

# Philippine National Police Training and the Utilization of Less-Lethal Weapon

Lee John Dexter A. Lomat<sup>1</sup>, Angelito B. Narez<sup>2</sup>, Steven Kyle G. Makinano<sup>3</sup>, Benjie B. Paangay<sup>4</sup>, Joshua Raymundo<sup>5</sup>, Cedric R. Calumpong<sup>6</sup>

San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite, Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

This research focused on the effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons and the efficiency of their utilization among the uniformed personnel of Philippine National Police in Cavite City. In terms of training design and content, training delivery and methodology, and the degree of efficiency in their use in the field operations in terms of application and outcome, this study evaluated the effectiveness of training on less-lethal weapons. It also identified significant differences and relationship among these variables. Participants in the study were 73 uniformed personnel from the Cavite City Police Station. It used a quantitative research design, specifically descriptive correlational and comparative. The researchers changed and adjusted the research tool and validated by experts. Based to the results, training on less-lethal weapons was generally seen as effective in terms of both training design and delivery, and field operation also proved to be effective in terms of usage efficiency. However, when categorized by years of service, no significant difference was discovered. On the other hand, a significant relationship between utilization efficiency and training efficacy was discovered, suggesting that they impact and influence one another. Finally, the Philippine National Police personnel's training effectiveness and use of less-lethal weapons has been improved through the proposal of a sustainable development program called "SAFEFORCE: Sustainable Advancement for Effective and Fair Operational Response through Continues Education."

**Keywords:** Philippine National Police, Effectiveness of Training, Utilization of Less-Lethal Weapon

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

The use of force is a delicate and important topic in the complicated security context in which the Philippines National Police (PNP) work. Less-lethal weapon are instruments made to persuade people to comply without endangering their lives. These weapons are mostly used by law enforcement organizations and are meant to be used in circumstances where using fatal force is either improper or unneeded. However, the phrase "less lethal" acknowledges that deaths can happen in specific circumstances, especially when people have underlying medical disorders or when they are misused. The term "maximum tolerance" refers to the strictest guidelines that law enforcement, the military, and other peacekeeping forces must follow when conducting a public gathering or dispersing it., Less-lethal weapons encompass a variety of types, including chemical agents like tear gas, projectile options such as rubber and plastic bullets, and electroshock devices like Tasers (Rogers, C. W. 2024).

By presenting Philippine National Police personnel the abilities and information to employ these weapons correctly and successfully in a variety of scenarios, training greatly increases the effectiveness of less-lethal weapons. To guarantee the efficient and responsible use of less-lethal weapon, the Philippine National Police (PNP) consistently improve the skills of its officers through a variety of training initiatives. These training programs are organized around clearly defined training design and content that prioritizes operational procedures, scenario-based exercises, and human rights concepts. The approach and delivery of training, which guarantee that knowledge is successfully imparted through lectures, real -world examples, and interactive simulation, are equally crucial. Training Design refers to a structured plan for developing and implementing

training programs that align learning objectives with methods and evaluation (Qualee, n.d.). It entails careful preparation and alignment with learning objectives to guarantee that the material, evaluation techniques, and instructional methodologies all complement one another to promote learning. The specific materials, data, and resources utilized in a training program to accomplish the intended learning goals are referred to as training content (Martin & Garcia, 2023). It includes the concepts, abilities and information that are meant for students and are created to align with the overall objectives of the program. Furthermore, training delivery describes the strategies, tactics, and formats utilized to offer training materials to students in order to accomplish the intended learning results (Lee & Tan, 2022).

The Public Safety Basic Recruit Course stands out among various training programs as a foundational course for prospective recruits. Officers who complete this course will have the fundamental information abilities, and tactical awareness that serves as the basis for future specialization and improvement in the use of less-lethal weapon. Enhancement training programs that offer ongoing professional development supplement these basic training activities, allowing officers to hone their abilities, stay abreast of tactical development, and successfully address changing operational difficulties. The goal of combining basic and enhancement training is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of using less-lethal weapons in combat. Public safety and law enforcement effectiveness will be greatly increased by the combination of basic and enhancement training, which are designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of using less-lethal weapons in the field. Officers are better equipped to keep the peace without using fatal force when they participate in exercises like the non-lethal weapons executive seminar (NOLES), where they learn tactical control holds, how to use pepper spray and tasers correctly, and crowd methods. Furthermore, ongoing training guarantees that police comprehend the concepts of graduated force and proportionality, which lowers the possibility of undue injury and raises responsibility in operations utilizing less-lethal alternatives. In the end, this thorough training method encourages safer law enforcement and improved human rights protection (Philippines National Police, 2021). In order to address these issues and decrease deaths, the PNP has acknowledged the necessity of equipping police with less-lethal weapons (LLWs) such batons, tasers, and pepper spray (GMA News, 2020). In order to stop fatal shooting and enhance operational results, police Chief General Archie Gamboa stressed the value of giving police a variety of force alternatives (GMA News, 2020). Since then, in an effort to improve officer competence while upholding human rights, the PNP has created procedures and minimum requirements for the acquisitions and employment of non-lethal weaponry, including as chemical and blunt impact models (NAPOLCOM, 2024).

These advancements are reflected in the updated (PNP Operational Procedures Manual., 2021), which emphasizes that weapon should only be used as a last option and describes the employment of LLWs within a force continuum framework (PNP, 2021). In order to maintain public safety and protect basic rights, the PNP Guidebook on Human Rights Based policing also promotes the use of force proportionately and the employment of non-lethal alternatives (Panay News, 2025). Despite these regulatory developments, through training programs that develop officer competency and moral judgment are crucial to the successful deployment of LLWs (Martir, 2024). The Constitution provides for the creation of a national police commission. It provided that the authority of local executives over the police units in their jurisdiction shall be provided by law (Philippines Law on Police Use of Force., 2025).

The effectiveness of LLWs in lowering the number of fatalities and serious injuries sustained during police contacts police is supported by empirical research from various jurisdictions. In their analysis of 2,348 use-of-force occurrences, (Petersen et al. 2025) discovered that chemical irritants were responsible for just 4% of hospitalizations or fatalities, which is far less than conducted energy devices (13%), impact weapons (16%), and police canines (37%). These results highlight how crucial it is for police operations to prioritize safer, less-lethal solutions in order to reduce harm. Law enforcement officers have a duty to protect and maintain everyone's human dignity. When law enforcement interacts with vulnerable individuals and groups, such as members of ethnic minorities, women, children, LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex) people, and people with disabilities, this section is especially important. (UNODC, 2019)

Based on organizational and individual circumstances, there is considerable diversity in the efficiency of law enforcement training on less-lethal weapons (LLWs) and the subsequent successful application of these instruments in field operations. According to PNP MC 2023-056, factors including an officer's years of service,

can have a significant impact on how well instruction is absorbed and used in practice. For example, a study on mandatory training for Philippine National Police (PNP) revealed that although the overall effectiveness was rated highly, there were notable personnel were categorized by years of service (Cabataña et al., 2023). Recent PNP leadership measures to implement stricter continuous gun and tactical proficiency requirements across all levels, recognizing that expertise is not static, also emphasize the need for renewing proficiency (Gomez, 2024). As a result, the way that different units are exposed to operational demands and the type of specialized training they get are strong indicators of how well less-lethal weapon training converts in to capable field performance.

Despite a lot of study on less lethal weapons, there are still a lot of unanswered questions, particularly on how these weapons are trained and performed by the Philippine National Police (PNP), for example, a recent study conducted by the MSEUF Research Department (2024) studied how barangay police officers and residents felt about the effectiveness of less lethal weapons. The study found that opinions were generally positive, but also pointed out that more research is needed to fully understand how they can be used in crime prevention and harm reduction. The efficiency of LLW training and the effectiveness of LLW usage in field operations are two crucial elements that must be considered while researching the use of less-lethal weapons (LLWs) by the Philippine National Police (PNP). The curriculum's design and content, which must incorporate human rights concepts, legal and ethical concerns, tactical application, and realistic scenario-based exercises, are just a few of the factors that contribute to training efficacy. For instance, essential behavioral elements required for training effectiveness, such operational flexibility and critical decision-making, are highlighted in international research, including a Finnish police use-of-force study (Finnish Police Use of Force Study, 2021). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2019), the formation of moral and legal judgment is equally important to guarantee the proportionate use of force and respect for human right. Additionally, officer's decision-making and personality characteristics affect how training is retained and applied in the field (Finnish Police Use of Force Study, 2021). However, the effectiveness of LLWs use is linked to practical results, such as the demonstrated decrease in civilian facilities and injuries when LLWs are deployed appropriately, as evidenced by a multi-agency U.S. analysis that found lower hospitalization rates for chemical irritants that alternative options (Petersen et al., 2025). Other crucial elements of efficacy include the achievements of compliance without escalation, strict compliance to operational procedures, and adjustment to contextual and environmental elements such suspect conduct and officer experience (NIH PMC, 2024; Geneva Guidelines on LLWs, 2019). Assessing these aspects provides a thorough framework for comprehending and enhancing PNP training initiatives as well as the operational use of less-lethal weaponry, eventually promoting safer and more accountable law enforcement. To lessen its dependence on lethal force the PNP has also established minimum requirements for non-lethal weapons and started acquiring tools like batons, tasers, and pepper spray (NAPOLCOM, 2024; GMA News, 2021).

However, there are currently few empirical studies to determine if these training programs effectively prepare officers for their correct usage and whether the deployment of these weapons improves operational outcomes. Furthermore, although the PNP Operational Procedures Manual (2021) and recent Senate resolutions (Senate of the Philippines, 2023) outline protocols to govern the use of non-lethal weapons, there are still few studies that document adherence to these protocols and their practical effects. Additionally, international research emphasizes the significance of monitoring in preventing abuse and unintentional injury (NIH PMC, 2024; Congress.gov, 2025). In order to improve community safety and educate policy, there is an urgent need for localized research that looks at the efficacy of less-lethal weapon training deployment procedures, and the results inside the PNP.

## OBJECTIVE

Generally, this study determined the effectiveness of the current training program on less-lethal weapon and the efficiency on the utilization of less-lethal weapon of the Philippine National Police. It also determined the significant difference on the effectiveness of the training and the efficiency of the less-lethal weapons in the field operations when grouped according to years in service. The significant relationship between the effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons and the efficiency on the utilization of less-lethal weapons in the field operations were also looked into.

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## FRAMEWORK

This study is to anchor a theoretical framework that investigates the connection between the training received by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the personnel's efficient and responsible use of less-lethal weapons (LLWs). This framework provides a thorough understanding of the intricate interactions between officer behaviors, policy, training, and human rights considerations in the context of law enforcement by drawing on a number of well-established theories.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) relies on the belief that we gain knowledge through our social interactions with other people. Separately, people learn to behave similarly by seeing the actions of others. People absorb and reproduce other people's behavior after witnessing it, particularly if the observational experience was favorable or involved promotions associated with the conduct they saw. Bandura claims that imitation entails really replicating observed motor behaviors (Bandura 1977).

According to the Social Learning Theory, officers pick up knowledge about LLW use through seeing and copying senior officers and trainers in addition to receiving formal training. This figure demonstrates that effective training requires presenting officers with correct models of behavior. Lethal force may be used less frequently if officers receive effective training because it increases their self-efficacy LLWs appropriately (Butler et al., 2023; IJSMS, 2024). Moreover, according to Social Learning Theory, officers absorb procedures through institutional culture, modeling, and observation. Additionally, police who get training in simulation-based settings are more likely to utilize de-escalation tactics successfully and refrain from abusing LLWs in contemporary policing (Michela et al., 2023; Koedijk et al., 2022). This theory, which has been used in a variety of contexts, including law enforcement training and education, emphasizes how observing experiences and simulated learning aid in the development of advanced skills and the adoption of novel behaviors (IJSMS, 2024; Tandfonline, 2024).

Force Continuum Theory (National Institute of Justice 2009) explains the range various measures that law enforcement officials may use in reaction to a scenario, including pursuing justice or looking into a crime. The application of force is guided by a continuum, Officers are urged to employ the proper amount of force in the given circumstances. This figure shows how PNP officers are expected to make decisions that align with proportionality and necessity. The placement of less-lethal weapons in the middle of the continuum represents their role as the preferred option before any escalation to lethal force. According to the Use of Force Continuum police should respond to threats in a graded manner, varying from less to more aggressive alternatives while always using force according to the circumstances. This study will determine whether PNP training successfully incorporates this idea, appropriate guaranteeing that officers choose the appropriate LLW for the appropriate situation in accordance with PNP operational protocols (Revised Philippines National Police Operational Procedures, 2021) and new non-lethal firearms regulations (NAPOLCOM, 2024). Additional recommendations are provided by the usage of the force continuum. About the amount of force that can be applied in a particular self-defense scenario.

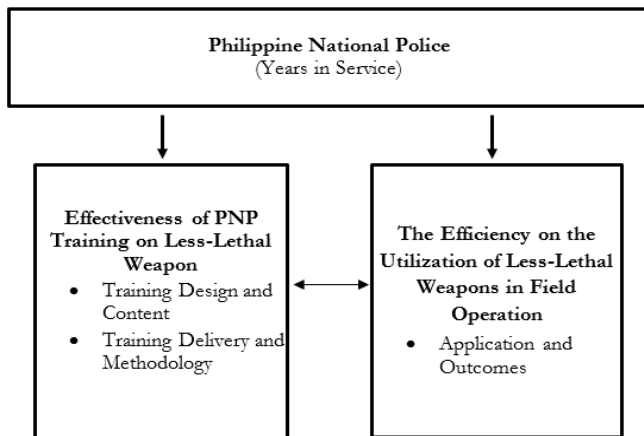
These rules are not universal as they are often decided by different states and authorities. In court, the continuum may also be utilized to assist the jury in determining if the defendant used appropriate force given the situation. To assist individuals in using the continuum to the national use of force framework was created to prevent the use of excessive force. While law enforcement personnel are the primary target of this framework, it may also be beneficial to civilians. It can serve as a guide for decision making and subsequent explanation. Your behavior, but it's not meant to serve as an excuse for what you're doing. The Three categories are included in the framework for consideration. (College of Policing, n.; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d).

Human Rights Based Policing Theory highlights the importance of upholding legality and proportionality in all police operations, including the use of less-lethal weapon, in order to respect and protect human rights. We will assess whether there ethical and human rights principles are properly incorporated into PNP training (PNP Guidebook on Human Rights-Based Policing, 2023; PPSC, 2019; Labata, 2024). This figure highlights that LLW training must not only teach technical skills but also embed human rights values such as legality, accountability, proportionality, and respect for human dignity.

Additionally, it emphasizes the necessity of strong accountability systems for the use of less-lethal weapon (Cerillo et al., 2022). In accordance with the human right-based policing, police officers frequently have to find this state of balance in a few seconds under complicated and dangerous circumstances, while keeping in mind the main guidelines pertaining to International Human Rights legislation and the use of force (Ohchr., 2020). According to recent research, accountability systems in Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines, are frequently reactive rather than proactive, which undermines law enforcement law credibility (Rappert et al., 2023).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 Research Paradigm



The research on Philippine National Police Training and the use of Less-Lethal weapon focused on the uniformed personnel of the Philippine National Police. The diagram showed that the primary step in conducting the research is identifying the respondents and the variables needed. Then, the demographic profiles of the respondents such as their years in service. Then, the level effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons and the level of the efficiency on the utilization of less-lethal weapons in the field operations was measured using the questionnaire adapted by the researchers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative and correlational research design to determine the effectiveness of the Philippine National Police (PNP) training on less-lethal weapons and the efficiency of less-lethal weapon utilization during field operations. While the quantitative approach enabled the statistical examination of respondents' perceptions, it relied on self-reported survey responses that may not fully capture actual operational performance. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as perceptions of training effectiveness rather than direct measures of operational competency.

The study has several methodological limitations. First, it utilized purposive sampling involving respondents from only one police station, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied exclusively on self-reported survey responses, which may be influenced by social desirability bias and may not fully represent actual operational performance. Finally, the cross-sectional design captured respondents' perceptions at only one point in time and did not assess changes in competency after repeated operational deployment or refresher training.

### Respondents

The study involved 73 uniformed personnel assigned to the Cavite City Police Station who had completed less-lethal weapon training and were actively engaged in field operations. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that only personnel with relevant operational experience participated in the study. Although the



respondents represented nearly all eligible personnel in the selected police station, the study was limited to a single operational unit. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to other police stations or regional offices that differ in organizational structure, operational environment, training resources, and frequency of less-lethal weapon deployment.

| Rank                             | N  |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Patrolman / Patrolwoman          | 25 |
| Police Corporal                  | 7  |
| Police Staff Master Sergeant     | 23 |
| Police Senior Master Sergeant    | 17 |
| Police Executive Master Sergeant | 1  |

### Research Instrument

The first part of the instrument contains the demographic profile of the respondents such as years in service

The second part of the instrument were the questions pertaining to the effectiveness of the Philippine National Police training on less-lethal weapons. This was composed of two (2) dimensions namely: Training Design and Content, and Training Delivery and Methodology with a 13-item questionnaire. This instrument was adapted on PNP MC 2023-056, NAPOLCOM MC 2021-002, and PNP Guidebook on Human Rights-Based Policing which will be rated using a 4-point scale.

The next was the efficiency on the utilization of less-lethal weapons in the field operation based on the PNP Operational Procedures, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials with a dimension: Application and Outcome. This includes a 7-item questionnaire to be obtained using 4-point Likert-type scale.

### Validity and Reliability

The adapted-modified questionnaires that were used in this study undergone content validity ratio by Lawshe. It involved five (5) validators who rated the items as either essential or not essential. All items had a content validity ratio that is higher than the critical value of 0.600. The computed validity index for the questionnaires is 0.8804.

The validated survey questionnaire was pilot tested to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha, with 30 respondents who were not included in the actual respondents. The pilot testing yielded an alpha coefficient 0.94.

### Ethical Consideration

Prior to data collection, approval to conduct the study was obtained from the concerned university research authorities and the management of the Cavite City Police Station. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents before questionnaire administration. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, responses would remain confidential, and collected information would be used solely for academic research purposes. No identifying information was included in the statistical analysis to preserve participant anonymity.

### Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, analysis of variance and Kruskal Wallis and Spearman rho.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 The Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons by the Philippine National Police Uniformed Personnel in terms of Training Design and Content

| Training Design & Content                                                                                                                                                               | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| The training curriculum adequately covers the technical aspects and capabilities of various less-lethal (e.g. baton, pepper spray, stun guns).                                          | 3.397 | 0.595          | Very High      |
| The training effectively integrates the PNP Use of Force Continuum principles (e.g. verbal commands, physical force, and less-lethal weapon) as outlined in PNP Operational Procedures. | 3.411 | 0.549          | Very High      |
| Human Rights Based Policing Principles are thoroughly emphasized in less-lethal weapon training.                                                                                        | 3.466 | 0.502          | Very High      |
| The training provides clear guidelines on the legal implications and justifiable                                                                                                        | 3.438 | 0.500          | Very High      |
| The training content is updated regularly to reflect new policies, technologies, and best practices in less-lethal weapons.                                                             | 3.384 | 0.490          | Very High      |
| The training emphasizes de-escalation techniques as a primary approach before resorting to less-lethal force.                                                                           | 3.452 | 0.578          | Very High      |
| I understand the circumstances under which I am authorized to use each type of less-lethal weapon.                                                                                      | 3.301 | 0.617          | Very High      |
| Overall Training Design & Content                                                                                                                                                       | 3.407 | 0.406          | Very High      |

Table 1 presented the level of effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons in terms of Training Design and Content. Item 3 obtained the highest mean ( $M=3.466$ ,  $SD = 0.502$ ), indicating that Human Rights-Based Policing Principles were thoroughly emphasized. This was followed by item 6 ( $M = 3.452$ ,  $SD = 0.578$ ) on de-escalation techniques and item 4 ( $M = 3.438$ ,  $SD = 0.500$ ) on clear legal guidelines. Item 2, 5, and 1 were also rated very high level of effectiveness, showing that the training integrated the PNP Use of Force Continuum, updated content regularly, and covered technical aspects. Although Item 7 had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.301$ ,  $SD = 0.617$ ), it was still very high level of effectiveness, indicating that officers understood proper weapon use. Overall, the composite mean of 3.407 ( $SD = 0.406$ ) showed that the training design and content were generally very high level of effectiveness.

According to systematic reviews, when properly designed and executed, training programs that incorporate scenario-based exercises and clearly defined use-of-force rules are linked to fewer injuries among both police and civilians (Sheppard, 2022; Petersen et al., 2024). Moreover, experimental evaluations of police training, officers who finish courses that combine classroom learning with real-world fieldwork experience are also less likely to use excessive force and report fewer injuries in operational situations (Sanders, 2024). Additionally, the instruction of defensive tactics and equipment management through repeated drills, live demonstrations, and supervised simulations also greatly improves officer performance, skill retention, and self-efficacy, according to research on PNP training in the Philippines (Pastrana, 2024). Other than that, to standardize training and guarantee ongoing professional development, the Philippines National Police (PNP) created a thorough Field Training Program under Memorandum Circular No. 2023-056 to further institutionalize these advancements.

Moreover, this policy aims to strengthen officer's competence in the responsible use of less-lethal weapons, thereby improving their readiness to handle complex field situations while minimizing injuries and promoting public safety (PNP, 2023). Finally, Petersen et al. (2024) point out, the type of weapon used and the situational conditions under which it is used can significantly influence outcome, indicating that giving officers training and access to less-lethal tools alone does not automatically guarantee consistently safe or effective result.

**Table 2 The Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons by the Philippine National Police Uniformed Personnel in terms of Training Delivery and Methodology**

| Training Delivery & Methodology                                                                                                                   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| The instructors for less-lethal weapon training are knowledgeable and experienced                                                                 | 3.260 | 0.553          | Very High      |
| The training (e.g., lectures, practical drills, simulations) are effective engaging.                                                              | 3.274 | 0.629          | Very High      |
| There are sufficient hands-on practical exercise and scenario-base drills for less lethal weapon use.                                             | 3.260 | 0.624          | Very High      |
| The training facilities and equipment for less-lethal weapon drills are adequate and realistic.                                                   | 3.233 | 0.635          | High           |
| I received constructive feedback during my less-lethal weapon training that helped me improve.                                                    | 3.288 | 0.565          | Very High      |
| The training simulates real-world scenario, including dealing with non-compliant or violent individuals, while incorporating less-lethal options. | 3.274 | 0.768          | Very High      |
| Overall Training Delivery and Methodology                                                                                                         | 3.265 | 0.508          | Very High      |

Table 2 presented the level of effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons in terms of training Delivery and Methodology. As shown, item 2 obtained the highest mean ( $M = 3.274$ ,  $SD = 0.629$ ), which was interpreted as very high level of effectiveness. This item may address a core principle or procedure that is frequently used in their daily tasks. Its high effectiveness suggests the training content was clear, practical, and easy to implement. This was followed by Item 1 ( $M = 3.260$ ,  $SD = 0.553$ ) rated as a very high level of effectiveness its very high rating shows that the training successfully built a strong understanding of fundamental principles. Item 3 with means of and ( $M = 3.260$ ,  $SD = 0.624$ ), rated very high level of effectiveness a very high rating indicates that the training effectively enhanced these competencies. Item 5 ( $M = 3.288$ ,  $SD = 0.565$ ) rated as very high level of effectiveness while Item 4 ( $M = 3.233$ ,  $SD = 0.635$ ) were rated high level of effectiveness, officers regarded the training facilities and equipment as somewhat less realistic and sufficient in comparison to other measures. Lastly, Item 6 ( $M = 3.274$ ,  $SD = 0.768$ ) was also rated very high level of effectiveness the high effectiveness rating indicates that the training significantly improved the participants' confidence or competence in this area. Then overall composite mean of 3.265 ( $SD = 0.508$ ) indicated that the training delivery and methodology were generally very high level of effectiveness.

Maximum tolerance in law enforcement operations is emphasized in both the PNP Operational Procedures Manual (2021) and DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2007-001. The Public Assembly Act 880 further support this notion. According to this Act, maximum tolerance is the highest level of restraint requires of law enforcement when handling civil unrest. Furthermore, Olma, Sutter, and Sulzenbruck (2024) showed that blended firearms training-combining theoretical instruction with hands-on practice-improves cadet accuracy and decision-making under pressure, while Sammut (2023) found that simulation-based programs significantly improve officers' confidence and communication skills during use-of-force situations. In a similar manner, study



from the Harris School of Public Policy (2021) showed that creative curriculum design that successfully combine classroom-based learning with practical experience minimizes needless use of force. However, Dejustica (2023) issued a warning that the improper deployment of less-lethal weapons during protests resulted in fatalities, serious injuries, and injuries, and lasting impairment in a number of Latin American countries including Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina

**Table 3 The Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons by the Philippine National Police Uniformed Personnel when Taken Collectively**

| Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| Training Design and Content                          | 3.407 | 0.406          | Very High      |
| Training Delivery and Methodology                    | 3.265 | 0.508          | Very High      |
| Overall                                              | 3.336 | 0.421          | Very High      |

Table 3 below showed the Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons. Based on the results, the overall mean rating was 3.336 (SD=0.421), interpreted as very high level of effectiveness. This suggests that the PNP's instructional materials and training designs are typically well-organized and give officers the fundamental information and frameworks they need to utilize less lethal weapons responsibly.

According to Birzer and Stoughton (2020) Standardized and competency-based training programs promote operational preparedness and confidence in using the less lethal weapons by establishing explicit learning objectives and consistent skill development across cohorts. Furthermore, it has also been demonstrated that scenario-based and simulation training enhances the transfer of training to fieldwork, decision-making under tension, and skill retention (Blumberg et al., 2020; Worden et al., 2020) Additionally, implementing tracking systems and recurring, agency-wide training requirements inside an organization result in consistent outcomes and lessens unit variability (Wolfe et al., 2020). Other than that, officers gave the design and content high ratings since multi-modal delivery, which combines lectures, video reviews, and hands-on practice, has been linked to improved learning Retention and practical application (Engel et al., 2020). Sheppard and Welsh (2022) noted that harm reducing is not always consistent and found conflicting evidence about the efficacy of non-lethal weapons. They emphasize that the sort of weapon used, context, and oversight all effect the results.

Lastly, the consistently high ratings indicate that the existing PNP training program provides officers with adequate theoretical knowledge and practical preparation for the responsible use of less-lethal weapons. More importantly, these findings suggest that standardized competency-based training contributes to operational consistency regardless of assignment. For police administrators, the results support continued investment in scenario-based instruction, simulation exercises, and periodic proficiency assessments. Similar competency-based approaches adopted by police organizations in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia have demonstrated improvements in decision-making, proportional use of force, and officer accountability. Therefore, strengthening continuous professional development may further enhance operational readiness while reinforcing public trust in police service delivery.

**Table 4 The Efficiency on the Utilization of Less-Lethal Weapons in the Field Operations by the Philippine National Police Uniformed Personnel When Taken Collectively in Terms of Application and Outcomes**

| Application and Outcome                                                 | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| Less- lethal weapons are effective in de-escalating potentially violent | 3.288 | 0.736          | Very High      |

|                                                                                                                      |       |       |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| The use of less- lethal weapons has consistently minimized injuries to suspects/civilians during police operations.  | 3.329 | 0.554 | Very High |
| The use of less-lethal weapon has consistently minimized injuries to police personnel during police operations.      | 3.452 | 0.528 | Very High |
| I feel confident in my ability to choose the appropriate less-lethal weapon for a given situation in the field.      | 3.411 | 0.523 | Very High |
| I am able to deploy less-lethal weapons effectively and safely in high-stress situations.                            | 3.356 | 0.537 | Very High |
| The availability of less-lethal weapons provides viable alternatives to firearms in most situations requiring force. | 3.301 | 0.739 | Very High |
| Post-incident reviews and debriefings effectively assess the efficacy and appropriateness of less-lethal weapon use  | 3.411 | 0.597 | Very High |
| Efficiency on the Utilization of Less-Lethal Weapons in the Field Operations                                         | 3.364 | 0.468 | Very High |

Table 4 presents the efficiency of the utilization of less-lethal weapons in field operations. The highest mean was recorded for item 3 ( $M = 3.452$ ,  $SD = 0.528$ ), interpreted as very high level of efficiency, indicating that less-lethal weapons effectively minimize injuries to police personnel during operations. This was followed by items 4 and 7, both rated very high level of efficiency, showing confidence in weapon selection and the effectiveness of post-incident reviews. Items 5 ( $M = 3.356$ ,  $SD = 0.537$ ) and 2 ( $M = 3.329$ ,  $SD = 0.554$ ) were also rated very high level of efficiency, suggesting effective and safe weapon deployment and reduced injuries to civilians. The lowest mean was noted for Item 1 ( $M = 3.288$ ,  $SD = 0.736$ ), yet it remained very high level of efficiency, indicating success in de-escalating violent situations. Overall, the composite mean of 3.3654. ( $SD = 0.468$ ) indicates that the utilization of less-lethal weapons in field operations was generally very high level of efficiency.

According to Kocurkova (2024) less-lethal weapons like kinetic impact projectiles and conducted energy devices, when used in compliance with operational protocols, not only aid in preserving control during conflicts but also considerably lower the risk of serious injuries and fatalities among both officers and civilians. Furthermore, officers are guaranteed to comprehend the proper circumstances in which less-lethal weapons should be used thanks to the uniform application of policy and standardization of operational language among the police organizations; this improves decision-making and reduces the possibility of misuse (Kaske, 2022). Additionally, scenario-based training and post-deployment evaluations promotes better situational judgment, which enhances police personnel's individual and group competency in handling critical crises (Sytsma & Kaming, 2024). However, by these coordinated efforts, the nation reaffirms the value of moderation and proportional reaction in law enforcement, which eventually lowers the possibility of using excessive force and advances the general objective of efficient and compassionate policing (Senate of the Philippines., 2023) Finally, a study carried out in a few barangays in Calauag, Quezon, revealed that while residents and barangays police officers had generally positive opinions about the use of less-lethal weapons like pepper spray, batons, and tasers, there were still significant differences in the frequency of actual use, access to resources, and consistency of implementations (Barangay Police Officers and the Resident's Perceptions, 2023). Similarly, a comparative review of less-lethal force methods revealed that once organizations implemented standardized training and deployment protocols, the average risk of subject in injury significantly decreased and performance outcomes will be more consistent across weapons types, demonstrating efficiency of properly trained utilization in real life police operations (Injury Rates Following Conducted Electrical Weapons and Other Less-Lethal Force Modalities in Real life Police Settings: A Comparative Literature Review, 2025).

**Table 5 Significant Difference on the Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons When Grouped According to Years in Service**

| Dimension                                            | Group              | Mean  | sd    | p-value | Significance at 0.05 | Status of the Hypothesis |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|---------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Training Design and Content                          | 1 - 5 years        | 3.068 | 0.302 | 0.230   | Not significant      | Accepted                 |
|                                                      | 6 - 10 years       | 3.647 | 0.279 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 11 - 15 years      | 3.455 | 0.391 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 16 - 20 years      | 3.310 | 0.262 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 21 years and above | 3.829 | 0.383 |         |                      |                          |
| Training Delivery and Methodology                    | 1 - 5 years        | 2.960 | 0.500 | 0.224   | Not significant      | Accepted                 |
|                                                      | 6 - 10 years       | 3.526 | 0.476 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 11 - 15 years      | 3.242 | 0.420 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 16 - 20 years      | 3.139 | 0.195 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 21 years and above | 3.800 | 0.477 |         |                      |                          |
| Effectiveness of PNP Training on Less-Lethal Weapons | 1 - 5 years        | 3.014 | 0.370 | 0.193   | Not significant      | Accepted                 |
|                                                      | 6 - 10 years       | 3.586 | 0.329 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 11 - 15 years      | 3.348 | 0.349 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 16 - 20 years      | 3.224 | 0.226 |         |                      |                          |
|                                                      | 21 years and above | 3.814 | 0.415 |         |                      |                          |

Table 5 presents the significant difference on the effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons in terms of training design and content, and training delivery and methodology when grouped according to years in service. The result of p-value is (0.230, 0.224, and 0.193) are all higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no a significant difference in the participant response in the groups. The null hypothesis is accepted for all dimensions.

According to Petersen (2024) regardless of tenure, departments make sure that all officers receive the same amount of training and regular recognition which encourage consistency in application and reduce outcome variability. Additionally, there is little opportunity for individual judgment based on experience because agency regulations and standardized use-of-force guidelines specify when and how less-lethal technologies should be employed (Congressional Research Service, 2025). Furthermore, NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2024-0632, the National Police Commission prescribes minimum standards for non-lethal firearm, hence establishing uniform equipment requirements that aid in guaranteeing uniform training delivery usage procedures for all officers, regardless of their years of service.

Although officers with more years of service might demonstrate enhanced decision-making skills, stress management, and situational awareness from their accumulated field experience (Tiesman et al., 2022), veteran personnel are also inclined to depend on contextual judgement and proportional response methods honed through their repeated experiences in difficult operational settings (Koper et al., 2024). Additionally, research shows that factors like location, operation threat, and suspected behavior have a greater impact on the deployment of less-lethal weapons than years of service (Han, 2025). Moreover, weapons reliability and technological development have made these tools more uniform in their effectiveness, reducing the difference amongst officers with different levels of experience (LeVine, 2024). Finally, longevity has a little effect on the effectiveness of less-lethal weapons applications and results since organizational culture and supervision are important in maintaining procedural in consistency (Mun, 2024).

Table 6 Significant Difference on the Efficiency on the Utilization of the Less-Lethal Weapons in the Field Operations When Grouped According to Years in Service

| Dimension                                                                                   | Years in service   | Mean  | sd    | p-value | Significance at 0.05 | Status of Hypothesis |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Efficiency on the Use of Less-Lethal Weapons in Field Operations – Application and Outcomes | 1 - 5 years        | 3.068 | 0.273 | 0.193   | Not significant      | Accepted             |
|                                                                                             | 6 - 10 years       | 3.444 | 0.426 |         |                      |                      |
|                                                                                             | 11 - 15 years      | 3.526 | 0.435 |         |                      |                      |
|                                                                                             | 16 - 20 years      | 3.190 | 0.721 |         |                      |                      |
|                                                                                             | 21 years and above | 3.800 | 0.447 |         |                      |                      |

Table 6 presents the significant difference on the efficiency on the use of less-lethal weapons in the field operations in terms of application and outcome when grouped according to years in service. The result of p-values is 0.193, as indicated by the results, and is higher than the 0.05 level of significance indicating that there is not a significant difference between groups. This implies that police personnel have a consistent opinion about how effective training and the use of less-lethal weapons are, regardless of the number of years in service.

According to Sierra-Arevalo (2024) although senior officers may demonstrate greater situational awareness and tactical ability that allow them to handle pressure and make precise tactical decisions, such experiential advantages are effectively balanced by the Philippine National Police's standardized training programs. Moreover, empirical studies show that experienced officers are often more adept at identifying behavioral cues, anticipating suspect reactions, and selecting suitable less-lethal instruments based on situational assessment (Terrill & Reisig, 2020). However, these competencies are equally cultivated among all officers through structured, scenario-based training modules. Furthermore, while seasoned personnel tend to process more advanced communication and de-escalation skills that improve operational control (Engel et al., 2022), the PNP's training design and methodology emphasize these same competences across all service levels, ensuring consistent application of less-lethal options in the field. According to a recent analysis officer's capacity to include new technologies into their tactical repertory, such kinetic impacts projectiles and upgraded tasers is influenced by their years of service, which enhances operational effectiveness (Sklansky, 2023). Other than that, research from forensic Science Medicine and Pathology (2025) shows that more expertise lowers the number of injuries sustained by officers and suspects when using less-lethal weapons suggesting a discernible variation in application effectiveness by years of service. Additionally, constant exposure to simulation-based exercises and continuing skill assessment promotes uniform efficiency and decreases differences in performance terms (Todak & White, 2021). Finally, continuing developments in less-lethal weapon technology, like as enhanced taser targeting systems and light kinetic tools, have simplified their usage reducing reliance on experience and promoting uniform efficacy among police officers (Wood et al., 2021).

**Table 7 Significant Relationship between the Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons and the Efficiency on the Utilization of Less-Lethal Weapons in the Field Operations**

| Effectiveness of the Training on Less-Lethal Weapons and the Efficiency on the Utilization of Less-Lethal Weapons in the Field Operations | Mean  | Std. Deviation | P - Value | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| PNP Training Relates to Efficiency of Utilization of Less Lethal Weapon                                                                   | 0.730 | 0.537          | <.001     | Significant    |

Table 7 a significant correlation ( $p = 0.730$ ,  $p < .001$ ), there is a strong positive correlation between the effectiveness of training and the efficiency of using less-lethal weapons. This suggests that as training quality and effectiveness rise, so does the officers' capacity to use less-lethal weapons effectively in field operations. Operationally, this means that well-planned and executed training immediately improves PNP personnel's performance in real-life scenarios, allowing them to use less-lethal weapons more precisely, securely, and confidently. It implies that investing in ongoing training reduces the possibility of misuse or inefficiency during field operations while also strengthening knowledge and skills and improving decision-making and operational outcomes. To put it briefly, the more successful the training, the more capable and effective the officers become in using what they have learned in real-world situations. Schott et al. (2022) claim that efficient training programs enhance police cognitive awareness and procedural precision, enabling them to employ less-lethal weapons dynamic situations with speed and appropriateness. Moreover, officers are more likely to use force sensibly and safely when training focused on situational problem-solving and realistic simulations, which boosts operational efficiency (Lum et al., 2020). Other than that, it has also been discovered that ongoing education and practice sessions maintain competence and stop skill deterioration, particularly when making snap decisions regarding the use of less-lethal weapons under pressure (Blumberg et al., 2021). Furthermore, research reveal that agencies who invest in training programs that are performance- based and feedback-driven see a decrease in force-related injuries as well as an increase officer confidence (Gundhus & Talbert, 2023). Additionally, training promotes accountability and ethical awareness, which results in reliable and legal field performance (Schainle & Sheffield, 2025).

On the other hand, training may enhance procedural knowledge, but its influence on performance outcomes is limited because it frequently does not mimic the accuracy, unpredictability (Hine et al., 2022). However, when faced with erratic and quickly changing threats, officers may report instinctive reactions or learned habits, making formal training less significant in determining field effectiveness (Krammedine & Silverstone, 2020).

## CONCLUSIONS

Given the findings, the following conclusions are hereby drawn:

Although the findings demonstrate that the PNP's less-lethal weapon training program is perceived as highly effective, the results should be interpreted within the study's limitations. Because the study involved only 73 respondents from one police station, the findings may not fully represent other Philippine National Police units with different operational environments. Furthermore, the use of self-reported survey responses measures officers' perceptions rather than objective operational performance. Nevertheless, the significant relationship between training effectiveness and utilization supports previous research emphasizing that continuous professional development, scenario-based training, and evidence-based instructional strategies contribute to safer policing practices and improved operational performance

First, the less-lethal weapon training given to uniformed members of the Philippine National Police is very successful in terms of training design, content, delivery, and methodology.

Second, when application and outcomes are considered, the uses of less-lethal weapons in field operations is highly effective. Third, when respondents were categorized years of service, no significant differences in training



effectiveness were discovered, suggesting that officers' perceptions of the training are not greatly impacted by their duration of service.

Fourth, there were not any significant differences in the effectiveness of using less-lethal weapons according to years of service, indicating that operational experience has little impact on field application efficiency. Lastly, training efficacy have a strong positive relationship, indicating that better training helps to apply less-lethal weapons in field operations more effectively. These findings emphasize the value of ongoing training initiatives and imply that a sustainable development program might improve training efficacy and field operations efficiency.

Lastly, as a response to sustaining the effectiveness of the training on less-lethal weapons by the Philippine National Police uniformed personnel and the level of efficiency on the utilization of less-lethal weapons in the field operations by the Philippine National Police uniformed personnel, it is of crucial importance to formulate sustainable development program.

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