounter with victim hesitancy or the total refusal to pursue legal action. Investigators often invest significant emotional labor and time into building a case, only to have the survivor withdraw their cooperation due to fear, financial dependence on the offender, or familial pressure. This phenomenon creates a sense of professional frustration and legal helplessness among the informants. They describe the difficulty of witnessing a cycle of abuse continue despite their readiness to intervene, highlighting a gap between the investigator's duty to enforce the law and the victim's readiness to seek justice.

The informants emphasized that this hesitancy is not merely a lack of courage but a complex survival mechanism for the victims. However, for the investigator, this serves as a major obstacle that disrupts the justice process and leads to case backlogs or wasted resources. From a phenomenological lens, this theme captures the internal conflict of the officers; they must balance their professional drive for a conviction with the ethical necessity of respecting the victim's autonomy. This tension often results in a stagnant case status, which remains a primary source of negative experience and professional fatigue for the unit.

This challenge can be analyzed through Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. When victims refuse to file cases, investigators may experience a decline in their perceived efficacy. Since their success is tied to case outcomes, the inability to move forward due to factors outside their control can lead to frustration and a sense of diminished professional impact.

This aligns with the study by Dawson and Dinovitzer (2001), which explored "Victim Cooperation and the Prosecution of Domestic Violence." Their research emphasizes that victim non-cooperation is one of the most significant barriers in specialized prosecution, often forcing law enforcement to navigate a no-win situation between legal mandates and the victim's personal safety concerns.

Additionally, a study by Belknap et al. (2000) regarding the barriers to victim participation notes that systemic delays and fear of retaliation are primary drivers for case withdrawal, which directly impacts the morale and efficiency of female-led investigative units like the WCPD.

External Intimidation Pressures. A significant and daunting challenge within the WCPD workworld is the interference of powerful figures and political entities in the pursuit of justice. Investigators frequently encounter situations where suspects leverage their social status, wealth, or political connections to exert pressure on the police. This intimidation often manifests as subtle threats to the officer's career, such as forced reassignments or direct attempts to suppress evidence and discourage victims from testifying. The informants expressed that such interference creates a climate of legal paralysis, where the standard protocols of law enforcement are undermined by the weight of external influence.

The investigators highlighted that these power dynamics not only hinder the progress of individual cases but also compromise the integrity of the judicial process itself. Dealing with untouchable suspects causes immense psychological stress, as officers must navigate the precarious balance between their oath to uphold the law and the reality of political survival. From a phenomenological lens, this theme reveals a sense of professional vulnerability; the informants often feel isolated when the systems meant to support them are manipulated by those in power, leading to a profound sense of injustice and moral distress.

This theme can be analyzed through Richard Schechner's Performance Theory. In these scenarios, the investigator is forced to "perform" their role under extreme duress. The professional mask they wear is tested

when external actors attempt to rewrite the script of the investigation. The tension arises when the official performance of justice is sabotaged by the hidden performance of political manipulation.

Furthermore, Marenin (2016) in "Challenges to Police Legitimacy" notes that perceived inequality in the application of the law, where the powerful are exempt, is the most significant factor in reducing police morale and public trust. This study highlights that investigators in specialized units like the WCPD are particularly susceptible to burnout when they feel the legal scales are tipped against the victims they are trying to protect.

Address the Challenges Encountered in the Performance of Duties

Family Support Systems. For WCPD investigators, the family serves as the ultimate sanctuary and the most effective countermeasure against the secondary traumatic stress inherent in their workworld. Given the heavy emotional burden of investigating cases of abuse and violence, the home environment provides a vital space for de-rolling, the process of stepping out of the professional investigator persona and returning to the role of a mother, wife, or daughter. Informants consistently highlighted that the simple act of interacting with their children acts as a powerful emotional reset, allowing them to replace the grim realities of their cases with the warmth and normalcy of domestic life.

The investigators emphasized that their families are not just a source of joy, but a fundamental support system that sustains their mental health. The psychological recharging that occurs through family time is what enables them to return to the field with renewed patience and focus. From a phenomenological perspective, this theme illustrates a profound shift in consciousness; the investigators consciously use their private lives to insulate their spirits from the professional toxins they encounter, ensuring that the trauma they investigate does not consume their personal identity.

This coping strategy is deeply anchored in Abraham Maslow's Motivation Theory. By prioritizing family time, investigators are actively fulfilling their Belongingness and Love needs, which Maslow argues are essential for psychological health once basic safety is secured. For these officers, the family satisfies the emotional deficit created by their high-stress careers, providing the fuel necessary to reach higher levels of professional self-actualization.

This aligns with the study by Hickman et al. (2011) on "Work-Related Stress and Coping Strategies Among Justice Professionals." Their research found that social support, particularly from family and children, is the single most significant predictor of resilience among officers handling sensitive and traumatic cases. The study notes that family serves as a buffer that prevents work-related stress from evolving into clinical burnout.

Professional Emotional Objectivity. Within the emotionally charged workworld of the WCPD, investigators rely heavily on the dual pillars of peer camaraderie and internal self-reflection to sustain professional boundaries. Maintaining emotional objectivity, the ability to remain neutral and focused despite witnessing traumatic events, is not a passive trait but an active, daily discipline. Informants shared that debriefing with fellow female officers who understand the specific nuances of WCPD work allows for a shared processing of trauma that cannot be found elsewhere. This peer-level support serves as a collective emotional shield, ensuring that no single investigator carries the weight of a horrific case alone.

Complementing this social support is the practice of self-reflection, where investigators consciously evaluate their own emotional triggers. By looking inward, they are able to identify when their personal sympathies might be clouding their professional judgment, allowing them to reset their perspective. This balance of external support and internal awareness is what prevents compassion fatigue and keeps the investigator grounded in their legal mandate. From a phenomenological lens, this theme reveals that emotional objectivity is a crafted skill, a vital survival mechanism that enables the officer to be empathetic to the victim without becoming emotionally paralyzed by the crime.

This strategy is deeply anchored in Richard Schechner's Performance Theory. The investigator's ability to maintain objectivity is a specialized performance of the professional self. Peer support acts as the backstage

where the performers can drop their masks and process their emotions, while self-reflection ensures that the on-stage performance during an investigation remains disciplined and ethically sound.

This aligns with the study by Papazoglou and Andersen (2014) on "A Guide to Utilizing Police Officers' Compassion Satisfaction," which emphasizes that peer-led interventions and self-care practices are critical in preventing post-traumatic stress. Their research suggests that when officers engage in meaning-making through reflection, they are better able to handle the moral injuries associated with law enforcement.

Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of their Services

Advanced Trauma-Informed Training. The final dimension of the WCPD workworld is defined by a forward-looking commitment to professional excellence. Informants articulated a critical need for specialized, advanced training that moves beyond basic police procedures into the realms of behavioral science and forensic precision. Specifically, they aspire to master Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) to ensure that the investigative process does not re-traumatize the survivors. They recognize that a standard interrogation approach is ineffective for child victims or traumatized women; instead, they seek proficiency in Forensic Interviewing, a technique designed to elicit accurate information while prioritizing the victim's psychological safety. This aspiration reflects a shift from being merely case-takers to becoming specialized practitioners who bridge the gap between law enforcement and social work.

The investigators emphasized that the quality of their service is directly linked to the sophistication of their tools. They believe that consistent, high-level training would not only increase the rate of successful prosecutions but also enhance the credibility of the WCPD unit within the judicial system. From a phenomenological lens, this theme reveals that the informants view learning as a form of empowerment; by acquiring these advanced skills, they transform their frustration into proactive competence, ultimately seeking to provide a higher standard of holistic justice for the vulnerable.

This aspiration is a perfect application of Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. The investigators' desire for training is a pursuit of mastery experiences. They understand that their perceived self-efficacy, their confidence in winning cases and helping victims, is dependent on their technical competence. By seeking advanced knowledge, they are attempting to increase their efficacy to match the high demands of their specialized field.

This aligns with the study by Koenen et al. (2021) on "The Impact of Trauma-Informed Training on Law Enforcement." Their research demonstrates that officers trained in TIC report significantly higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress because they feel better equipped to handle the emotional volatility of victims.

Inter-Agency Collaboration Linkages. A core aspiration among WCPD investigators is the establishment of a more seamless and robust framework for inter-agency coordination. The workworld of an investigator does not exist in a vacuum; it relies heavily on the efficiency of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), medical professionals, legal counsels, and non-governmental organizations. Informants expressed that the current fragmented approach often leads to delays that can discourage victims and jeopardize the integrity of a case. They aspire to a one-stop shop or a more integrated referral system where the transition from police investigation to social service support and medical examination is instantaneous. This coordination is viewed not just as a logistical convenience but as a vital component of victim-centered justice that ensures the survivor is supported through every stage of the legal process.

The investigators believe that when agencies work in silos, the burden of bridging the gap falls on the officer, which leads to administrative exhaustion and case backlogs. By strengthening these external partnerships, informants anticipate a significant improvement in case efficiency and a reduction in the re-traumatization of survivors caused by repetitive interviews across different offices. From a phenomenological lens, this aspiration reflects the investigators' desire for a more holistic and professionalized environment, one where collective responsibility ensures that the pursuit of justice is as efficient as it is compassionate.

This aspiration is supported by Abraham Maslow's Motivation Theory, particularly the concept of Safety and Belongingness. On a systemic level, inter-agency coordination provides a safety net for the investigators,

ensuring they have the necessary institutional support to fulfill their duties. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of this coordination fulfills the need for a professional community, reducing the sense of isolation often felt by WCPD officers.

This aligns with the study by Littel (2015) on "Coordinated Community Responses to Domestic Violence," which found that jurisdictions with strong inter-agency protocols show significantly higher rates of victim safety and perpetrator accountability. The research emphasizes that the police cannot do it alone and that success is directly correlated to the strength of ties between the police and social service providers.

Consistent Legal Refreshers. A critical aspiration identified by the informants is the institutionalization of consistent refresher training programs focused on the evolving legal landscape. In the workworld of the WCPD, laws and jurisprudence regarding women and children, such as updates to the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (RA 9262) or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (RA 7610), are subject to frequent amendments and new Supreme Court interpretations. The investigators expressed that initial training is insufficient for a lifelong career; without regular updates, there is a significant risk of procedural errors that could lead to the dismissal of cases. They view these refreshers as a legal shield that protects both the integrity of their investigations and their own professional standing.

The investigators emphasized that maintaining high-quality service requires more than just experience; it requires being legally up-to-date. They aspire to have structured intervals of training that keep them sharp on new penal provisions, evidentiary rules, and digital forensic trends in cyber-crimes against children. From a phenomenological lens, this aspiration reveals a deep-seated commitment to professional ethics and accountability. The informants do not wish to rely on outdated knowledge; instead, they seek a state of continuous readiness, where their legal expertise remains as dynamic as the crimes they are tasked to investigate.

This aspiration is a direct manifestation of Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977). Bandura posits that Cognitive Mastery, achieved through the acquisition of new, relevant knowledge, is a primary source of self-efficacy. For WCPD investigators, refresher training serves as a verbal persuasion and mastery experience that reassures them of their competence, thereby reducing the anxiety associated with complex legal proceedings.

This aligns with the study by Haberfeld (2013) in "Modern Police Training," which argues that the one-and-done approach to police education is obsolete. The research suggests that specialized units require continuous professional education (CPE) to maintain a high level of legal literacy, which is directly correlated to the quality of arrests and the successful filing of charges.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter dealt with the summary, findings, and implications.

Summary

This research study explored the workworld of Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators assigned to the Negros Oriental Police Provincial Office in Negros Oriental, Philippines.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following sub-problems:

What are the experiences of the informants in the performance of their duties?

How do the informants address the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties?

What are the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their services?

The study explored the "workworld" of WCPD investigators. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, specifically Colaizzi's method, the research delved into the day-to-day realities of officers handling sensitive cases of abuse against women and children. This technique was instrumental in capturing the essence of their experiences, moving beyond their official duties to uncover the deep-seated emotional impacts, the

psychological resilience required for the role, and the systemic challenges they navigate. By centering on the investigators' own narratives, the study illuminates how these women construct meaning from their dual roles as law enforcers and empathetic protectors within the Philippine National Police.

The study's informants were ten (10) Women and Children Protection Desk Investigators of Negros Oriental Police Provincial Office (NOrPPO). Six (6) out of ten (10) informants were interviewed in a focused group discussion, and the remaining four (4) were interviewed individually.

The researcher employed an Interview Guide (IG) to gather relevant data for the study. Before conducting the interviews, a transmittal letter was sent to the informants' Chief of Police, requesting permission to participate. After receiving the approval, interviews were arranged at times that suited the informants. Additionally, each informant signed a consent form before the interviews.

The Interview Guide (IG) utilized by the researcher was developed in order to acquire significant statements from the informants and answer the sub-problems of this study. The said interview guide was reviewed, approved, and validated by the panel of experts and the chairman.

The researcher used Colaizzi's (1978) method to collect and analyze the data effectively. Initially, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. After this, the transcriptions were reviewed to identify common themes. Lastly, thematic analysis was conducted to identify emerging patterns.

A significant legal consideration of this study was maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information provided by the informants, including the protection of their identities and the companies to which they were assigned. To ensure the integrity of the company's and the safety of the informants. All information was treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The informant's participation in this study was entirely voluntary.

Findings

There were nine (9) emergent themes drawn from the significant statements of the informants.

The first sub-problem revealed four (4) emergent themes, which were organized into two (2) categories: positive experiences and negative experiences of the WCPD Investigators. The positive experiences were encapsulated in the themes: *Deriving Satisfaction from Justice* and *Achieving Professional Success Milestones*. These themes highlighted the fulfilling experiences of the WCPD Investigators. The informants conveyed experiences related to the successful resolution of cases, professional fulfillment, and the emotional rewards of securing justice for vulnerable victims. Moreover, the informants emphasized their crucial role in the protection of women and children within NOrPPO while gaining significant expertise through the performance of their duties. Thus, the WCPD Investigators reported a sense of professional satisfaction and success.

In contrast, the negative experiences experienced by the informants were incorporated in the themes: *Victim Hesitancy Barriers* and *External Intimidation Pressures*. Through continual adaptation to the complexities of sensitive investigations and the pressures of the legal environment, the informants were able to integrate effectively into the workplace.

On the other hand, the second sub-problem revealed two (2) themes: *Family Support Systems* and *Professional Emotional Objectivity*. These themes illustrated how the informants developed strategies to address the challenges posed by the work environment. The informants emphasized the importance of creating mechanisms to alleviate the emotional and mental strain associated with being a WCPD Investigator.

Lastly, the third sub-problem unravels three (3) themes: *Advanced Trauma-Informed Training*, *Inter-Agency Collaboration Linkages*, and *Consistent Legal Refreshers*. These themes reflect the informants' aspirations to continually acquire knowledge and enhance their skills in the performance of their duties. They also highlight a commitment to personal and professional growth, aimed at both self-improvement and the advancement of the specialized field of victim protection and investigation.

Implications

Implications for Practice

From the inquiry's findings, the following recommendations suggestions are offered.

For the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators, this study holds significant value by validating their lived experiences and bringing visibility to the unique emotional and systemic challenges they face within the "workworld" of law enforcement. It empowers them by providing a platform to voice their realities, fostering a sense of recognition and professional belonging. The specialized knowledge and skills required for their roles, particularly in trauma-informed care and forensic interviewing, must be continuously practiced and updated, as these competencies are vital for maintaining the integrity of investigations. Furthermore, investigators are encouraged to embrace their capabilities with confidence, recognizing that their empathetic approach is a strategic asset in securing justice for the vulnerable.

For the Dumaguete City Police Station (DCPS), Bacong Municipal Police Station, Dauin Municipal Police Station and the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NOrPPO), the findings offer a critical viewpoint on localized strategies and recommendations. These offices are encouraged to use the study as a basis for improving the services provided under the WCPD section by addressing specific field realities. By managing and crafting programs that directly support the mental and physical well-being of their personnel, they can enhance the overall efficiency of each station within the province.

At the institutional level, the Philippine National Police (PNP), the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) are urged to conduct a comprehensive reassessment of current policies and protocols. These results should serve as a basis for strengthening WCPD units through better resource allocation, the provision of modern technology, and the implementation of safeguards against political interference and intimidation. By systematically organizing training modules to meet high ethical and legal standards, these institutions can ensure that investigators are fully equipped, both technically and psychologically, to improve public service delivery.

The Local Government Units (LGU) and Barangay Officials are encouraged to recognize and support the critical role of the WCPD in peace and order initiatives. This study serves as a catalyst for LGUs to enhance their local support programs, specifically by strengthening the operations of Barangay VAWC Desks and ensuring proper documentation at the frontline. Providing a more empowering environment for victims to report abuse requires a unified effort where local officials act as informed allies to the police.

Furthermore, the results of this research provide a framework for Other Law Enforcement Agencies, Prosecutors, and the Courts to improve inter-agency collaboration. By identifying gaps in case handling and promoting victim-sensitive approaches during litigation, these bodies can ensure the timely issuance of protection orders and a more streamlined filing process. Similarly, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) can use these insights to improve shelter services and monitoring mechanisms, ensuring a holistic response to domestic violence.

Ultimately, the Victims of Domestic Violence and the Community stand to benefit from the improved practices derived from this study. Enhancing response times, reducing the stigma against reporting, and fostering a culture of intervention creates a safer society for all.

For the Researcher and the Academe, this study provides a profound empirical foundation for future inquiry into gender dynamics and law enforcement, offering real-world insights that bridge the gap between theory and the complex realities of seeking justice for women and children.

The research process significantly sharpens the researcher's proficiency in qualitative research, specifically in phenomenological inquiry, data analysis, and theory integration. These sharpened competencies bridge the gap between academic theory and the complex realities of seeking justice for women and children, providing a valuable foundation for future academic, training, or policy-related careers.

Implications for Future Studies

Based on the findings and limitations of the present research, the following recommendations for further inquiry are offered to expand the body of knowledge surrounding the WCPD and specialized law enforcement:

Lived Experiences of WCPD Investigators in High-Risk Field Operations. While this study focused on the "workworld" of the desk and immediate case handling, a follow-up inquiry should investigate the experiences of female investigators as they transition into high-risk field duties, such as serving warrants on dangerous offenders or conducting rescue operations in hostile environments. These officers may encounter unique pressures related to prevailing masculinity norms, expectations of emotional restraint, and the physical discrepancies between administrative investigation and field combat. Such research would uncover coping mechanisms and perceptions of how effectively their initial specialized training prepared them for the violent realities of the field.

Lived Experiences of WCPD Training Instructors and Legal Experts. This study recommends focusing on the individuals who shape the expertise of specialized units. Instructors play a pivotal role in establishing the instructional quality and ethical grounding of trainees. Understanding their challenges—including instructional strategies for trauma-informed care, personal motivations, and their perceptions of trainee engagement—can reveal critical gaps in the current pedagogical approach and the standard curriculum used by the PNP.

Comparative Phenomenological Studies across Different Police Regional Offices (PROs). Lastly, it is highly recommended to conduct similar phenomenological inquiries in other regions of the Philippines to assess the consistency and uniformity of WCPD implementation. Comparative research would determine if the experiences of investigators in urban centers, like Dumaguete City, align with those in rural or conflict-affected geographical contexts. These findings would be instrumental in evaluating the adaptability and equity of WCPD resource allocation across the entire Philippine National Police (PNP).

Moreover, these future insights can guide the enhancement of selection criteria for both investigators and instructors, ensuring that the most contextually aware individuals are chosen. Ultimately, these research efforts will contribute to the continuous improvement of service quality, promote the standardization of trauma-informed protocols across all regional centers, and ensure that all PNP personnel are equally prepared to fulfill their duties with competence, empathy, and professional integrity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Workworld of Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) Investigators in NOrPPO

Rest assured that all of the information given by the informant as the answered to all of the questions will be kept as confidential.\

Name: _____(Optional)

Age: _____

Rank/Position: _____

Length of Service in the WCPD: _____years

Educational Background: _____

What are the experiences of the informants in the performance of their duties?

Positive Experiences

1. What motivates you the most in performing your duties at the Women and Children Protection Desk?
2. Share a specific case where you successfully navigated the legal and procedural requirements to ensure a positive outcome for a woman or child? What specific women and children desk protocols or resource were most helpful?
3. Share an instance where your intervention at the WCPD directly led to the prevention of further harm or abuse to a woman or child?
4. How has the WCPD's approach to handling cases changed or improved during your time working there, and what positive impact have you observed?
5. Give some instances where the community appreciated or acknowledged your work? How does it contribute to your personal and professional development?

Negative Experiences

1. What are the common obstacles you face when trying to gather evidence or build a case for victims of abuse or exploitation ?
2. Describe a situation wherein you felt that the resources or training you had were inadequate to address the needs of a particular victim or case?
3. What challenges have you encountered with other law enforcement units or government agencies when handling cases?
4. Have you faced resistance or lack of cooperation from community members or family members when investigating cases of abuse or exploitation? How did you handle it?

5. What are some of the ethical dilemmas or conflicts of interest you've encountered while working , and how did you resolve them?

How do the informants address the challenges encountered in the performance of their duties?

1. What strategies or mechanisms do you use to cope with the emotional stress and challenges of your work?
2. Share/elaborate methods or techniques you personally use to process and cope with the emotional toll of your work and maintain emotional objectivity?
3. How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance while working in a demanding and emotionally draining environment?
4. How do you maintain professionalism when dealing with hostile or uncooperative individuals? What strategies do you use to cope with resistance and uncooperative behavior during investigations?
5. What policies, training, or resources helped you navigate these challenges? What additional support do you think is needed?

III. What are the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of their services?

1. Considering your experiences, where do you currently feel gaps in fulfilling your role as WCPD investigator, and what is needed to close those gaps?
2. In your view , what should be the key priorities for WCPD investigators and the unit moving forward to strengthen investigative efficiency and victim support?
3. If you could implement one mandatory training program or policy change within the WCPD to directly improve the quality of services or victims, what would it be and why?
4. How can you better engage with and build trust within the communities it serves, particularly those that are marginalized or underserved?
5. How do you envision yourself in contributing to the overall improvement and success of the WCPD unit and the organization as a whole in the coming years?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher humbly expresses profound gratitude to the Almighty God for the gift of life, wisdom, strength, and unwavering guidance throughout the conduct of this study. His divine grace made every challenge bearable and every achievement possible.

Heartfelt appreciation is extended to the researcher's family, whose constant love, encouragement, patience, and sacrifices served as a strong foundation and a primary source of motivation during this academic journey.

Sincere thanks are given to the informants, the dedicated WCPD Investigators of NORPPO, who generously shared their time, professional experiences, and sensitive insights. Their willingness to participate and their openness in providing valuable information were the heart of this study and greatly contributed to its depth and credibility.

The researcher likewise conveys deep appreciation to the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office (NORPPO) for granting permission to conduct the study and for the professional support extended throughout the data-gathering process within the province.

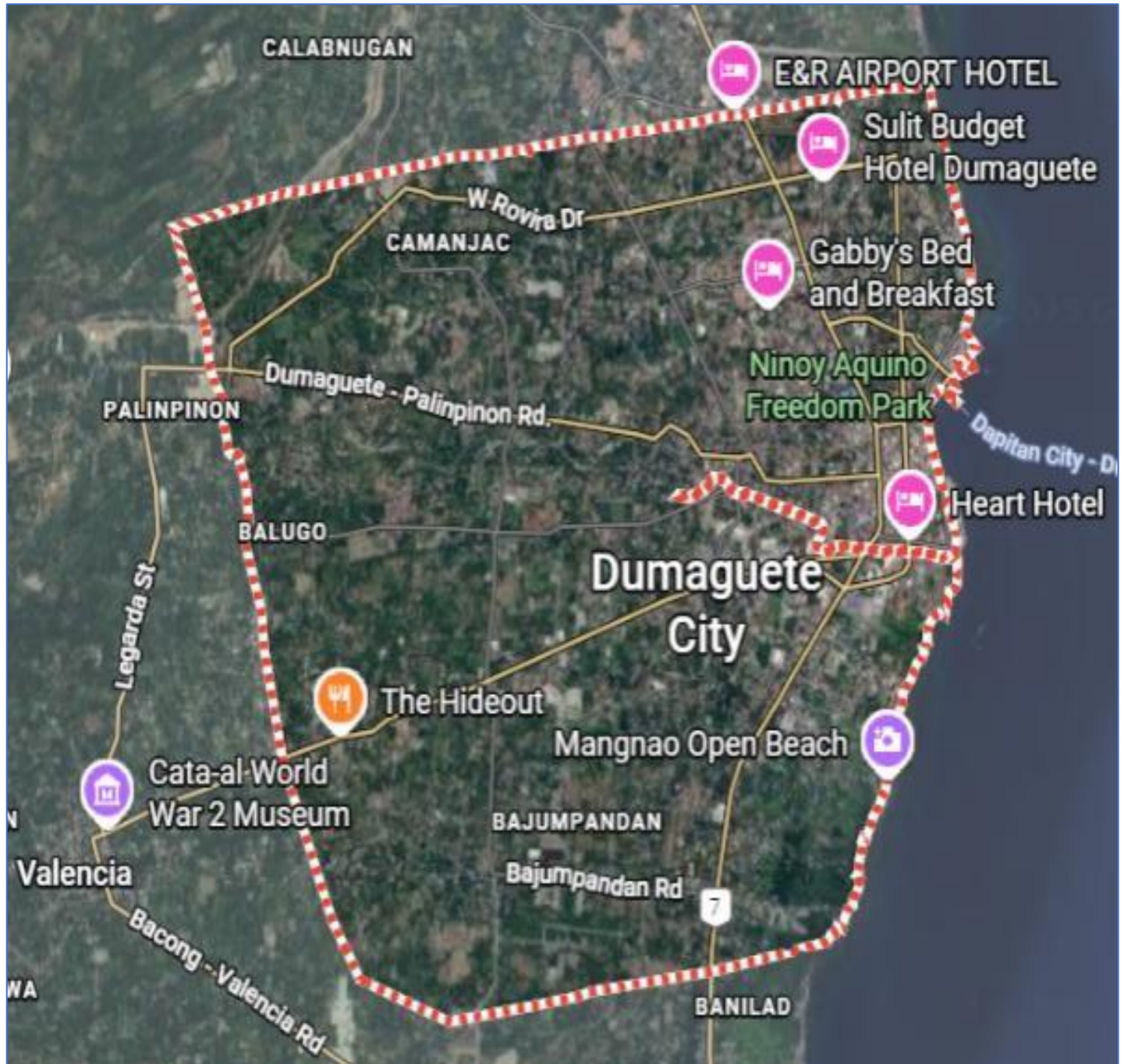
Finally, the researcher is profoundly grateful to Dr. Paulino V. Pioquinto, the research adviser, for his expert guidance, constructive feedback, patience, and unwavering commitment to mentoring. His scholarly insights and

encouragement were instrumental in shaping this study into a meaningful contribution to the field of criminal justice and victim advocacy.

To all who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the realization of this work, the researcher offers sincere gratitude and appreciation.

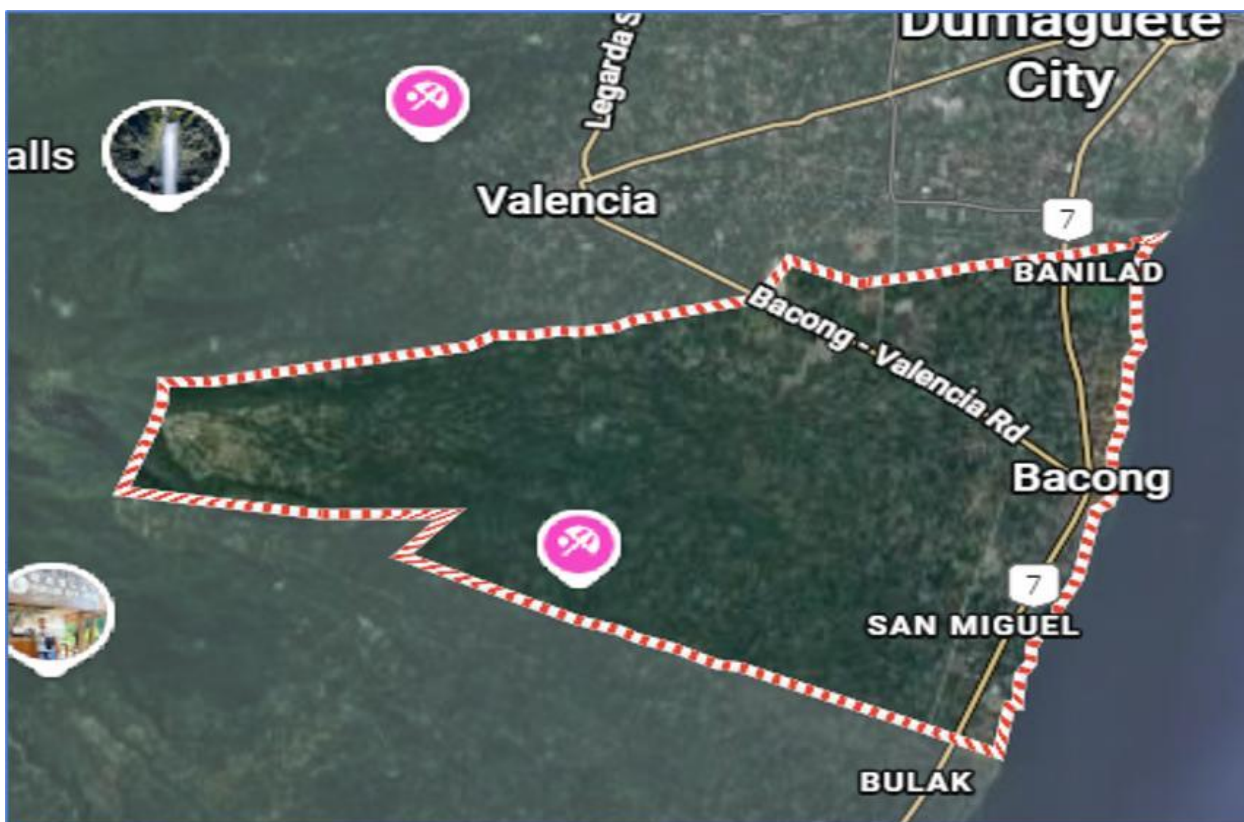
Appendix D

Location Map

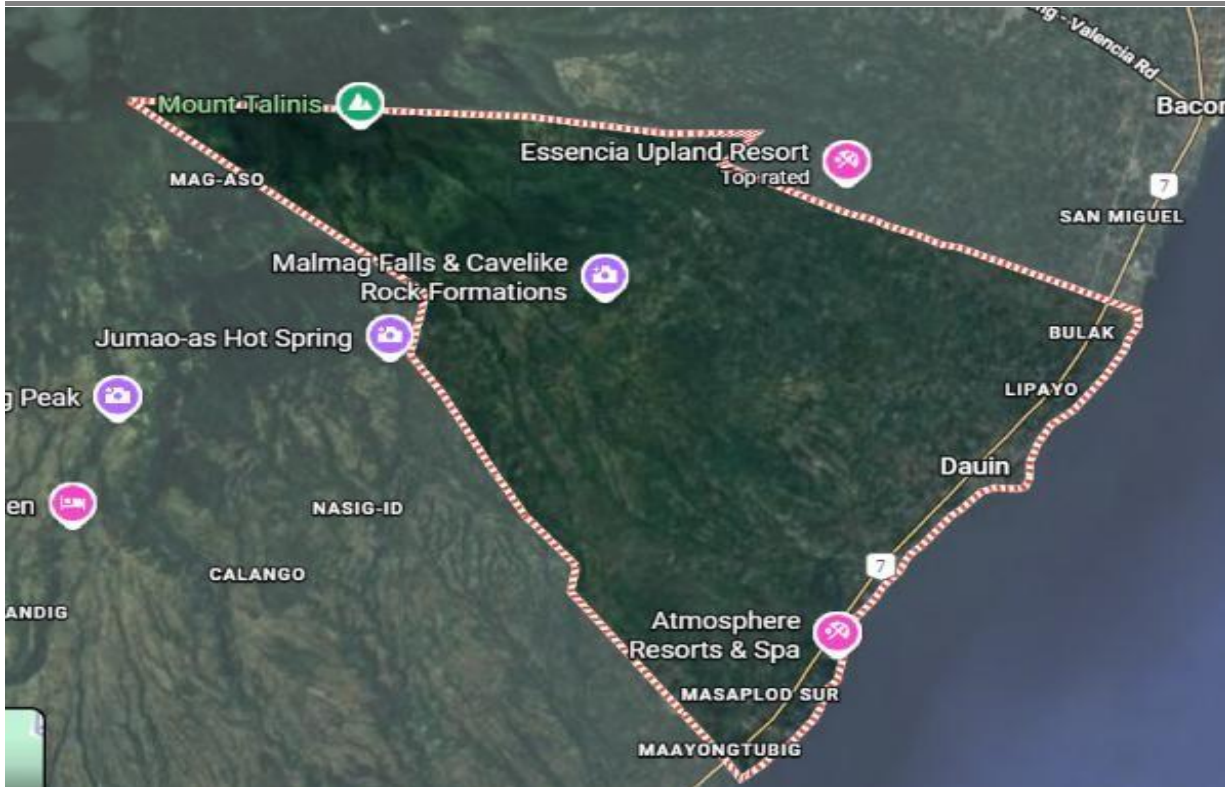




DUMAGUETE CITY



BACONG



DAUIN

APPENDIX E

In-Depth Interview

Informant: Informant 1

SessionNumber: 1

Date: January 3, 2026

TimeStarted: 1542H

DateEnded: 1600H

Duration: 12 minutes

Location: Interviewed by : ANNALYN D BENIGAY

Transcribed by: Annalyn D Benigay

Transcript Of Interview

LINE NUMBER	RESPONSES	CODE
1	I am motivated by the opportunity to protect and support women and children, ensure their safety and help in providing them justice.	IDI 1
2	I handled a case involving a woman who was a victim of domestic violence. I ensured proper documentation, coordinated the barangay for barangay protection order, social worker and medical personnel for medico-legal examination.	IDI 1

3	I intervened in a domestic violence case by immediately assisting the victim, coordinating with barangay officials, and facilitating protective measures which prevented further abuse and ensured the safety of the woman and her child.	IDI 1
4	The WCPD's approach has improved through faster response, better coordination with partner agencies, and more victim-sensitive handling, resulting in increased trust and more effective case resolution.	IDI 1
5	The community expressed appreciation through verbal thanks and continued cooperation with the WCPD. This recognition motivates me to perform better and contributes to my growth in professionalism, empathy, and commitment to public service.	IDI 1
6	Common obstacles were delayed reporting and limited cooperation from witnesses or family members.	IDI 1
7	There were cases where limited training made it difficult to fully address the victim's psychological needs, requiring referral to appropriate agencies for further support.	IDI 1
8	Challenges included delayed responses, coordination issues, and differences in procedures among agencies, which sometimes slowed case processing.	IDI 1
9	Yes, some family members were uncooperative due to fear or personal ties. I addressed by explaining legal processes, ensuring confidentiality, and building trust through proper communication.	IDI 1
10	I encountered situations involving personal relationships and pressure that could affect impartiality. I resolved them by strictly following ethical standards, maintaining professionalism, and reporting or recusing myself when necessary to ensure fairness and integrity.	IDI 1
11	I manage stress through proper time management, peer support, regular rest, and focusing on physical and mental well-being to stay effective at work.	IDI 1
12	I maintain emotional objectivity by separating personal feelings from professional responsibilities, practicing self-reflection, seeking guidance from supervisors, and adhering strictly to established procedures and protocols.	IDI 1
13	I set clear boundaries, prioritize rest, seek peer support, enjoy joy rides, take time to appreciate nature and practice stress-management activities to prevent burnout.	IDI 1
14	I remain calm and respectful, follow protocols, use de-escalation techniques, communicate clearly, and document interactions objectively.	IDI 1
15	Standard operating procedures, ethics training, stress management programs, and supervision help. More mental health support, regular counseling, and workload management are needed.	IDI 1
16	Limited specialized training (forensic interviewing, trauma-informed care), manpower shortages, and lack of on-call medical/psych services. Regular advanced trainings, increased staffing, and stronger inter-agency coordination with health and social services.	IDI 1
17	Strengthen victim-centered and trauma-informed investigations. Improve case documentation, evidence handling, and timelines. Enhance coordination with prosecutors, LGUs, hospitals, and NGOs. Ensure investigator welfare to prevent burnout.	IDI 1
18	Mandatory trauma-informed investigation training, to improve victim trust, reduce re-traumatization, obtain more reliable statements, and increase case success rates	IDI 1
19	Building trust with marginalized or underserved communities by practicing respectful, trauma-informed communication, maintaining visibility through	IDI 1

	community outreach, ensuring confidentiality, and responding promptly and fairly to concerns to show consistency and accountability.	
20	Contribution to WCPD improvement and success by continuously improving my investigative skills, adhering to ethical standards, mentoring peers when possible, supporting victim-centered approaches, and actively contributing ideas that enhance efficiency, professionalism, and public trust within the unit.	IDI 1

APPENDIX F

Sample Coded Significant Statments

Significant Statement Number	Significant Statements	Line Number	CODE
1	Ang akong motibasyon mao ang oportunidad sa pagpanalipod ug pagsuporta sa mga kababayan-an ug kabataan, pagsiguro sa ilang kaluwasan, ug pagtabang sa paghatag kanila og hustisya (IDI1:SS1). (I am motivated by the opportunity to protect and support women and children, ensure their safety and help in providing them justice).	4	IDI 1
2	Ang komon nga mga babag mao ang nadugay nga pag-report ug limitado nga kooperasyon gikan sa mga saksi o mga sakop sa pamilya(IDI1:SS2). (Common obstacles were delayed reporting and limited cooperation from witnesses or family members.).	5	IDI 1
3	Akong giatubang ang problema pinaagi sa pagpasabot sa mga legal nga proseso, pagsiguro sa pagka-kompidensyal, ug pagtukod og pagsalig pinaagi sa saktong komunikasyon(IDI1:SS3). (I addressed by explaining legal processes, ensuring confidentiality, and building trust through proper communication).	6-7	IDI 1
4	Akong gidumala ang stress pinaagi sa saktong pagdumala sa oras, suporta gikan sa mga kauban sa trabaho, regular nga pahuway, ug pag-focus sa pisikal ug mental nga kahimsog (IDI1:SS4). (I manage stress through proper time management, peer support, regular rest, and focusing on physical and mental well-being).	8	IDI 1
5	Ang pagtabang sa mga biktima sa pagpangabuso, ilabi na ang biktima sa RAPE, maoy nagdasig kanako sa pagtuman sa akong katungdanan isip WCPD investigator.(IDI1:SS5). (Helping the victim of abuse specially the victim of RAPE motivates me to perform my duty as Women and Children investigator).	9	IDI 1
6	Naa na koy pagsalig sa kaugalingon unsaon pag-atubang sa mga biktima... sa tabang sa tanang mga seminar nga akong natambongan (IDI1:SS6). (I already have confidence on how to handle the victim of abuse... with the help of all the seminars I have attended).	10	IDI 1
7	Ang bugtong paagi aron masagubang ang stress mam, mao ang pagginhawa og lawom, pag-relax, ug pagtawag sa akong kanunay nga tigsuporta nga mao ang akong 6-anyos nga anak nga babaye (IDI1: SS7).	11	IDI 1

	(The only way to cope up stress mam, is to take a deep breath, relax and call my constant supporter which is my 6 years old daughter).		
8	Naggikan sa panginahanglan sa pisikal nga paglahutay, mental agility, teamwork, ug ang abilidad sa paggamit sa komplikado nga mga konsepto ubos sa pressure. Pisikal nga paglahutay ug kaabtik sa panghuna-huna tungod kay hapit tanan nga mga hilisgutan sa kini nga module kinahanglan nga himuon sa natad (IDI1: SS8). (In my opinion mam, the WCPD personnel should be given proper training in all the laws that we are handling).	12-13	IDI 1
9	Sa akong opinyon mam, ang mga personahe sa WCPD kinahanglan hatagan og saktong pagbansay sa tanang mga balaod nga among gidumala(IDI1: SS9). (Learning this subjects at same time maintaining to be mentally and physically fit).	14	IDI 1

Appendix G

Diagram Of Common Themes

