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ACTION SURAT: EXPLORING THE WRITING SKILLS OF TRAINED INVESTIGATORS

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ABSTRACT

*This action research study explores the writing skills of police investigators at Pangasinan Police Provincial Office and their difficulties developing it through Action SURAT (Skills **U**pgrade of w**R**iting **A**mong **T**rained Investigators). It was found out that they are Good in all the components of writing although they find challenges in grammar and in diction. It was also revealed that time pressure and pressure coming from superiors contribute to the quality of reports submitted by the investigators. It is recommended that the study be implemented in a wider scale and of participants of different ranks to account to other factors that may result to challenges of police officers in writing. Moreover, the study suggests that the PNP Certification Program for Investigators be revisited to ensure inclusion of training on writing and communication.*

KEYWORDS: *Writing skills, Action SURAT, Police Officers' Writing Skills*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental skill that police officers must possess due to the various reports on noncriminal and criminal cases that they do. Yu and MK (2020) disclosed that in "noncriminal cases such as an attempted suicide, writing a report that properly documents the mind-set of the individual in question and explains what protective action an officer took (or did not take) has important liability implications" (p. 36). They further cited Beehr, Ivanitskaya, Glaser, Erofeev, and Canali (2004) who purported that in "criminal cases, reports enable the police department and the court to use the officers' account and testimony to prosecute crimes" (p.36).

Critical as it is though, the nurturing of good writing skills among law enforcers, specifically among the police officers is usually neglected (Nowicki, 2001). Problems on grammar, spelling, sentence structures (Hart, 2000) and clarity of ideas have been noted in police's works (Stewart, 2020). In an article published by Cojuangco (2012) in the Philippine Star, she mentioned of the result of a diagnostic test in English grammar taken by 1938 students from eight police regional training schools across the country, including 187 jail recruits. She revealed that only .93% passed the test, adding that the test takers are college graduates, civil service examination passers and professionals who are expected to exhibit a higher level of proficiency in grammar. While these do not entirely speak of the quality of writing skills among police officers, it paves to an intellectual curiosity of status of their English writing proficiency skills.

Studies on communication skills of law enforcers have been published over the years. Mostly in the Middle East, research studies explore on the speaking and listening skills of law enforcers (Abo Mosallem, 1984; Khamkaew, 2009; Ulum, 2014; Aldohon, 2014; Akeyl & Yalcin, 1991). With the growth of tourism and spurt of information, police officers in these countries put into high regard their communication abilities. Additionally, surveys on the attitudes and needs analysis of the police on language training (Alqurashi, 2011; Qaddomi, 2013; Stepanoviene, 2014; Akeyl & Yalcin; Mosallem, 1984) yielded to a more pronounced necessity of exhibiting good command of speaking and listening skills as perceived by the participants themselves. It is only with Mosallem (1984) that he also noted vocabulary as points for improvement. Communicative English competence requires fluency in at least all of the skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, few studies published dwelled on writing skills, putting forward the conduct of this research. Given the scarce literature on writing, the study aims to explore the writing skills of police investigators who are front liners in the writing of reports. Likewise, as most studies were descriptive (Abo Mosallem, 1984; Khamkaew, 2009; Ulum, 2014; Aldohon, 2014; Akeyl & Yalcin, 1991; Alqurashi, 2011; Qaddomi, 2013; Stepanoviene, 2014; Akeyl & Yalcin; Mosallem, 1984) the research will implement an action research to look at the potentials of the innovation "Action SURAT" (**S**kills **U**pgrade of w**R**iting **A**mong **T**rained Investigators).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

As learners of the English language come from different backgrounds and have different proficiency levels, it is but proper that different theories are used to understand their needs and further their potentials in writing. This study dwells on two theories, laying foundation to the proposed intervention.

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Cognitive Process Theory. As the name implies, this theory first introduced by Flower and Hayes (1981) posits that writing is a mental process or a process of thinking that requires brainstorming, planning and creativity. They argue that there are three processes undertaken in writing namely planning, translating and reviewing. These require series of decisions and choices 'in the mind' in order to come up with a good piece of writing. To illustrate, police report writing is a cognitive undertaking because it starts with the decision of what to write, what words to be used and how they are to be written in paragraphs. Each process involves setting of objectives (Pulungan, 2016). In planning, composing and expressing ideas, organizing them and inferring a conclusion are to be done. In translation, there are the transformation and modification of ideas into sentences. Finally, reviewing entails the write to go over his report.

To sum up, the investigators go through the processes mentioned in order to realize the primary goal of report writing, which is to present a comprehensive, complete and accurate account of an incident.

Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura (1993) explains that cognitive, behavioral, personal and environmental factors affect motivation and behaviors of learners. He asserts that in learning, there are three models: observational learning, imitation and modelling. Akin to writing, these models are compared to the processes commonly followed. When people write, they pattern it to what they see and read. They follow what they think are correct, learn from mistakes and eventually develop their writing.

The HoM or Habit of the Mind supports the Social Cognitive theory. It also applies four habits which are applying past knowledge to new situations, metacognition, striving for accuracy and precision and questioning and posing problems.

It draws the important role of teachers to draw upon intellectual resources and intentionally develop writing skills to result to better quality and significant outputs (Costa and Callick, 2009 and Dugler, 2011).

The diagram illustrates an Input–Process–Output (IPO) Operational Planning Framework, which shows how an intervention is systematically implemented to achieve a desired outcome.

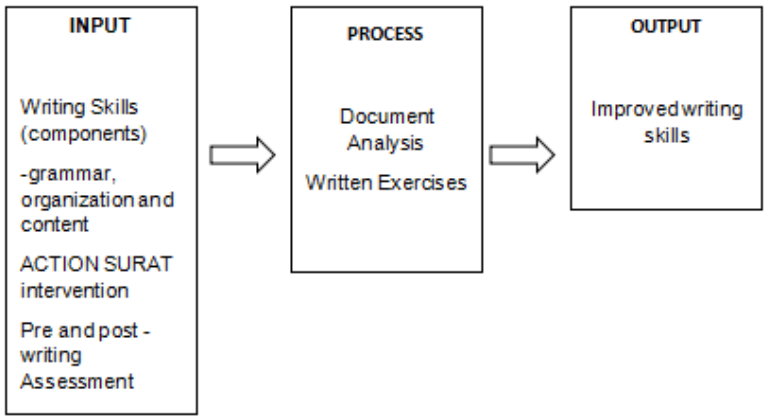
The inputs refer to the resources and baseline conditions needed before implementation. In this framework, the inputs include: Writing skills components such as grammar, organization, and content, which represent the specific competencies to be developed; ACTION SURAT intervention, which serves as the planned instructional strategy; Pre- and post-writing assessments, used to establish the learners' initial skill level and to measure change after the intervention.

On the other hand, the process describes how the inputs are transformed through planned activities. This involves: Document analysis, where written outputs are examined to identify strengths and weaknesses and written exercises, which provide guided and repeated practice aligned with the intervention goals. These activities operationalize the intervention and ensure that learning objectives are addressed systematically.

Lastly, the output represents the expected result of the process. In this framework, the output is: Improved writing skills, indicating measurable enhancement in grammar, organization, and content as a result of the intervention.

Overall, the framework shows a clear and logical flow: identified needs and interventions (input) are applied through structured instructional activities (process) to produce improved learner performance (output). This makes it useful for planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational or training programs.

Operational Planning Framework



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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of the writing skills of trained investigators from Pangasinan PPO in terms of:
   a. Grammar
   b. Organization (coherence and cohesion)
   c. Content (vocabulary)
2. What is the level of writing skills of trained investigators from Pangasinan PPO in terms of the following after the implementation of ACTION SURAT in terms of:
   a. Grammar
   b. Organization (cohesion and coherence)
   c. Content (vocabulary)
3. Is there a significant difference between the performance of the writing skills of investigators before and after the conduct of the ACTION SURAT?
4. What are the challenges encountered by the investigators in report writing?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized an action research employing a mixed method approach specifically sequential explanatory to fully explore the writing skills of the participants and the potentials of the innovation ACTION SURAT. Creswell (2003) explains that sequential explanatory design incorporates quantitative and qualitative approaches in two consecutive phases within one study.

Pre and post tests in the form of a writing task were administered to the participants as the first phase of the study. This seeks to check the investigators' level of writing skills. Before the post test, the ACTION SURAT through series of lectures and workshops were implemented.

The second phase implemented a documentary analysis wherein the pre and post tests were analyzed to further determine the difficulties of the investigators in writing. Informal interviews were also conducted to triangulate the findings in the document analysis. The rationale of this is the writing performance significantly reflects how the participants write in the field. Furthermore, in sequential explanatory designs, qualitative results are used to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of the quantitative phase (Cresswell, 2003).

Population and Locale of the Study

Upon coordination with the Provincial Director of Pangasinan PPO, a total of eighty-seven (87) investigators were issued an order to attend the Action Surat training based on the limitations of this study. From these projected participants, only 75 investigators from Pangasinan PPO were able to complete their participation in the study. This accounts to the promotion and transfer of the officers in different stations. At the same time, the activities and programs of the PNP in the course of the study affected the participation of the participants as it was still the height of the COVID- 19 pandemic. Specifically, they were with the ranks of PSSg, PMSg and PSMS and with at least one year experience as investigators to ensure that they have enough experiences on writing reports. Further, these officers are first hand report writers in their respective stations. Stratified random sampling was employed to identify them. The table below summarizes the participants:

Table 1.
Number of Respondents by Rank

Respondents by rank	n
PSSG	45
PMSG	13
PSMS	29
Total	87

Data Collection Method

The first phase of the study was a pre- test. It is a researcher-made writing test that underwent validation by language experts and a reliability test. This operates on the idea that writing is a complex task that encompasses a variety of sub- skills (Ur, 1996; Weigle, 2002; Shrum & Glisan, 2000) and that it cannot be effectively measured by a test that only checks on knowledge of isolated language component (Imane, 2013). Thus, to measure writing skills, essay tests which are direct tests akin to authentic language use (Davies, Elder, Lumley & McNamara, 1999) is best.

The test is a 2-item writing task that asks participants to write a Drug and Incident Case Reports from a given context or situation. To ensure an objective evaluation of the performance task, an analytic rubric adapted from Beyreli and Ari (2009) will be used. This is for the assessment of Writing Performance consisting of three sections and 10 properties that contain the components of writing being analyzed. These are the external structures composing of the (grammar) format, spelling and punctuation; (content) the language and expression that capture vocabulary and organization that deals with the introduction, story and conclusion. Rubrics are a descriptive list of criteria or a pre- established performance criteria that support learning (Mertler, 2001, Zharan, 2017 & Zahran, 2017). The test was given for two hours to give time for participants to recheck their outputs.

Prior to the implementation of this, the heads of the participants were informed of the study. More importantly, a Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) were sought from the participants. It is important that they understand the objectives of the research, the nature of their participation and implication to their works.

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Likewise, they were assured of the confidentiality of all data to be collected before, during and after the conduct of the study.

Treatment of Data

To determine the writing skills of the trained investigators in the pre and posttest, the following scales were used as lifted from the analytic rubric adopted from Beyreli & Ari, 2009:

Table 2.

Descriptive Equivalent and Symbol of the Writing Skills of Pangasinan PPO Investigators

Numerical Values	Statistical Limits	Descriptive Equivalent	Symbol
4	3.25 - 4.00	Very Good	VG
3	2.50 – 3.24	Good	G
2	1.75 – 2.49	Average	A
1	1.00 – 1.74	Poor	P

To analyze the result of the pre and post test, t-test two sample for paired means analysis was utilized to know if there is a statistical significance of the scores in the pre and post tests.

As for the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was employed in the reports written to generate codes and look for the common themes on the difficulties of investigators in writing. Likewise, it was used as a means of triangulation to corroborate findings from the quantitative phase (Eisner, 1991).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Writing is a salient skill necessary especially among law enforcers as writing reports makes up a big percentage of their duties. Without an acceptable fluency in writing, police officers would not be able to precisely communicate information. In criminal cases such as those involving drugs, the officers' accounts and their testimonies are used to prosecute crimes (Beehr, Ivanitskaya, Glaser, Erofeev, & Canali, 2004; Godwin, 1993; Hess & Wrobleski, 1991) and that their reports allow courts to discern on what they experienced (Yu & Monas, 2020). According to Fisher (1993), false and misleading reports injure the process of law as well as the defendant. More importantly, their reports serve as big factor in the evaluation of their work and to ensure that they appropriately follow their agency's standard and standard operating procedure (Yu & Monas, 2020; D Aulizio & Sheehan, 1992).

Level of the Writing Skills of Trained Investigators This section presents the level of the writing skills of trained investigators from Pangasinan PPO in terms of grammar, organization (coherence and cohesion), and content (vocabulary).

Tables 3 summarizes the level of writing skills of trained investigators based from their submitted Affidavit of Poseur-buyer and Affidavit of Arrest. It appears that they are overall good in the different areas of writing skills. Specifically, the investigators scored *Good* in the Organization having an area mean of 3.20, and in the specific items still getting the highest with the Introduction as 3.30 or Very Good and conclusion with 3.20 as Good. Vocabulary under Content also resulted to 3.20 or Good. Grammar and Mechanics has the lowest Average weighted mean (AWM) of 2.70, followed by Expression and Sentence under Content with Average Weighted Means of 2.90 and 3.00, respectively.

Table 3.

Level of the Writing Skills of the Trained Investigators Before the Implementation of Action SURAT

AREAS	AFFIDAVIT OF POSEUR-BUYER	AFFIDAVIT OF ARREST	AWM	*DE*
Grammar and Mechanics	***2.70***	***2.70***	***2.70***	***G***
Organization				
Introduction	3.20	3.30	***3.30***	***VG***
Story	3.10	3.00	***3.10***	***G***
Conclusion	3.30	3.20	***3.20***	***G***
Area Mean	***3.20***	***3.20***	***3.20***	***G***
Content (Language and Expression)				
Vocabulary	3.20	3.10	***3.20***	***G***
Sentence	3.10	3.00	***3.00***	***G***
Paragraph	3.10	3.10	***3.10***	***G***
Expression	2.90	2.90	***2.90***	***G***
Area Mean	***3.10***	***3.00***	***3.10***	***G***
Over-all Mean	**3.00**	**3.00**	**3.00**	**G**

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The results show that *Grammar and Mechanics* obtained a mean score of 2.7, the lowest among the assessed areas. This suggests recurring difficulties in sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and general grammatical accuracy. Similar findings were reported by Abaday (2021), who identified frequent linguistic deviations in police investigative reports, particularly in syntax, morphology, and mechanics, which negatively affected clarity and legal precision. Likewise, Pacleb and Tabuena (2020) found that police blotters commonly contained grammatical and mechanical errors, indicating that such weaknesses are systemic rather than isolated. These studies corroborate the present finding that, prior to training, investigators' grammatical competence is generally adequate but remains a major area requiring improvement.

In terms of *Organization*, the investigators performed relatively better, with an area mean of 3.20, rated as *Good*, and *Introduction* obtaining *Very Good* ratings across all document types. This indicates that investigators were generally capable of structuring affidavits with a clear beginning, body, and conclusion. This finding aligns with Cañete and Villanueva (2019), who reported that individuals involved in criminology and law enforcement-related writing demonstrate acceptable organizational skills, even when language accuracy is limited. However, while organization was comparatively stronger, the same study noted that logical flow is often undermined by weak sentence construction—an issue also reflected in the present study's lower grammar and expression scores.

The *Content* area, which includes vocabulary, sentence formation, paragraph development, and expression, interpreted as *Good*. Notably, *Expression* recorded one of the lower mean scores (2.9), indicating difficulty in clearly and concisely conveying ideas. This finding is consistent with Santos and De Guzman (2018), who observed that law enforcement personnel often struggle with articulating facts clearly and objectively despite having adequate knowledge of case details. Similarly, Abaday (2021) emphasized that inappropriate word choice and vague expressions are common weaknesses in investigative writing, supporting the current study's results.

The overall mean score of 3.00 across all affidavit types suggests that investigators' writing skills prior to Action SURAT were functional but not optimal. This finding is consistent with broader literature on investigative documentation. Lum, Koper, and Telep (2021) emphasized that while investigators generally meet minimum documentation standards, the quality of written reports often lacks precision and clarity without structured writing interventions. These findings reinforce the necessity of implementing focused training programs such as Action SURAT to enhance the effectiveness, accuracy, and legal soundness of investigative writing.

The convergence of these findings underscores the importance of structured writing interventions and validates the implementation of Action SURAT as a timely and evidence-based response to identified gaps.

Level of Writing Skills of Trained Investigators After the Implementation of Action Surat

Table 4 meanwhile shows the performance of trained investigators in the different areas of Writing as reflected in their writing of Affidavit of Poseur- buyer and Affidavit of Arrest after the implementation of Action SURAT. The participants attended series of lectures and completed activity sheets aimed at positively affecting their fluency in writing. It can be gleaned from the table that they are still *Good* in all the areas of Writing with an Overall mean of 3.10, scoring higher though than that of the pretest with 3.00. This is interpreted as a positive result as it signifies the possibility of the police officers moving towards *Very Good* when subjected to more rigorous training. It is important to note that the training given under Action SURAT were conducted via webinars or online, not in- house, as restrictions for face-to-face classes were still implemented because of the COVID- 19 pandemic. This is aside from the numerous paperwork the participants had to do while in their stations during the course of study.

Table 4.

Level of the Writing Skills of the Trained Investigators After the Implementation of Action SURAT

AREAS	AFFIDAVIT OF POSEUR-BUYER	AFFIDAVIT OF ARREST	AWM	*DE*
Grammar and Mechanics Organization	***2.90***	***2.80***	***2.90***	***G***
Introduction	3.20	3.30	***3.30***	***VG***
Story	3.10	3.10	***3.10***	***G***
Conclusion	3.20	3.20	***3.20***	***G***
Area Mean	***3.20***	***3.20***	***3.20***	***G***
Content (Language and Expression)				
Vocabulary	3.30	3.20	***3.30***	***VG***
Sentence	3.20	3.10	***3.20***	***G***

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Paragraph	3.20	3.20	***3.20***	***G***
Expression	3.10	3.10	***3.10***	***G***
Area Mean	***3.20***	***3.20***	***3.20***	***G***
Over-all Mean	**3.10**	**3.10**	**3.10**	**G**

Strikingly, the *Introduction* remains to have a Descriptive Equivalent (DE) of Very Good from the pre-test to the post test. This suggests that the persons involved, places and time of the events were clearly introduced, indicated and defined in the submitted reports. The introduction holds an impact as they give the first impression of facts. Moving on though, the story and the Expression hold the second lowest DE with 3.10. The *story* indicates that the events are presented in the order of importance, and details and descriptions are provided to enable better understanding of events. The narration of events under *Expression* uses the proper text type and the topic is presented in correct arrangement in the context of flow and logic. Being *Very Good* in the *Introduction* but *Good* in the *Story* and *Expression* suggest that the reports still need further revision to make the style of narration consistent, realistic and effective.

Moreover, there are changes in the individual items under the different areas of writing. To cite, *vocabulary* under content went from an AWM of 3.20 to 3.30, already bearing the same Descriptive Equivalent (DE) of *Very Good* with that of Introduction, from *Good* during the Pretest. This would mean that the words in the reports are used effectively and correctly and that other vocabulary and set phrases are used skillfully.

The *conclusion, sentence and paragraph* come second with 3.20 or Good. This is glaring as *sentence* showed to receive lowest marks during the pretest. Significantly, Grammar and Mechanics still scored lowest but with a higher AWM of 2.90 from 2.70. Also, Story and Expression received 3.10, with the latter improving from 2.90 to 3.10.

Grammar and Mechanics remained to have the lowest AWM although there is an increase in the after implementation of ACTION SURAT. Best captured in the statement *I face difficulties in grammar*, the police officers are amenable to this. This does not come as a surprise as various references state of police officers' difficulty in grammar. In an article published by Cojuanco (2012) in the Philippine Star, she mentioned of the result of a diagnostic test in English grammar taken by 1, 938 students from eight police regional training schools across the country, including 187 jail recruits. She revealed that only .93% passed the test, adding that the test takers are college graduates, civil service examination passers and professionals who are expected to exhibit a higher level of proficiency in grammar. She pointed out that police reports hold a significant role in bringing criminals to justice as defense counsels can argue on technicalities brought by bad grammar and vague references. Having the inability to provide *prima facie* evidence, with police reports as basis, can also affect court decisions.

Additionally, this outcome corroborates the findings of Abaday (2021) and Pacleb and Tabuena (2020), who noted that while grammar and mechanics are often the most persistent challenges in police writing, incremental improvement can be achieved through targeted training. These studies emphasize that grammatical accuracy usually improves gradually and requires continuous practice, explaining why gains in this area, though evident, remain modest after a single intervention cycle.

In contrast, Kekana (2015) found out in the case study conducted among 203 police constables assigned at selected police clusters in the Gauteng province in South Africa that 40.4% of them has inadequate English writing ability. Further, half of the research participants (50.2%) are not satisfied with their current English writing knowledge.

The *Organization* component sustained strong performance, with an area mean of 3.20 across all affidavit types and *Introduction* rated as *Very Good*. This finding supports Cañete and Villanueva (2019), who found that structured writing instruction significantly enhances the logical sequencing of police narratives. The consistency of high organizational scores after the intervention suggests that Action SURAT effectively reinforced investigators' ability to present events coherently, a critical requirement for affidavits and legal documents.

The *Content* area demonstrated notable post-intervention improvement, particularly in *Vocabulary* (mean scores of 3.20–3.30, rated *Very Good*). This aligns with Santos and De Guzman (2018), who reported that training focused on clarity, appropriateness of terminology, and factual expression leads to improved language precision among law enforcement personnel. Similarly, Abaday (2021) highlighted that guided writing activities and corrective feedback significantly enhance vocabulary usage and overall expression, findings that directly corroborate the increased post-test scores.

The increase in the overall mean from 3.00 (pre-test) to 3.10 (post-test) reflects a positive effect of Action SURAT on investigators' writing skills. This improvement is consistent with the conclusions of Lum, Koper, and Telep (2021), who emphasized that evidence-based training programs lead to measurable improvements in investigative documentation, particularly in clarity, organization, and language use. Although the gains are moderate, they demonstrate that structured writing interventions contribute meaningfully to enhancing the quality of police reports and affidavits.

In summary, the post-implementation findings consistently show that structured writing interventions improve investigators'

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writing performance, especially in organization and content clarity, while grammatical accuracy improves at a slower but observable pace. The convergence of these findings supports the effectiveness of Action SURAT as a practical and evidence-based approach to strengthening investigative writing skills.

Significant Difference Between the Performance of the Writing Skills of Investigators Before and After the Conduct of ACTION SURAT

Table 5 shows the comparison of the investigators' writing skills in the Affidavit of Poseur-Buyer before and after the implementation of Action SURAT, using a 5% level of significance. The results indicate that Grammar and Mechanics ($p = 0.017$) and Paragraph Development ($p = 0.032$) exhibited statistically significant improvement, while the remaining areas showed no significant difference.

The significant improvement in Grammar and Mechanics suggests that Action SURAT was effective in addressing basic linguistic accuracy, such as sentence structure, punctuation, and grammatical consistency. This finding corroborates the study of Abaday (2021), which emphasized that focused writing interventions and guided practice lead to measurable improvements in grammatical accuracy in police investigative reports. Similarly, Pacleb and Tabuena (2020) found that grammar and mechanics are among the most responsive areas to short-term training, as these skills can be corrected through explicit instruction and repetitive exercises.

The significant improvement in Paragraph Development indicates enhanced coherence and logical flow of ideas within the affidavit. This aligns with Cañete and Villanueva (2019), who reported that structured writing instruction improves paragraph unity and coherence, particularly in legal and technical writing. The improvement suggests that investigators were better able to organize facts into complete and logically connected paragraphs, a critical requirement in poseur-buyer affidavits where clarity of sequence and detail is essential.

Table 5.
Significant Difference of the Writing Skills of the Trained Investigators in the Affidavit of Poseur-Buyer

AFFIDAVIT OF POSEUR-BUYER		Before	After	P-Value	Description
Grammar and Mechanics		***2.70***	***2.90***	0.017	Significant
Organization	Introduction	3.20	3.20	0.263	Not Significant
	Story	3.10	3.10	0.786	Not Significant
	Conclusion	3.20	3.20	0.324	Not Significant
Content (Language and Expression)	Vocabulary	3.20	3.30	0.160	Not Significant
	Sentence	3.10	3.20	0.263	Not Significant
	Paragraph	3.10	3.20	0.032	Significant
	Expression	2.90	3.10	0.051	Not Significant

Level of Significance: 5%

In contrast, Organization (Introduction, Story, Conclusion) and most areas under Content (Vocabulary, Sentence, Expression) did not show statistically significant differences. This may be attributed to the already *Good to Very Good* pre-test scores in these areas, indicating a ceiling effect where substantial improvement is statistically harder to detect. Santos and De Guzman (2018) noted that when baseline organizational skills are already adequate, training interventions tend to produce incremental rather than dramatic gains, which may not reach statistical significance within a short intervention period.

Table 6 presents the pre-test and post-test comparison of writing skills in the Affidavit of Arrest. Results show that Sentence Construction under *Content (Language and Expression)* demonstrated a statistically significant improvement ($p = 0.032$), while all other areas, including Grammar and Mechanics, Organization, and Vocabulary, did not show significant differences.

The significant improvement in Sentence Construction indicates that Action SURAT effectively enhanced investigators' ability to form clearer, more complete, and more precise sentences. This finding supports Abaday (2021), who highlighted sentence-level issues as a major weakness in police writing and emphasized that sentence construction is particularly receptive to targeted feedback and practice. Likewise, Lum, Koper, and Telep (2021) emphasized that improvements in sentence clarity directly contribute to the overall readability and legal reliability of investigative documents.

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Table 6.
Significant Difference of the Writing Skills of the Trained Investigators in an Affidavit of Arrest

AFFIDAVIT OF ARREST		Before	After	P-Value	Description
Grammar and Mechanics		2.7	2.8	0.402	Not Significant
Organization	Introduction	3.3	3.3	0.263	Not Significant
	Story	3.0	3.1	0.263	Not Significant
	Conclusion	3.2	3.2	1.0	Not Significant
Content (Language and Expression)	Vocabulary	3.1	3.2	0.768	Not Significant
	Sentence	3.0	3.1	0.032	Significant
	Paragraph	3.1	3.2	0.324	Not Significant
	Expression	2.9	3.1	0.051	Not Significant

Level of Significance: 5%

The absence of statistically significant differences in Grammar and Mechanics and Organization may again be explained by the modest numerical gains and relatively stable pre-test performance. Pacleb and Tabuena (2020) observed that improvements in these areas often require longer-term and continuous interventions to achieve statistically significant changes, particularly in formal legal documents such as affidavits of arrest that follow standardized formats.

Additionally, the non-significant change in Expression (p = 0.051), despite an increase in mean score, suggests a trend toward improvement that narrowly missed statistical significance. This observation aligns with Santos and De Guzman (2018), who argued that expressive clarity in police writing improves gradually as officers gain repeated exposure to reflective writing tasks and real-case applications.

Synthesis of Findings. Taken together, Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that Action SURAT produced selective but meaningful improvements in investigators' writing skills. Significant gains were observed in Grammar and Mechanics, Paragraph Development, and Sentence Construction, indicating that the intervention was most effective at the micro-level of writing—specifically sentence and paragraph formation. These results are consistent with studies conducted, which report that structured writing programs for law enforcement personnel yield the strongest immediate effects on foundational writing skills, while higher-level organization and expressive competence improve more gradually.

In addition, there are significant differences in the individual components of writing in the two kinds of reports asked to the participants. Almost all components in both kinds of reports, except two yielded as significant. Under Affidavit of Poseur Buyer, *Paragraph* under Content is significant. From a 3.10 AWM, it went higher to 3.20 after the post test. This result gives a good overview of how the participants can write although cannot be used as an excuse in furthering their writing abilities. While they may have difficulty in their grammar and in other components of writing, their message still comes across throughout their reports. Paragraph would refer to the unity of individual paragraphs and the effective transition and links between paragraphs. In writing skills, this would refer to cohesion and coherence, which are very salient in the comprehending of a text or of what is written.

According to Crossley and McNamara (2010), cohesion refers to the presence or absence of explicit cues in the text that allow the reader to make connections between the ideas while coherence refers to the understanding that the reader derives from the text, which may be more or less coherent depending on a number of factors, such as prior knowledge and reading skill (McNamara, Kintsch, Songer, & Kintsch, 1996; O'Reilly & McNamara, 2007).

Meanwhile, under affidavit of arrest, the change of scores under *Sentence* is significant. With a Descriptive Equivalent of *Good*, it shows that the participants have used sentences of varying length and order to prevent monotony in their reports, and that the different kinds of sentences were used to its purpose. In writing, the ability to use the different kinds of sentences to effect their purposes and to effectively put them together to produce a comprehensible text is critical to avoid misunderstanding of events and information.

Challenges Encountered by the Investigators in Report Writing

All police officers acknowledged that police report writing is challenging because of the multiple factors complicating the task. Mastery of the technicalities of report writing empowers police officers to produce quality reports. Several foreign researches, however, show that law enforcers have inadequate skills in report writing.

In a study conducted by Cotugno (2017), police officers agreed that writing skills are important as it is a factor towards their success as police officers and that it holds a significant impact to the perception of the community to them. While it is true that the trained investigators received an overall *Good* remark in their written tasks, there is still the room for improvement to make their writing skills *Very Good*. In achieving this, their difficulties should be analyzed in order to appropriately address them. The study arrived at various problems and these were thematized according to *Grammar, Diction* and *Pressure*.

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Grammar

In an article written by Cojuanco (2012), she cited an actual police report that needs revision.

"At about 7:00 p.m. of October 8, 2010, Mario Ladislawa, 41 years old and Pedro Masinghay, 43 years old, both residents of Bgy. Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa City, were having a drinking spree together with their feet when suddenly a hot argument ensued between them. Ladislawa get hold a knife and have a duel wherein Masinghay sustained a lone stabbed wound that resulted his instantaneous death while suspect also sustained multiple stabbed wound was rush to the City Hospital for medical treatment. Cadaver of the victim now lies at Asuncion Funeral Parlor awaiting relatives." (Philippine Star, January 8, 2012)

As the report is riddled with errors in grammar and in diction, Cojuangco (2012) has greatly argued the importance of grammar. Se explains that while it is usually said that what counts is the message, the way how a report is written is of equal importance-especially if it involves law enforcement and public safety enforcers. In the study, the struggle of the participants in English grammar is true. These are best reflected in the statements:

"I find difficulties in constructing my report with correct grammar".
" I face difficulties in grammar".
" Grammar is the challenge I encounter in writing a police report".

The investigators also gave specific components of grammar to which they are having challenges with.

"Proper use of subject verb agreement of making sentence or report".
"Grammar and punctuation errors".
"Lack of basic grammar skills needed to construct sentences".
"Conjunctions, spelling and punctuations".

In corroboration with the research finding, the Turkish public order police officers considered insufficient grammar knowledge to be the highest rank among the difficulties experienced in writing (Ulum, 2016). Also, a study conducted among 223 police cadets studying at King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia disclosed that the Arab police trainees experienced such difficulties (Alhuqbani, 2014).

The study conducted by Miller and Pomerenke (1989) supported the finding, revealing that officers submit reports which are hastily written, poorly developed and badly composed and that these reports often include incorrect verb, incorrect tense, wrong pronoun usage, spelling mistakes and poorly structured sentences and paragraphs.

Moreover, prosecuting attorneys in Indiana, USA supported this claim and considered grammatical errors and misspellings as common problems in arrest reports (Lahay, 2017).

Lastly, the finding supports the observation of the Philippine National Police TACDS (2014) that the most common issue of problematic report is grounded in basic grammar.

Diction

Captured in the responses below, diction or the choice and use of words in writing is another difficulty among the participants. This is a surprise as it is reflected in the submitted outputs that they are Very Good in Vocabulary. Nevertheless, their responses are still worth exploring as this hint the desire of the investigators to learn more about words and how they could be used effectively.

"sometimes, you were thinking on the proper words to use before writing a police report"
"One of the difficulties I encountered is choosing the right words in report writing".
"lack of vocabulary"
"uses of correct words"
"terminologist words"

According to Reynolds (20110, most issues with police reports result from lexical inadequacy.

The finding was supported by Aldohon (2014), exposing that the 46 tourist police serving in the different workplaces in Jordan dealt with inadequate vocabulary, specifically using inappropriate English in speaking and lexis shortage.

In the same manner, tourist police in Thailand encountered problems with vocabulary, particularly with legal terminologies (K-Romya, 2006) while police officers in South Africa struggled with vocabulary and spelling (Kekana, 2015), resulting in poor quality of statements from witnesses (Ndenze, 2012).

In conclusion, 120 police blotter narratives, recorded in 2019 and written by police investigators in three municipalities in Region VIII were analyzed to determine the difficulties of police officers in writing narrative reports. Findings revealed that among the errors committed are associated to lexical gaps, inappropriate word choice and improper word form.

Pressure

Categorized under Pressure, there are different types of pressure the police experience affecting their reports. Time pressure tops in the list as the nature of their job does not tell when crimes happen. When cases come at the same time, they will not have enough time to review and edit their reports. Yu and Monas (2018) asserted that "time constraints" is one of the challenges in writing police reports. Time poses constraints on police report writing. These are the lag that can happen between the time an officer responds to a call and the time the officer sits down to report the call. In addition, officers are under pressure to finish their reports relatively quickly because time they spend writing reports is time they are taken off the street.

Reflected in the statements below, it can be gleaned that the investigators can review their reports, if not with many other reports to be done after.

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"Time frame in sending SMS reports"
"time frame"
"time- consuming reports"

The pressure coming from supervisors and other related tasks likewise hinder investigators from fully investing in their reports. These kinds of pressure, including that of Time, result to lack and concentration and focus.

"Complex crimes involving the VIPs"
"order of the Chief of police"
"The burden from the Chief of police"
"multi- tasking in the station"
"lack of concentration and focus"

Analysis

The ability to convey meaning proficiently in written texts is a critical skill, and is attributed to professional competence (Light, 2001). Without enough English writing competencies, writing would be one of the most challenging tasks, and a critical one especially for law enforcers as it involves human and community relations.

It was found out in the study that the police investigators have *Good* writing skills although having difficulties in some areas of writing such as in *Grammar* of which the participants themselves agree with. Grammar includes the form, content and use of the English language, and its saliency to any writing task is obvious. Having a profession that requires writing reports, as in the Philippine National Police, does not only ask for a Good remark, but seeks a *Very Good* or an *Excellent* one as they claim, instill and impose quality service in whatever they do.

Further, it is also good to highlight that they are *Very Good* in Vocabulary and in the *Introduction* although they raised concerns in their Diction which could be explained in the result of the *Expression* and *story.* They are supporting factors to the *Introduction* as they give supplementary information that will make the whole report understandable. In doing so, they need to use appropriate words (or the skill of Diction) for description and details and correct transitions. A police report is a story of action and it is a chronological or step by step account which has a beginning, a body and a conclusion. They corroborate one another to come up with a report that is not only consistent but also effective. To emphasize, the investigators stated that they encounter challenges in their *Vocabulary,* and it needs to be addressed. Alongside with Grammar, giving the policemen what they think they need, while they are interested, is best for optimal learning.

Aside from this, it revealed that Pressure coming from supervisors and other related works negatively affect the participants. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis would say that fear of negative evaluation, in this case from external factors, would result to language anxiety that gives adverse effects to language performances (Du, 2009).

Implications to the Organization/Bureau

It is important to note that there are mandatory courses in police academies that endeavor to develop writing skills among police officers. However, these courses may not be as intensive as they should be to positively affect the English writing skills of policemen. With the results of the study, focus on grammar, vocabulary and on cohesion and coherence should be emphasized in the classes. Additionally, there are memoranda that seek to advance the capabilities of investigators. These are the NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular No. 2013- 002 otherwise known as Professionalizing the Philippine National Police Field Investigation Service Through the Implementation of a Certification Program for Field Investigators of the PNP and Promulgating Guidelines for the Purpose and the Memorandum Circular No. 2020- 006 that approved the certification program for investigators, detectives and case managers of the PNP amending for the purpose NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular No. 2013- 002. It is interesting to highlight that in the first memo, it was specified that for certification of police investigators (PNCO Category), they should possess communication skills by *passing the initial screening and evaluation of his/ her Chief of Police/ Superior*. This gives a vague definition of communication skills, and should therefore be specified recognizing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. For Police investigators (PCO Category) and Case Managers, exhibiting communication skills is another criterion but is not specified like that of the PCO Category. Moreover, in the second memo, the criterion "communication skills" is no longer present which demotes the importance of communication skills. Finally, in the selection of trainees to be police officers, English proficiency skills are not assessed, unlike in other government Departments. An addition of an English Proficiency Test during the recruitment of police officers would boost the Philippine National Police's dedication of their men in uniform's improved English Proficiency.

CONCLUSION

Possessing good writing skills is salient in law enforcement. It does not only reflect the officers' abilities, but it also speaks highly of their Department. The study successfully explored the writing skills of the police officers and looked into the challenges they face in improving their writing skills. It was found out that they are overall *Good* in the components of writing, but still find difficulty in grammar, vocabulary and cohesion and coherence. Time pressure and pressure from supervisors and colleagues were also noted to hinder the accomplishment of good reports and likewise their writing skills.

Recommendations

While the study revealed that the police officers are *Good* in all the components of writing, it is still encouraged that they attain an *Excellent* mark and that their difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, cohesion and coherence as well as the encountered challenges brought about by time pressure and pressure from supervisors and colleagues should be addressed accordingly. This is a great contribution to ensuring the attainment of the PNP's vision of a "highly capable, effective and credible police service".

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It is then recommended that:

(1) Action SURAT be adopted, implemented and institutionalized by the Pangasinan Police Provincial Office in order to further enhance the writing skills of its investigators. The implementation of the innovation should be conducted face- to-face and in longer period of time to look more into its effectiveness and potentials;

(2) Studies of similar topic be conducted in wider scale to account for other possible factors of officers' challenges in writing. The participants and setting of Action SURAT were limited to identified ranks and years of service of police investigators assigned at Pangasinan PPO. Hence, in order to reflect the totality of the challenges identified and encountered by the participants in this study, this course of action is recommended;

(3) Review the PNP Certification Program for Investigators so as to strengthen further the PNP's writing skills. NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular No. 2013-002, as amended by NAPOLCOM Memorandum No. 2020-006 must be revisited in order to ensure inclusion of trainings on writing and communication before a police officer will be certified as investigator, detective or case manager;

(4) Conduct more action research on police officers focusing on writing skills. As it was earlier emphasized, there is scarce studies on the writing skills of police officers although most agree on the importance of these skills in law enforcement.

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