

Investigative Leadership and Operational Accountability in National Bureau of Investigation Services

Virgilio C. Reganit^{1*} and Glenda G. Mina¹

¹ Northeastern College

*vcreganit94@gmail.com, minaglenda@yahoo.com

Date Submitted:

April 18, 2026

Date Accepted:

May 24, 2026

Date Published:

June 11, 2026

DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.20643201

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between investigative leadership and operational accountability in National Bureau of Investigation services, with attention to how leadership practices shaped responsible, timely, and procedurally grounded service delivery. Using a predictive explanatory quantitative design, the study gathered data through a validated and reliability-tested survey questionnaire that measured investigative leadership in terms of strategic case direction, ethical decision-making, supervisory guidance, personnel coordination, and crisis-responsive leadership. Operational accountability was assessed through procedural transparency, documentation discipline, timeliness of action, evidence and records responsibility, client responsiveness, and corrective service mechanisms. The

findings showed that investigative leadership was rated very high, with ethical decision-making, strategic case direction, and supervisory guidance emerging as the strongest areas. Operational accountability was rated high, although lower results were noted in corrective service mechanisms, timeliness of action, and documentation discipline. Spearman's rho revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between investigative leadership and operational accountability. Ordinal logistic regression further showed that supervisory guidance, strategic case direction, ethical decision-making, and personnel coordination significantly predicted higher accountability outcomes, while dominance analysis identified supervisory guidance as the strongest contributor. The study concluded that accountable investigative service was strengthened when leadership was visible, ethical, directive, and closely connected to daily operational work. It recommended stronger supervisory monitoring, improved case tracking, standardized documentation review, and clearer corrective service procedures to further reinforce accountability in NBI operations.

Keywords: *case direction, investigative leadership, NBI services, operational accountability, supervisory guidance*

INTRODUCTION

Public confidence in criminal justice institutions depends not only on the authority given to them by law, but also on the manner by which that authority is exercised in actual service. In investigative agencies, leadership is tested in the daily work of case handling, evidence management, field supervision, coordination with other offices, and interaction with complainants, witnesses, victims, and respondents. Investigative work is therefore not merely technical. It is also administrative, ethical, and public-facing. Every decision made by an investigator or supervising officer may affect the credibility of the case, the rights of persons involved, and the public's belief that justice can be pursued without fear, favor, or delay.

The National Bureau of Investigation occupies a distinct role in the country's justice system. Republic Act No. 10867, otherwise known as the National Bureau of Investigation Reorganization and Modernization Act,

declared the policy of the State to maintain an effective, modern, gender-responsive, competent, and highly trained investigative body that is national in scope. The same law expanded the Bureau's structure and functions, including investigation and detection of crimes, issuance of subpoenas, maintenance of criminal records, provision of technical assistance to government agencies, establishment of forensic and scientific research services, cyber investigation capacity, and other functions assigned by the President or the Secretary of Justice (Republic Act No. 10867, 2016). These legal mandates show that NBI services require more than operational presence. They require leadership that can guide personnel, protect the integrity of procedures, and ensure that investigative actions remain accountable to law and public interest.

Investigative leadership refers to the capacity of officers and supervisors to direct investigative work with sound judgment, ethical conduct, procedural discipline, and sensitivity to the people affected by the process. In law enforcement organizations, leadership is closely tied to internal fairness and professional behavior. Recent policing research has shown that when officers experience fair and respectful treatment within their organization, they are more likely to value fair treatment in their dealings with the public (Yesberg et al., 2024). This finding is important for investigative agencies because field conduct is often shaped by the tone set by supervisors. When leaders provide clear direction, model lawful behavior, observe proper documentation, and correct lapses, accountability becomes part of routine practice rather than a reaction to complaints.

Operational accountability, on the other hand, concerns the responsibility of an investigative office to explain, justify, monitor, and improve how services are carried out. It may be seen in the proper receiving of complaints, timely action on assignments, careful management of evidence, observance of due process, accurate reporting, respectful treatment of clients, and readiness to answer for decisions made in the course of duty. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has long emphasized that accountability and integrity mechanisms are essential to building public trust in policing and criminal justice institutions (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011). In public service, accountability is not limited to punishment after misconduct. It also includes clear standards, supervision, transparency of procedures, documentation, and corrective action when services fall short.

The connection between leadership and accountability becomes stronger when viewed through procedural justice. Studies on policing consistently show that people are more likely to regard authorities as legitimate when they believe that they are treated fairly, respectfully, and with neutrality. A systematic review and meta-analysis by Chan et al. (2025) found that procedural justice is significantly associated with police legitimacy, while social identity also plays a role in how communities judge the fairness and authority of police institutions. Although the NBI is not the same as the regular police force, the lesson is relevant to investigative services. Citizens do not judge an agency only by the final result of a case. They also remember whether they were heard, whether the process was clear, whether personnel acted professionally, and whether decisions appeared grounded in law.

The work of the NBI also places leadership and accountability in a setting where cases may be complex, sensitive, and sometimes high profile. Under Republic Act No. 10867, the Bureau has primary jurisdiction over cases such as human trafficking in airports, cybercrime, extrajudicial or extra-legal killings involving media practitioners and activists, killings of justices and judges, transnational crimes, anti-graft referrals, and commercial, economic, and financial crimes (Republic Act No. 10867, 2016). Such cases require coordination, technical skill, confidentiality, timeliness, and respect for legal safeguards. When investigative leadership is weak, case delays, unclear instructions, poor documentation, or inconsistent supervision may affect both case quality and public perception. When leadership is strong, personnel are more likely to observe standards, manage pressure, and remain answerable for the quality of their work.

Good governance literature also supports the need to study accountability in public institutions. Mansoor (2021) found that good governance practices can strengthen citizens' trust in government through perceptions of performance and integrity. This matters in investigative services because trust is a practical resource. Complainants must be willing to report offenses, witnesses must be willing to cooperate, and communities must believe that state institutions can act with fairness. Without trust, even technically capable agencies may face hesitation, fear, or skepticism from the public. For district and regional offices, where personnel often deal directly with local communities, operational accountability becomes a visible expression of institutional credibility.

Despite the importance of investigative agencies in the justice system, much of the available research on leadership, accountability, and legitimacy focuses on police organizations in general. There remains a need for studies that examine investigative leadership and operational accountability in specialized investigative bodies such as the National Bureau of Investigation. This study, titled “Investigative Leadership and Operational Accountability in National Bureau of Investigation Services,” responds to that need by focusing on how leadership practices relate to accountable service performance in the NBI context. It recognizes that the pursuit of truth and justice depends not only on legal authority and technical capability, but also on the quality of leadership that directs investigative work and the accountability systems that keep such work lawful, fair, timely, and worthy of public trust.

Literature Review

Investigative Leadership in Case Direction and Professional Conduct

Investigative leadership is central to the quality, discipline, and ethical direction of investigative services because criminal investigation requires both technical competence and sound judgment. In specialized investigative offices, leadership is not limited to assigning personnel or supervising case progress. It also involves setting clear expectations, guiding investigators in lawful procedures, sustaining professional discipline, and ensuring that investigative decisions are based on facts rather than pressure, habit, or convenience. Mount and Mazerolle (2021) emphasized that investigative skills learned through training do not automatically transfer to actual police work unless the organization supports their use in the workplace. This suggests that leadership plays an important role in converting training into daily investigative practice. In the same manner, Ericsson (2024) found that police teachers experience challenges in training officers for complex professional situations because investigative work cannot rely only on fixed scripts. These studies imply that effective investigative leadership requires continuous guidance, practical mentoring, and situational decision-making. For the National Bureau of Investigation, where personnel may handle sensitive, technical, and high-stakes cases, the quality of leadership can influence how investigators plan their work, interact with clients and witnesses, document facts, and preserve the credibility of the investigation.

Operational Accountability and Public Service Performance

Operational accountability in investigative services refers to the responsibility of an office to ensure that its actions, decisions, records, and service outputs can be examined, explained, and justified. In public administration, accountability has developed into a major field of study because government agencies are expected to answer not only for their formal authority but also for the manner in which they deliver services. Pérez-Durán (2024), in a systematic review of accountability research in public administration, noted that accountability involves relationships in which public actors inform, justify, and answer for their conduct before forums that may evaluate or sanction them. This view is relevant to investigative agencies because operational work requires both internal accountability to supervisors and external accountability to the law, complainants, other justice institutions, and the public. Schnell et al. (2021) also stressed that effective performance management in public administration depends on leadership commitment, alignment of organizational and individual goals, fair performance assessment, staff development, and the embedding of performance management into organizational culture. Applied to NBI services, accountability may be reflected in timely case action, proper recordkeeping, responsible use of authority, evidence integrity, client responsiveness, and corrective measures when procedures are not properly followed.

Evidence Handling, Interviewing Practice, and Investigative Quality

The quality of an investigation depends greatly on how evidence is gathered, preserved, analyzed, and interpreted. Investigative leadership therefore has a direct connection to evidence documentation and case reliability because poorly supervised evidence handling can weaken the truth-finding purpose of the investigation. Lillis et al. (2016) observed that modern digital forensic investigation faces increasing pressure due to the growing number of devices, large volumes of data, and backlogs that affect the timely processing of cases. Although their study focused on digital forensics, the same concern applies to broader investigative services where evidence may come from physical documents, witness accounts, digital materials, financial records, and technical examinations. Kassin et al.

(2025) also emphasized that interrogation practices must be carefully managed because certain conditions and tactics can contribute to false confessions and wrongful outcomes. These findings show that investigative quality is not measured only by whether a case is filed or resolved, but also by whether the process used to obtain facts is fair, reliable, and properly documented. In the NBI context, investigative leaders must therefore ensure that evidence management, interviewing, case recording, and report preparation are carried out with accuracy, caution, and respect for legal safeguards.

Accountable Policing, Institutional Trust, and Service Legitimacy

Accountable investigative service is closely linked to institutional trust because citizens are more likely to cooperate with an investigative agency when they believe that its personnel act lawfully, fairly, and professionally. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2022) described accountable policing as a set of policies and practices that hold police agencies responsible for their broad mandates and daily tasks. This understanding is useful for the NBI because accountability is not only a matter of responding to misconduct, but also of building systems that make responsible service part of ordinary operations. Archbold (2021) similarly explained that police accountability has become a continuing concern in modern law enforcement because public attention to misconduct often raises questions about the strength of internal controls and external review mechanisms. For investigative agencies, legitimacy is strengthened when leaders promote transparent procedures, discourage abuse of discretion, require accurate documentation, and respond fairly to service concerns. This literature supports the present study by showing that investigative leadership and operational accountability should be studied together, since the quality of leadership within an investigative office can shape the degree to which services become lawful, timely, reliable, and trusted by the public.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a predictive explanatory quantitative design using a structured survey approach. This design was considered appropriate because the study did not merely describe the level of investigative leadership and operational accountability, but also examined how leadership-related dimensions explained variations in accountability practices within National Bureau of Investigation services. The design allowed the researcher to determine patterns among measured variables and to identify which aspects of investigative leadership carried stronger explanatory value in relation to operational accountability. Since the study dealt with actual institutional practices as perceived by personnel and service stakeholders, no experimental manipulation was introduced. Instead, the inquiry relied on naturally occurring perceptions and experiences within the organizational setting.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the service environment of the National Bureau of Investigation, with particular attention to district-level investigative operations and administrative service delivery. The locale was relevant because NBI district offices serve as direct points of contact for complainants, witnesses, requesting parties, government offices, and other clients who require investigative, clearance, record, forensic, and legal assistance. In this setting, investigative leadership was observed through case supervision, coordination, field direction, decision-making, and personnel guidance, while operational accountability was reflected in timeliness, documentation, procedural compliance, responsiveness, and responsible handling of public concerns. The locale therefore provided a practical setting for examining how leadership and accountability were experienced in actual investigative service operations.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of the study consisted of individuals who had sufficient knowledge of, exposure to, or direct experience with National Bureau of Investigation services. They included personnel involved in investigative and administrative functions, as well as service stakeholders who had interacted with the office in relation to official transactions, complaints, requests, or coordination work. The study used criterion-based purposive sampling combined with proportional representation. The criterion-based procedure ensured that only participants with relevant experience or direct engagement with NBI services were included, while proportional representation helped capture views from different participant groups without overconcentrating the responses in one category. This sampling approach strengthened the relevance of the data because the participants were selected based on their capacity to provide informed assessments of investigative leadership and operational accountability.

Research Instrument

The main instrument of the study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire constructed from the major variables of the study. The first part gathered responses on investigative leadership in terms of strategic case direction, ethical decision-making, supervisory guidance, personnel coordination, and crisis-responsive leadership. The second part measured operational accountability in terms of procedural transparency, documentation discipline, timeliness of action, evidence and records responsibility, client responsiveness, and corrective service mechanisms. The items were written in clear and work-related statements using a five-point Likert scale ranging from very low extent to very high extent.

The instrument underwent content validation by experts in criminal justice education, public administration, research methodology, and law enforcement practice. Their comments focused on item clarity, relevance to NBI operations, ethical sensitivity, and suitability for respondents from both internal and external service groups. Items that were found to be overlapping, unclear, or too broad were revised before the pilot testing. The validation process produced a content validity index of 0.91, which indicated that the instrument had strong content relevance.

A pilot test was conducted among participants who shared similar characteristics with the actual respondents but were not included in the final data gathering. The pilot testing assessed whether the questionnaire items were understandable, answerable within a reasonable time, and appropriate to the institutional context. After the pilot test, the internal consistency of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The investigative leadership scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94, while the operational accountability scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.95, which indicated excellent reliability. These results showed that the instrument was internally consistent and suitable for use in the full study.

Data Gathering

Before the collection of data, the researcher secured the necessary permission from the concerned office and coordinated with authorized personnel regarding the proper schedule and manner of administering the instrument. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, including the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of their responses. The survey questionnaire was then distributed either through printed copies or a controlled digital form, depending on the availability and convenience of the participants.

The researcher ensured that the participants were given enough time to read and answer the instrument without pressure. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, but no identifying information was required beyond what was necessary for grouping and analysis. Responses with substantial missing data were excluded from the analysis to preserve the accuracy of the findings. After retrieval, the data were encoded, cleaned, and prepared for statistical treatment. The researcher carefully reviewed the data set for incomplete responses, duplicate entries, and inconsistent answer patterns before proceeding to analysis.

Data Analysis

The study used descriptive and predictive statistical procedures. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of investigative leadership and operational accountability. The weighted mean

described the general assessment of the participants, while the standard deviation showed the degree of consistency or variation in their responses.

To determine the relationship between investigative leadership and operational accountability, Spearman's rho was used because the data were gathered through ordinal scale responses and did not require the assumption of normal distribution. To identify which leadership dimensions best explained operational accountability, the study used ordinal logistic regression. This treatment was selected because the dependent variable was measured through ordered response categories, making it more appropriate than ordinary least squares regression for Likert-based outcome interpretation. The analysis allowed the researcher to determine the predictive contribution of each investigative leadership dimension to higher levels of operational accountability.

In addition, dominance analysis was applied to determine the relative importance of each leadership dimension in explaining accountability outcomes. This provided a more refined interpretation by showing not only whether a predictor was significant, but also which leadership area contributed most strongly to the accountability model. The use of dominance analysis made the treatment more responsive to the purpose of the study because it helped identify priority leadership areas for institutional improvement. All statistical results were interpreted using the appropriate significance level and were presented in a manner consistent with the objectives of the study.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed ethical standards in the conduct of research involving human participants and institutional service settings. Participation was voluntary, and the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before answering the questionnaire. They were also assured that their responses would be treated with confidentiality and would be used only for academic and research purposes. No participant was required to disclose sensitive case details, confidential investigative information, names of parties, pending case records, classified documents, or operational matters that could compromise official functions.

The researcher avoided collecting information that could identify complainants, respondents, witnesses, or personnel in connection with specific cases. Data were reported in summarized form to prevent the identification of individual participants or offices. The researcher also maintained neutrality throughout the data gathering process and avoided any action that could influence the responses of the participants. All completed questionnaires and encoded data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher. After the completion of the study, the data were handled in accordance with confidentiality and academic research requirements. Through these safeguards, the study protected the dignity, privacy, and institutional responsibilities of all persons and offices involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Level of Investigative Leadership in National Bureau of Investigation Services*

Investigative Leadership Dimensions	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Strategic Case Direction	4.32	0.51	Very High
Ethical Decision-Making	4.41	0.47	Very High
Supervisory Guidance	4.25	0.54	Very High
Personnel Coordination	4.18	0.58	High
Crisis-Responsive Leadership	4.09	0.62	High
Overall Mean	4.25	0.54	Very High

The results in Table 1 show that investigative leadership in National Bureau of Investigation services was generally assessed at a very high level. Among the dimensions, ethical decision-making obtained the highest mean, which indicates that the respondents viewed NBI leadership as generally guided by fairness, responsibility, and respect for legal boundaries in the conduct of investigative work. This is an important strength because investigation involves authority that must be exercised with care, especially when dealing with complainants, witnesses, respondents, confidential information, and sensitive case materials. Strategic case direction and supervisory

guidance also received very high assessments, suggesting that leadership was evident in giving direction, clarifying case priorities, and guiding personnel in the performance of investigative duties.

However, the relatively lower ratings for personnel coordination and crisis-responsive leadership point to areas that still required improvement. Although both were rated high, their means were lower than the other leadership dimensions. This suggests that while leadership was generally strong, some difficulties may have been experienced in coordinating personnel across functions, responding to urgent situations, and sustaining clear communication during pressure-filled operations. In an investigative office, these gaps may affect the speed of case movement, the consistency of task assignment, and the smooth handling of unexpected developments. Thus, the overall finding suggests that NBI leadership was dependable and professionally grounded, but it still needed stronger systems for coordination and rapid operational response.

Table 2. Level of Operational Accountability in National Bureau of Investigation Services

Operational Accountability Dimensions	Mean	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Procedural Transparency	4.16	0.57	High
Documentation Discipline	3.94	0.66	High
Timeliness of Action	3.88	0.71	High
Evidence and Records Responsibility	4.28	0.52	Very High
Client Responsiveness	4.07	0.61	High
Corrective Service Mechanisms	3.82	0.73	High
Overall Mean	4.03	0.63	High

Table 2 presents the level of operational accountability in NBI services. The overall mean was interpreted as high, which indicates that accountability practices were generally observed in the delivery of investigative and related services. Evidence and records responsibility obtained the highest rating and was the only dimension interpreted as very high. This suggests that the respondents recognized the importance given to safeguarding records, maintaining evidence integrity, and handling official documents with care. This is a strong finding for an investigative institution because records, evidence, and case files are central to the credibility of any investigation.

Despite this positive result, the table also reveals that operational accountability was not uniformly strong across all areas. Corrective service mechanisms obtained the lowest mean, followed by timeliness of action and documentation discipline. These findings show a realistic operational concern. While personnel may have been careful in handling evidence and records, challenges may still have occurred in addressing service delays, documenting actions consistently, and applying corrective measures when concerns were raised. The lower rating for timeliness may be connected to case volume, coordination requirements, availability of technical results, or dependence on other offices and agencies. The lower rating for corrective service mechanisms suggests the need for more visible feedback channels, clearer monitoring of pending concerns, and stronger follow-through when service weaknesses are identified. Therefore, the result indicates that accountability was present, but it still required more systematic reinforcement in areas that directly affect client experience and service predictability.

Table 3. Relationship Between Investigative Leadership and Operational Accountability

Variables Correlated	Spearman's rho	Strength of Relationship	p-value	Decision
Investigative Leadership and Operational Accountability	0.71	Strong Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant
Strategic Case Direction and Operational Accountability	0.66	Strong Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant
Ethical Decision-Making and Operational Accountability	0.62	Strong Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant

Variables Correlated	Spearman's rho	Strength of Relationship	p-value	Decision
Supervisory Guidance and Operational Accountability	0.69	Strong Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant
Personnel Coordination and Operational Accountability	0.58	Moderate Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant
Crisis-Responsive Leadership and Operational Accountability	0.55	Moderate Positive Relationship	< 0.001	Significant

The results in Table 3 show a strong positive and significant relationship between investigative leadership and operational accountability. This means that stronger leadership practices were associated with better accountability in NBI services. The finding supports the view that accountability is not only a matter of rules and procedures. It is also shaped by how leaders guide personnel, clarify expectations, monitor performance, and model responsible conduct. When leadership is clear and active, personnel are more likely to observe procedures, document actions, act within authority, and respond appropriately to service concerns.

Among the leadership dimensions, supervisory guidance had the strongest relationship with operational accountability. This suggests that close, clear, and consistent supervision played a major role in strengthening accountable service delivery. Strategic case direction also showed a strong relationship, indicating that accountability improved when case priorities, investigative steps, and operational expectations were properly communicated. Ethical decision-making likewise showed a significant relationship, confirming that accountability was strengthened when leaders emphasized lawful and fair conduct. Personnel coordination and crisis-responsive leadership had moderate but significant relationships, which means that they remained important, although their influence was not as strong as direct supervision and case direction. These results reveal that the most immediate leadership behaviors, especially guidance, monitoring, and direction, had the strongest connection to accountable investigative service.

Table 4. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis of Investigative Leadership Dimensions Predicting Operational Accountability

Predictor Variables	Estimate	Standard Error	Wald χ^2	Odds Ratio	p-value	Interpretation
Strategic Case Direction	0.82	0.21	15.25	2.27	< 0.001	Significant Predictor
Ethical Decision-Making	0.64	0.19	11.34	1.90	0.001	Significant Predictor
Supervisory Guidance	0.91	0.23	15.65	2.48	< 0.001	Significant Predictor
Personnel Coordination	0.43	0.18	5.71	1.54	0.017	Significant Predictor
Crisis-Responsive Leadership	0.31	0.16	3.75	1.36	0.053	Not Significant

Model Fit and Explanatory Values

Model Indicator	Result	Interpretation
Likelihood Ratio χ^2	96.84	Significant Model
p-value	< 0.001	Model was statistically significant
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.52	Substantial explanatory value
Test of Parallel Lines	p = 0.214	Assumption was met
Classification Accuracy	74.60%	Acceptable predictive accuracy

Table 4 presents the ordinal logistic regression results identifying which dimensions of investigative leadership predicted higher levels of operational accountability. The model was statistically significant, and the Nagelkerke Pseudo R² value of 0.52 showed that the leadership dimensions explained a substantial portion of the variation in operational accountability. This means that leadership practices had meaningful explanatory value in determining whether accountability was assessed at a higher level.

Supervisory guidance emerged as the strongest predictor, with an odds ratio of 2.48. This means that higher ratings in supervisory guidance increased the likelihood of higher operational accountability by about 2.48 times. This result indicates that personnel and service stakeholders were more likely to perceive accountability positively

when leaders actively guided, monitored, and supported investigative work. Strategic case direction also significantly predicted accountability, with an odds ratio of 2.27. This suggests that clear case direction helped improve the likelihood of stronger accountability outcomes. Ethical decision-making was also significant, showing that leadership grounded in fairness and lawful conduct contributed to higher accountability.

Personnel coordination was a significant predictor, but its effect was weaker compared with supervisory guidance, strategic case direction, and ethical decision-making. This indicates that coordination mattered, but it may not have been as decisive as direct supervision and case direction. Crisis-responsive leadership did not reach statistical significance, although its p-value was near the threshold. This suggests that crisis responsiveness may have influenced accountability in some situations, but it was not strong enough to predict accountability consistently across the whole model. This may be because crisis situations were not encountered by all respondents with the same frequency, or because accountability was more strongly shaped by routine supervision and documentation practices than by occasional emergency responses.

Table 5. Dominance Analysis of Investigative Leadership Dimensions on Operational Accountability

Investigative Leadership Dimension	General Dominance Weight	Relative Contribution	Rank
Supervisory Guidance	0.168	32.31%	1
Strategic Case Direction	0.142	27.31%	2
Ethical Decision-Making	0.104	20.00%	3
Personnel Coordination	0.067	12.88%	4
Crisis-Responsive Leadership	0.039	7.50%	5
Total Explained Contribution	0.520	100.00%	

Table 5 shows the relative importance of each investigative leadership dimension in explaining operational accountability. Supervisory guidance ranked first, contributing 32.31 percent of the explained variance. This result strengthens the earlier finding that supervision was the most influential leadership area in relation to accountability. In the NBI service setting, this means that accountable operations depended greatly on whether leaders followed up case progress, reviewed outputs, reminded personnel of procedures, and provided timely direction when issues arose.

Strategic case direction ranked second, contributing 27.31 percent. This implies that clear investigative planning, proper prioritization, and careful direction of case activities were important in strengthening accountability. Ethical decision-making ranked third, with a relative contribution of 20.00 percent. This confirms that accountability had a moral and legal foundation, not merely an administrative one. Personnel coordination and crisis-responsive leadership contributed smaller shares, with 12.88 percent and 7.50 percent, respectively. These lower contributions do not mean that they were unimportant. Rather, they suggest that these areas may need stronger institutional support to become more visible and consistent contributors to accountability outcomes. Overall, the dominance analysis identified supervisory guidance, strategic case direction, and ethical decision-making as the leading leadership areas that should be sustained and strengthened.

Table 6. Priority Accountability Concerns Based on Dimension-Level Scores

Accountability Area	Mean	Relative Concern Level	Priority for Improvement
Corrective Service Mechanisms	3.82	Highest Concern	First Priority
Timeliness of Action	3.88	High Concern	Second Priority
Documentation Discipline	3.94	High Concern	Third Priority
Client Responsiveness	4.07	Moderate Concern	Fourth Priority
Procedural Transparency	4.16	Moderate Concern	Fifth Priority
Evidence and Records Responsibility	4.28	Lowest Concern	Maintenance Priority

Table 6 identifies the priority accountability concerns based on the relative standing of the accountability dimensions. Corrective service mechanisms emerged as the first priority for improvement because it obtained the lowest mean. This suggests that the office needed clearer systems for receiving feedback, acting on service concerns, documenting corrective actions, and informing concerned parties about the status of their concerns when appropriate. In an investigative agency, corrective mechanisms are important because even minor service gaps can affect public trust when they remain unresolved or unexplained.

Timeliness of action was the second priority. Although the rating was still high, it was one of the lowest among the dimensions, which indicates that delays remained a practical concern. In the NBI setting, timeliness may be affected by the complexity of cases, volume of requests, coordination with other agencies, availability of records, and technical examination requirements. Still, the result suggests that service accountability could be strengthened by improving monitoring of pending actions, setting clearer internal timelines, and providing more systematic updates within allowable limits.

Documentation discipline was the third priority. This finding is important because documentation is the link between investigative action and institutional accountability. Even when proper actions are taken, weak documentation may create uncertainty, expose the office to questions, or reduce the clarity of case history. The strong rating in evidence and records responsibility shows that the office handled records with care, but the lower rating in documentation discipline suggests that consistency in recording actions, updates, endorsements, and follow-through could still be improved. Taken together, the priority concerns reveal that the main accountability issues were not primarily about integrity failure. Rather, they were related to system consistency, service timeliness, documentation routines, and corrective follow-through.

CONCLUSION

Investigative leadership in National Bureau of Investigation services was generally strong, particularly in ethical decision-making, strategic case direction, and supervisory guidance, which showed that leadership practices were largely guided by professionalism, lawful conduct, and clear direction in investigative work. However, operational accountability, although rated high, still showed practical gaps in corrective service mechanisms, timeliness of action, and documentation discipline, indicating that accountability was present but not yet fully consistent across all service areas. The significant relationship between investigative leadership and operational accountability further confirmed that stronger leadership practices were associated with more accountable service delivery, with supervisory guidance emerging as the most influential factor in improving accountability outcomes. Based on these findings, it is recommended that NBI offices sustain ethical and strategic leadership practices while strengthening routine supervisory monitoring, case tracking, and documentation review systems.

The office may also develop clearer internal mechanisms for addressing service concerns, monitoring pending actions, and ensuring that corrective measures are properly recorded and followed through. Capacity-building activities may focus on supervisory coaching, case management, records discipline, client-responsive service, and coordination during urgent operational situations. Finally, future researchers may conduct similar studies in other NBI district or regional offices, include qualitative interviews, or compare internal personnel assessments with external client experiences to provide a deeper understanding of how investigative leadership supports operational accountability in public investigative services.

References

- Archbold, C. A. (2021). Police accountability in the USA: Gaining traction or spinning wheels? *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15(3), 1665–1683. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paab033>
- Chan, A., Bradford, B., & Stott, C. (2025). A systematic review and meta-analysis of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing: The effect of social identity and social contexts. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 21, 349–406. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-023-09595-5>

- Ericsson, S., Öman Ekervhén, L., Nyström, M., Stenlund, T., & Davis, P. (2024). "There is no script": Police teachers' experiences of training investigative interviewing. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 39, 789–804. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-024-09692-9>
- Kassin, S. M., Cleary, H. M. D., Gudjonsson, G. H., Leo, R. A., Meissner, C. A., Redlich, A. D., & Scherr, K. C. (2025). Police-induced confessions, 2.0: Risk factors and recommendations. *Law and Human Behavior*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000593>
- Lillis, D., Becker, B. A., O'Sullivan, T., & Scanlon, M. (2016). Current challenges and future research areas for digital forensic investigation. In *Proceedings of the 11th ADFSLS Conference on Digital Forensics, Security and Law* (pp. 9–20). Association of Digital Forensics, Security and Law. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1604.03850>
- Mansoor, M. (2021). Citizens' trust in government as a function of good governance and government agency's provision of quality information on social media during COVID-19. *Government Information Quarterly*, 38(4), Article 101597. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2021.101597>
- Mount, D., & Mazerolle, L. (2021). Investigative interviewing skills in policing: Examining the transfer of training into workplace practices. *Policing: An International Journal*, 44(3), 510–524. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-12-2019-0182>
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2022). *Policing to promote the rule of law and protect the population: An evidence-based approach*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26217>
- Pérez-Durán, I. (2024). Twenty-five years of accountability research in public administration: Authorship, themes, methods, and future trends. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 90(3), 491–509. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00208523231211751>
- Republic Act No. 10867. (2016). *National Bureau of Investigation Reorganization and Modernization Act*. Republic of the Philippines.
- Schnell, S., Mihes, D., Sobjak, A., & van Acker, W. (2021). *Performance management in the public administration: Seven success factors*. World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/35921>
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2011). *Handbook on police accountability, oversight and integrity*. United Nations.
- Yesberg, J. A., Sargeant, E., Fenn, L., Murphy, K., & Madon, N. (2024). Fairness in policing: How does internal procedural justice translate to external procedural justice? *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18, Article paae126. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paae126>