

Challenges Encountered by Iriga City Police Personnel in Solving Crimes

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the investigative hurdles encountered by police personnel of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Iriga City in solving crimes. Specifically, it examined the difficulties experienced across five key dimensions: evidence handling, witness cooperation, crime scene documentation, information management, and compliance with legal and procedural mandates. Adopting a descriptive-quantitative survey design triangulated with qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), the study administered a validated researcher-made instrument to sixty-nine (69) police personnel performing operational and investigative functions.

The empirical findings revealed that the respondents experienced "Major Challenges" across all five examined dimensions, culminating in an overall weighted mean of 3.84. The primary systemic bottlenecks included witnesses' reluctance to cooperate due to fear of retaliation (WM = 4.17), the increasing complexity of collecting and analyzing digital evidence (WM = 3.94), unauthorized crime scene contamination (WM = 3.99), and extensive legal documentation requirements (WM = 3.87). Statistical analysis proved these challenges exert a "Major Effect" (WM = 3.97) on crime resolution, leading to investigation delays, ballooning operational costs, and an increased risk of case dismissals.

To address these empirical gaps, the study developed the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES), a structured action plan built on four pillars: Community-Witness Protection, Technical Modernization, Scene Integrity Control, and Administrative Streamlining. The study concludes that the institutionalization of the IIES is essential to improving case resolution rates, maximizing conviction efficiency, and restoring community trust in the criminal justice system of Iriga City.

Keywords: Investigative Challenges, Iriga City, Police Personnel, Evidence-Based Policing, Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy, Witness Non-Cooperation, Digital Forensics.

INTRODUCTION

Police work is at the heart of criminal investigations, directly affecting public order and the legitimacy of the judiciary system. For the Philippine National Police (PNP), the ability to successfully resolve cases is an indicator of operational competence and a prerequisite for maintaining community trust. As the criminal enterprise becomes more sophisticated, however, investigators face a widening gap between their legal duties and actual field operations. This transformation requires the PNP to execute field procedures with scientific precision and optimize limited resources, as any lack of diligence in the investigative process can jeopardize judicial proceedings, compromise case outcomes, and expose the civilian population to heightened security risks.

In the global context, the friction between legislative mandates and field performance is significantly shaped by structural resource availability and capability alignment. Urbanizing semi-rural centers consistently suffer from a "resource-capability mismatch," where traditional, manual investigative approaches are structurally unequipped to handle the complex technical demands of modern offenses [Peterson, 2020]. When the administrative infrastructure fails to evolve alongside expanding city boundaries, critical operational processing bottlenecks arise during the "golden hour" of evidence handling, thereby creating a vulnerable foundation for future cross-examination in court [Ronamae, 2023].

As Iriga City expands as an urbanized hub in the Bicol Region, local law enforcement operations are increasingly challenged by a rising population and a sprawling geographic terrain that bridges densely populated commercial zones with isolated rural barangays. Systemic issues frequently constrain local police personnel, including shortages of specialized digital forensic software, limited tactical investigative kits, and personnel deficits. These institutional vulnerabilities are compounded by acute external disruptions, such as local witness unavailability due to fear of reprisal and high crime scene contamination rates typical of dense communal environments. These cumulative factors not only impede timely case resolution but also alter the public's perception of police effectiveness, eroding the foundational trust necessary for community-led policing.

The modern policing environment in the Philippines has shifted from a mere technical execution of an operation to a complex social affair. Broad community disinterest and local apprehension of retribution have been identified as dominant institutional barriers to field investigations [Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), 2021]. A chronic deficit in institutional witness security continues to encourage key informants to participate in a protective "culture of silence," depriving investigators of the contextual evidence needed to secure clear indictments [Pabelonia, 2022]. Consequently, local operational barriers must be addressed through targeted, structural reforms that bridge the social distance between officers and citizens, providing a legally and physically secure environment for public cooperation.

The legal basis of this study is anchored in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which mandates that the State shall promote the general welfare, protect life, liberty, and property, and maintain peace and order. This basic constitutional framework directly aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), which aims to reduce violence worldwide, eliminate systemic institutional exploitation, and ensure equal access to justice for all. Locally, this mandate is codified via Republic Act No. 6975 (The Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990), specifically under Section 24, which outlines the operational powers of the PNP to prevent crimes, bring offenders to justice, and maintain a community- and service-oriented force.

This research was initiated to address an urgent, empirical need observed within the local criminal justice system of Iriga City. By identifying the root causes of investigative friction—specifically surrounding evidence preservation, witness management, and administrative saturation—this study provides the empirical and theoretical foundation for the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES). Ultimately, the findings are intended to be practically applied to reshape station-level policies, optimize resource allocation, and enhance case solution efficiency across the wider Bicol Region.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To construct a robust explanatory model for the operational hurdles encountered by local law enforcement, this study establishes the **Multifaceted Crime-Solving Approach (MCSA)**. The MCSA is a unified framework synthesized from three foundational doctrines in contemporary criminology and administrative science: *Problem-Oriented Policing* (Goldstein, 1979), *Situational Crime Prevention Theory* (Clarke, 1997), and *Classical Organizational Theory* (Weber, 1947).

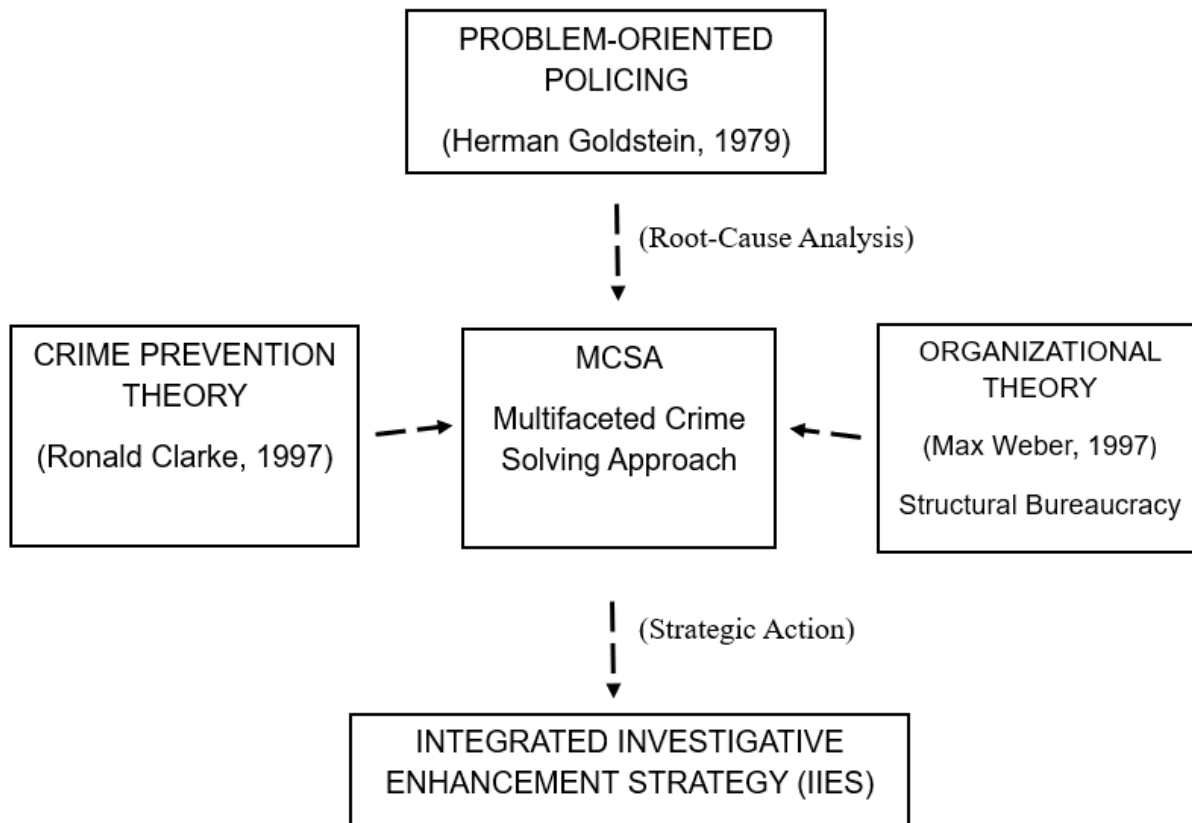


Figure 1: Unified Theoretical Architecture of the Multifaceted Crime-Solving Approach (MCSA)

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP)

Pioneered by Herman Goldstein, Problem-Oriented Policing shifts the focus of law enforcement from a purely reactive posture (responding to isolated incidents) to a proactive posture focused on discovering the root systemic causes of recurring issues in the community [Hinkle et al., 2020]. Goldstein asserts that to optimize efficiency, police departments must dissect the structural, logistical, and social patterns of operational problems to engineer localized, problem-specific responses rather than applying generic, centralized bureaucratic directives. Within the context of this study, POP provides the theoretical lens required to look past superficial case backlogs and examine the recurring field dynamics—such as localized witness intimidation networks and bystander scene encroachment—that necessitate specialized station-level strategies.

Situational Crime Prevention and Crime Prevention Theory

Crime Prevention Theory focuses on structural mechanisms designed to reduce opportunities for criminal commission and improve environmental controls. Ronald V. Clarke emphasizes that crime is highly contingent upon situational facilitators; hence, law enforcement must implement targeted interventions that alter the immediate environment to increase the perceived effort and minimize the rewards of criminal behavior [Chalfin et al., 2021]. In this study, this theory is extended to the investigative sphere: the crime scene itself is treated as an environment that requires immediate situational hard-perimeter design to prevent contamination, preserve fragile physical traces, and insulate the "golden hour" of inquiry from external interference.

Organizational Theory

Organizational Theory provides the structural framework necessary to analyze the internal workflows, resource allocation models, and bureaucratic communication paths within law enforcement agencies. Drawing from Max

Weber's classical institutional matrices, the theory examines how rigid hierarchies, administrative documentation standards, and personnel rotation cycles influence overall operational output [Garicano & Heaton, 2020]. Within the realm of crime-solving, Organizational Theory exposes how internal administrative red tape, systemic information silos, and investigator burnout restrict fluid data integration, directly causing investigative delays and high rates of procedural dismissal in the court system.

The Synthesized Multifaceted Crime-Solving Approach (MCSA)

The researcher synthesized these three distinct paradigms into the **Multifaceted Crime-Solving Approach (MCSA)**. The MCSA posits that investigative effectiveness is not a purely technical or linear procedure; rather, it is a dynamic equilibrium dependent upon the simultaneous optimization of problem-solving capabilities (POP), environmental management (Crime Prevention), and internal bureaucratic efficiency (Organizational Theory). By assessing how external social constraints (witness fear) interact with technical resource gaps (forensic deficits) and administrative strain (paperwork burden), the MCSA provides a comprehensive diagnostic framework to evaluate the local investigative ecosystem and directly informs the design of the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a convergent, mixed-methods descriptive-quantitative survey design, systematically reinforced by qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The integration of qualitative data was deliberately executed to satisfy peer-review mandates regarding methodological transparency, data triangulation, and the empirical verification of factors driving PNP investigative performance. The quantitative component captured standardized empirical metrics regarding the extent and perceived effects of investigative challenges, while the qualitative track captured the nuanced, lived experiences of field practitioners, isolating institutional variables that structured questionnaires cannot independently measure.

Respondents and Sampling Procedures

The target population for this study comprised the entire active operational and investigative force of the Iriga City Police Station. A purposive sampling technique was strictly applied to isolate personnel directly tasked with front-line criminal investigation, case processing, field intelligence, and first-responder scene management.

The final active sample consisted of **sixty-nine (69)** police personnel. To ensure absolute statistical integrity and prevent data contamination at the primary target station, a rigorous pilot-testing and instrument dry-run phase was conducted by personnel from the neighboring Nabua Municipal Police Station ($N = 15$). The pilot respondents shared identical operational profiles and socio-demographic contexts with the primary sample but were excluded from the final data pool.

Data Gathering Instruments

The primary quantitative data were collected using a researcher-made, expert-validated, highly structured five-point Likert scale survey questionnaire. The instrument was segmented into two core thematic axes: the first evaluating the specific extent of challenges across five distinct sub-dimensions (Evidence Handling, Witness Cooperation, Scene Contamination, Information Management, and Legal Mandates), and the second measuring the direct operational effects of those challenges on overall crime resolution.

To enrich and validate the quantitative findings, qualitative data collection was systematically embedded via two distinct operational mechanisms:

1. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Conducted individually with senior criminal investigators, desk officers, and the station command staff ($n = 8$) to document historical case progressions and trace specific procedural bottlenecks.
2. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** A facilitated, multi-departmental session involving investigative, patrol, and administrative personnel was executed to foster interactive group dynamics, allowing practitioners to cross-examine collective operational hurdles, administrative red tape, and community resistance patterns.

Statistical and Analytical Treatment of Data

Quantitative data processing was executed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The descriptive statistical array included frequency distribution matrices and computed weighted means (WM) formulated as:

$$WM = \frac{\sum(f \times x)}{N}$$

Where f represents the frequency of responses within a specific scale weight, x represents the assigned numeric scale value (1 to 5), and N represents the total sample size (69). The derived weighted means were interpreted using a structured, five-point verbal continuum:

Extent of Challenges Scale:

- [1.00 - 1.79] Not a Challenge (NC)
- [1.80 - 2.59] Minor Challenge (MiC)
- [2.60 - 3.39] Moderate Challenge (MoC)
- [3.40 - 4.19] Major Challenge (MaC)
- [4.20 - 5.00] Extreme Challenge (EC)

Operational Effects Scale:

- [1.00 - 1.79] No Effect (NE)
- [1.80 - 2.59] Minor Effect (MiE)
- [2.60 - 3.39] Moderate Effect (MoE)
- [3.40 - 4.19] Major Effect (MaE)
- [4.20 - 5.00] Extreme Effect (EE)

Qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs underwent inductive thematic analysis. Textual transcriptions were systematically indexed, coded for recurring concepts, and clustered into definitive thematic categories (e.g., *Forensic Infrastructure Deficits*, *Communal Retaliation Anxiety*). These qualitative themes were then directly juxtaposed with corresponding quantitative metrics to achieve comprehensive empirical triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings generated through the statistical compilation of survey questionnaires, directly synthesized with the qualitative narratives extracted during Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

Quantitative Analysis of Investigative Dimensions

The empirical data demonstrate that local law enforcement personnel face extensive operational friction, with all five targeted core investigative dimensions registering values within the "Major Challenge" threshold.

Axis A: Handling and Preserving Evidence

The evidence handling dimension recorded an overall average weighted mean of **3.78**, denoting a highly challenging operational domain.

Table 1: Challenges Encountered in Evidence Handling and Preservation

INDICATORS	WM	VI	R
1. Collecting physical evidence at crime scenes.	3.84	MaC	3
2. Preserving the integrity of evidence.	3.83	MaC	4
3. Ensuring proper chain of custody for evidence.	3.71	MaC	5
4. Handling digital evidence.	3.94	MaC	1
5. Documenting evidence properly.	3.64	MaC	7
6. Utilizing specialized equipment for evidence collection.	3.88	MaC	2
7. Implementing quality control measures for evidence handling.	3.65	MaC	6
Average Weighted Mean	3.78	MaC	

Legend: VI = Verbal Interpretation; R = Rank; MaC = Major Challenge

The data exposes a pronounced "technological-forensic gap." The primary friction point is isolated within indicator 4, *Handling digital evidence* (WM = 3.94), Rank 1), closely supported by indicator 6, *Utilizing specialized equipment* (WM = 3.88), Rank 2). This indicates that while traditional physical recovery metrics are standardized, investigators are digitally overwhelmed by the volume of electronic footprints, smartphone extractions, and cyber-linked data, due to a severe deficit in station-level digital forensic kits [Garcia, 2021].

Axis B: Dealing with Uncooperative Witnesses

This dimension emerged as the absolute most severe operational obstacle encountered by personnel, generating an alarming average weighted mean of **4.06**.

Table 2: Challenges Encountered in Witness Cooperation and Management

INDICATORS	WM	VI	R
1. Witnesses are unwilling to cooperate with investigations.	4.17	MaC	1
2. Witnesses are hesitant to provide information due to fear of retaliation.	4.14	MaC	2
3. Witnesses are unresponsive or uncooperative during interviews.	4.13	MaC	3
4. Witnesses provide inconsistent or unreliable testimony.	4.12	MaC	4
5. Building trust with witnesses.	4.09	MaC	5
6. Developing effective strategies for witness persuasion.	3.97	MaC	6
7. Providing support and protection for witnesses.	3.78	MaC	7
Average Weighted Mean	4.06	MaC	

Legend: MaC = Major Challenge

The severe inflation across all witness indicators reveals an acute crisis of confidence within the community-police dynamic. *Witness unwillingness* (WM = 4.17), Rank 1) and *fear of retaliation* (WM = 4.14), Rank 2) validate the presence of a robust, localized "culture of silence" [Pabelonia, 2022]. Key informants perceive local

security mechanisms as insufficient to protect them from suspect networks, prompting them to provide *inconsistent or unreliable testimony* ($(WM = 4.12)$) to deliberately insulate themselves from personal risk.

Axis C: Crime Contamination and Proper Documentation

Physical scene management and real-time administrative capturing registered a combined average mean of **3.80**.

Table 3: Challenges Encountered in Crime Scene Security and Documentation

INDICATORS	WM	VI	R
1. Crime scenes are often contaminated by unauthorized personnel.	3.99	MaC	1
2. Ensuring proper documentation of crime scenes.	3.90	MaC	2
3. Maintaining the integrity of crime scenes.	3.77	MaC	4
4. Documenting evidence in a timely manner.	3.87	MaC	3
5. Ensuring accuracy and completeness of crime reports.	3.74	MaC	5
6. Implementing crime scene security protocols.	3.68	MaC	6
7. Conducting thorough crime scene assessments.	3.67	MaC	7
Average Weighted Mean	3.80	MaC	

Legend: MaC = Major Challenge

Indicator 1, *Contamination by unauthorized personnel*, exhibits the highest strain within this category ($(WM = 3.99)$, Rank 1). Qualitative triangulation indicates that first responders struggle significantly with crowd control in tightly knit barangays and dense commercial centers. Accidental disruption by curious bystanders, media representatives, or uncoordinated local officials alters biological traces before forensic teams arrive, directly triggering *delays in timely documentation* ($(WM = 3.87)$, Rank 3) and exposing the case to future "fruit of the poisonous tree" procedural strikes during trial.

Axis D: Managing Information Overload

The analytical synthesis of mass intelligence and case data produced an average weighted mean of **3.82**.

Table 4: Challenges Encountered in Information Management and Synthesis

INDICATORS	WM	VI	R
1. Managing large amounts of data and information.	3.87	MaC	2
2. Prioritizing and focusing on relevant information.	3.81	MaC	5
3. Analyzing and interpreting complex data.	3.96	MaC	1
4. Sharing information effectively with team members.	3.71	MaC	7
5. Keeping track of multiple leads and tips.	3.72	MaC	6
6. Utilizing data visualization tools for information analysis.	3.84	MaC	3
7. Developing information management protocols.	3.83	MaC	4
Average Weighted Mean	3.82	MaC	

Legend: MaC = Major Challenge

The data reveals that the local precinct does not suffer from an information deficit; rather, it suffers from an information processing failure. The peak value rests in *analyzing and interpreting complex data* ($(WM = 3.96)$, Rank 1). Investigators are routinely inundated with unstructured data—ranging from community tips to cell phone records—but lack specialized link-analysis or data visualization software ($(WM = 3.84)$, Rank 3), resulting in cognitive paralysis and the potential omission of critical investigative angles [Dean, 2020].

Axis E: Navigating Legal Procedural Mandates

Compliance with strict statutory frameworks and human rights protocols generated an average weighted mean of **3.72**.

Table 5: Challenges Encountered in Legal and Statutory Compliance

INDICATORS	WM	VI	R
1. Understanding and applying relevant laws and regulations.	3.72	MaC	3
2. Ensuring compliance with legal procedures.	3.71	MaC	4.5
3. Navigating complex legal requirements.	3.71	MaC	4.5
4. Managing paperwork and documentation required by law.	3.87	MaC	1
5. Staying up-to-date with changes in laws and regulations.	3.75	MaC	2
6. Interpreting and applying case law and precedents.	3.67	MaC	6
7. Collaborating with legal experts for guidance.	3.62	MaC	7
Average Weighted Mean	3.72	MaC	

Legend: MaC = Major Challenge

The administrative burden is conclusively identified as the most prominent legal hurdle, with *managing paperwork required by law* scoring **3.87** (Rank 1). The extensive demand for meticulous affidavits, physical ledger maintenance, and procedural compliance reports actively cannibalizes hours that would otherwise be spent executing active field operations [Hernandez, 2022]. Furthermore, keeping pace with rapid shifts in Supreme Court evidentiary guidelines regarding warrantless arrests and cyber-warrants presents a significant structural challenge ($WM = 3.75$), Rank 2).

Comprehensive Summary Matrix of Investigative Dimensions

To map the definitive operational hierarchy of the challenges encountered by the Iriga City Police, the cumulative metrics were compiled and prioritized.

Table 6: Unified Summary Matrix of Core Investigative Challenges

CORE DISCIPLINARY AXIS	OVERALL WM	VERBAL INTERPRETATION	SYSTEMIC RANK
Axis B: Dealing with Uncooperative Witnesses	4.06	Major Challenge (MaC)	1
Axis D: Managing Information Overload	3.82	Major Challenge (MaC)	2
Axis C: Crime Contamination & Scene Documentation	3.80	Major Challenge (MaC)	3
Axis A: Handling and Preserving Evidence	3.78	Major Challenge (MaC)	4
Axis E: Navigating Legal Procedural Mandates	3.72	Major Challenge (MaC)	5
Cumulative Investigative Baseline Mean	3.84	Major Challenge (MaC)	

The unified matrix proves that **communal and cognitive parameters** represent a far more critical bottleneck to local crime-solving than internal legal comprehension. Witness management (Rank 1) and data analysis (Rank 2) form a critical operational bottleneck: investigators cannot secure high-fidelity statements due to fear of retaliation, and are simultaneously unequipped to process the digital evidence necessary to bypass uncooperative witnesses.

Downstream Effects of Systemic Challenges on Crime Resolution

The survey exhaustively measured how these primary operational challenges influence definitive case resolutions and institutional outcomes, yielding a collective mean of **3.97** (Major Effect).

Table 7: Perceived Operational Effects of Investigative Hurdles on Crime Resolution

INVESTIGATIVE RESOLUTION INDICATORS	WM	VI	R
1. Delays in investigation and resolution: Prolonged cases delay justice.	4.07	MaE	2
2. Reduced accuracy and reliability of evidence: Compromised integrity.	4.06	MaE	3.5
3. Increased costs and resource allocation: Excessive financial burn.	4.09	MaE	1
4. Decreased morale and motivation among personnel: Burnout/frustration.	3.96	MaE	9.5
5. Public dissatisfaction and loss of trust: Erosion of police legitimacy.	3.86	MaE	14
6. Difficulty in identifying and apprehending suspects: Blocked tracks.	3.99	MaE	7
7. Reduced ability to gather and analyze evidence effectively.	3.96	MaE	9.5
8. Increased likelihood of cases being dismissed or acquitted in court.	4.00	MaE	6
9. Negative impact on community safety and security.	3.80	MaE	15
10. Inefficient use of police resources and station manpower.	4.06	MaE	3.5
11. Increased clerical and operational workload for personnel.	4.01	MaE	5
12. Decreased operational collaboration between law enforcement agencies.	3.88	MaE	12
13. Inadequate or delayed forensic analysis and evidence processing.	3.97	MaE	8
14. Increased risk of wrongful convictions or erroneous acquittals.	3.87	MaE	13
15. Ongoing erosion of long-term police-community relationships.	3.93	MaE	11
Global Resolution Outcome Mean	3.97	Major Effect (MaE)	

Legend: MaE = Major Effect

The primary casualty of these investigative challenges is institutional fiscal sustainability, with *Increased costs and resource allocation* ranking as the number one consequence ($(WM = 4.09)$, Rank 1). When evidence is contaminated or witnesses retract statements, the station must dedicate excessive manpower and extended travel budgets to repeat basic field tracking.

This operational strain creates a severe "justice bottleneck" marked by *investigative delays* ($(WM = 4.07)$, Rank 2) and an *increased likelihood of case dismissals or acquittals* ($(WM = 4.00)$, Rank 6). Cases are frequently thrown out by Regional Trial Courts not due to a suspect's proven innocence, but due to technical dismissals arising from chain-of-custody gaps and delayed report filings [Philippine Judicial Academy, 2022]. This structural failure leads to an *inflated workload* ($(WM = 4.01)$, Rank 5), severely damaging *personnel morale* ($(WM = 3.96)$) and reinforcing a cycle of public dissatisfaction.

Qualitative Triangulation (FGD and KII Insight Synthesis)

The qualitative testimonies collected during Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions provided critical real-world context for these statistical benchmarks.

Senior investigators revealed that the lack of specialized, climate-controlled storage facilities at the local precinct actively compromises biological traces during hot or humid months, directly aligning with the strong evidence preservation scores ($(WM = 3.83)$). On the cyber front, field personnel explained that when digital crimes or electronic footprints are recovered, the station is forced to forward data storage units to regional headquarters in

Camp Ola, Legazpi City, due to the total absence of station-level extraction software. This logistical loop entirely shatters the investigative "golden hour."

Regarding witness management, participants in the FGD highlighted a severe socio-legal vulnerability: the statutory framework for the national Witness Protection Program (WPP) is entirely centralized, making it logistically inaccessible for low-income informants in semi-urban communities. As one veteran investigator noted:

"Witnesses look at the physical layout of our current Quality Service Desks and see that they must sit a few meters away from where suspects are detained. They choose silence because we cannot offer them an administrative buffer zone or real-time anonymity."

This qualitative data proves that witness non-cooperation is a rational, self-preservation strategy reacting to spatial and structural deficits inside the local police infrastructure.

Proposed Strategy: The Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES)

To systematically address the empirical vulnerabilities identified in this study, the department developed the **Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES)**. The IIES serves as an evidence-based roadmap engineered to modernize technical operations, secure witness safety, and eliminate administrative friction.

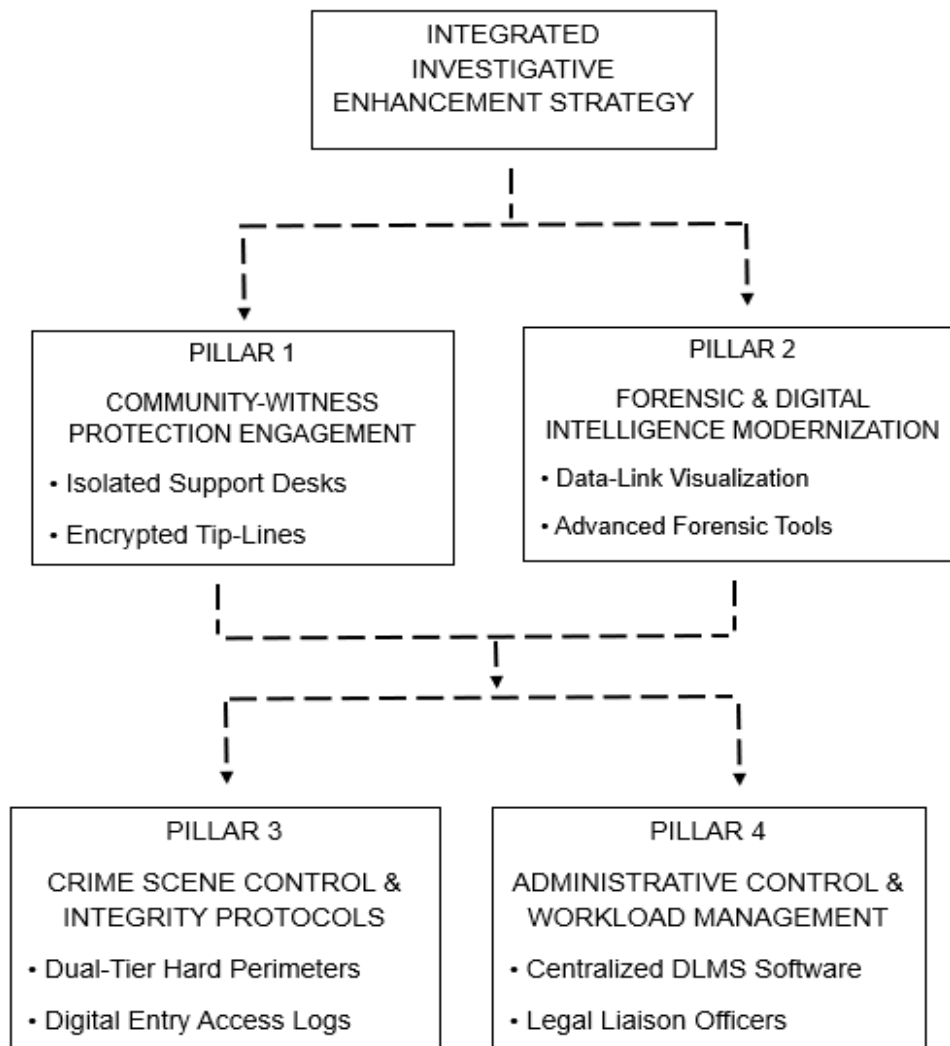


Figure 2: The Structural Pillars of the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES)

Pillar 1: Community-Witness Protection and Engagement

Directly targeting the highest-ranked operational hurdle—witness non-cooperation ($WM = 4.17$) driven by fear of retaliation ($WM = 4.14$)—this pillar restructures the spatial and communication layout of community interactions.

- **Operational Action A:** Dismantle the exposed configuration of the current intake terminal. The station will construct a physically isolated **Local Witness Support Desk** equipped with restricted access paths, completely separated from suspect processing and detention areas.
- **Operational Action B:** Partner with municipal telecommunications units to deploy an **End-to-End Encrypted Anonymous Tip-Line**. This provides a secure digital buffer zone, eliminating the requirement for a physical presence at the precinct during initial lead generation.
- **Operational Action C:** Mobilize the Community Relations Section to institutionalize **Barangay Reassurance Dialogues**. These targeted outreach programs educate community members on safe reporting protocols, actively neutralizing the local "culture of silence" and repairing public trust ($WM = 4.09$).

Pillar 2: Forensic and Digital Intelligence Modernization

This pillar directly resolves the primary technical bottlenecks identified by personnel: data analysis challenges ($WM = 3.96$) and digital evidence handling deficits ($WM = 3.94$).

- **Operational Action A:** Procure automated digital forensic triage kits through localized capital outlays, enabling the IT and Forensic Section to run immediate localized device extractions without systemic transfer delays.
- **Operational Action B:** Integrate open-source **Node-Link Data Visualization Software** into the intelligence unit. This platform allows investigators to convert masses of unstructured cell and CCTV data into clear, actionable visual intelligence maps ($WM = 3.84$).
- **Operational Action C:** Conduct mandatory station-level training cycles focused on modern electronic data preservation protocols to eliminate the forensic reliability gaps highlighted during senior investigator interviews.

Pillar 3: Crime Scene Control and Integrity Protocols

This protocol establishes an uncompromising physical and digital framework to eliminate unauthorized crime scene contamination ($WM = 3.99$) and maximize evidence collection accuracy ($WM = 3.84$).

- **Operational Action A:** Enforce a strict, mandatory **Dual-Tier Cordoning System** at all major incident sites. First responders will establish a rigid "Inner Cordon" restricted exclusively to forensic specialists, protected by an extended "Outer Cordon" perimeter secured by patrol personnel to manage crowds and local officials.
- **Operational Action B:** Deploy a mobile-based **Digital Scene Access Log Application**. This automates entry and exit timestamps via biometric or barcode scans, replacing manual paper logs and anchoring an unassailable, court-proof chain of custody ($WM = 3.71$).
- **Operational Action C:** Roll out public awareness campaigns via local media platforms to educate civilian populations and media groups on the legal boundaries and forensic importance of respecting active crime scene perimeters.

Pillar 4: Administrative Efficiency and Workload Management

This pillar streamlines internal operational workflows to reduce clerical friction and prevent investigator burnout, directly mitigating the legal paperwork burden ($WM = 3.87$).

- **Operational Action A:** Transition the station away from analog file formatting to a centralized **Digital Legal Management System (DLMS)**. The DLMS automates routine affidavit formatting, evidence log tracking, and report structuring, reducing manual clerical hours by up to 40%.
- **Operational Action B:** Embed dedicated **Legal Liaison Officers** directly within the investigative unit. These specialists provide real-time legal advice during active inquiries, ensuring complete compliance with evolving case law precedents ($WM = 3.75$) and minimizing technical dismissals.
- **Operational Action C:** Restructure investigator shift rotations and implement peer-support wellness initiatives to manage compassion fatigue and reduce occupational error rates caused by chronic workload saturation.

Comprehensive IIES Implementation Action Plan Matrix

The definitive operational implementation schedule for the execution of the IIES is organized across institutional commands.

Table 8: Strategic Action Plan Matrix for IIES Institutionalization

STRATEGIC PROGRAM	CORE DISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES	SPECIFIC EXPECTED OUTCOMES	ACCOUNTABLE RESPONSIBLE OFFICE
Witness Protection & Engagement	• Construct isolated Support Desks • Secure encrypted tiplines • Launch community dialogues	• Measurable expansion of witness statements • Dismantling of the localized "culture of silence"	Community Relations Section / Investigative Unit
Technical Modernization	• Procure forensic toolkits • Train personnel on data software • Execute digital triage	• Eradication of regional data lag • Accelerated intelligence synthesis timelines	Logistics Section / IT & Forensic Division
Scene Integrity Control	• Mandate dual-tier perimeters • Implement Digital Access Logs • Train first responders	• Absolute reduction in crowd contamination • Secured chain-of-custody validation	Patrol Section / Front-line First Responders
Administrative Streamlining	• Deploy DLMS software architecture • Institutionalize template automation	• 40% reduction in manual clerical strain • Accelerated statutory case file submissions	Station Administrative Office / Legal Branch
Resource Optimization	• Reallocate annual operational outlays • Mandate high-priority forensic funding	• Drastic minimization of prolonged case costs • Optimized investigator deployment footprints	Budget & Finance Command / Station Chief

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study comprehensively analyzed the multi-dimensional investigative challenges encountered by the police personnel of the Iriga City Police Station and determined the direct operational effects of these hurdles on case resolution outcomes. Utilizing a descriptive-quantitative mixed-methods design, the study administered an expert-validated survey to sixty-nine (69) active operational and investigative officers. Quantitative findings were systematically triangulated with qualitative themes extracted from individual Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions to guarantee data transparency and credibility. The ultimate objective was to design an evidence-based roadmap—the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES)—to eliminate operational friction points and improve crime solution efficiency.

Key Findings

1. **Pervasiveness of Operational Challenges:** The Iriga City Police face significant challenges across all five investigated domains, yielding a cumulative baseline mean of **3.84** (Major Challenge). Witness non-cooperation due to fear of retaliation emerged as the absolute most severe barrier ($WM = 4.06$), followed closely by information management and data interpretation overloads ($WM = 3.82$). Digital evidence handling ($WM = 3.94$) and unauthorized crowd contamination at crime scenes ($WM = 3.99$) represent critical technical vulnerabilities, while clerical paperwork saturation ($WM = 3.87$) dominates legal procedural hurdles.
2. **Impact on Crime Resolution Outcomes:** These collective investigative challenges exert a profound, damaging effect on overall case resolution efficiency, scoring a high global mean of **3.97** (Major Effect). The most critical consequences are severe inflation of investigation costs and resource burn ($WM = 4.09$), prolonged investigative delays ($WM = 4.07$), and an increased rate of case dismissals or acquittals ($WM = 4.00$) in regional courts due to technical or procedural lapses.
3. **Strategic Framework Resolution:** To resolve these systemic bottlenecks, the study engineered the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES). This proactive operational framework coordinates witness protection modernization, digital forensic technology integration, hard-perimeter scene protocols, and administrative digitization to replace manual workflows and optimize personnel morale.

Conclusions

1. The Iriga City Police Station operates within an unsustainable investigative framework characterized by a severe **resource-capability mismatch**. Traditional manual policing methods are fundamentally inadequate to resolve sophisticated, data-heavy modern crimes.
2. Witness non-cooperation is a rational self-preservation response to the current **physical and spatial vulnerabilities** of the precinct's intake infrastructure. Without structural separation and anonymous digital reporting channels, the communal "culture of silence" will continue to limit case clearance rates.
3. Administrative red tape and clerical saturation actively cannibalize active investigative hours. Transitioning from analog tracking to digitized legal workflows is a prerequisite to eliminate investigator burnout, minimizing procedural errors, and restore public legitimacy.

Recommendations

1. **Precinct Command and Operations:** The Iriga City Police Station should immediately prioritize the spatial restructuring of its intake facilities by constructing an isolated Witness Support Desk, while transitioning all legal file tracking to a digitized management platform.

2. **Logistics and Training Directorates:** PNP regional offices should prioritize the immediate procurement of localized digital forensic extraction software and execute mandatory link-analysis training cycles to eliminate data processing bottlenecks.
3. **Local Government and Legislative Authorities:** The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Iriga City should formally adopt and co-fund the implementation of the Integrated Investigative Enhancement Strategy (IIES) through a multi-departmental ordinance, ensuring continuous budgetary allocations and statistical monitoring of case resolution timelines.

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