



# Skills and Abilities Expected from Professionals Conducting Serious Crimes Investigations: A Descriptive Study from Turkey<sup>a</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Criminal investigation provides a practical contribution to this process while criminology provides a theoretical background in apprehension of criminals' arrest and clarification of crimes. However, studies on criminal investigation, which is a practical aspect of this process, are not sufficient. Every crime involves different dynamics in terms of investigation. But investigations of serious crimes are versatile and contains complex processes because of cases they are conducted. Therefore, professionals who conduct serious crime investigations differ in some aspects from others in the field. The most fundamental element of this differentiation is skills and abilities of these professionals. According to Eurostat data, Turkey is in an important position in terms of homicide rates. Therefore, in Turkey practice of serious crime investigation is specialized.

The present study aims to research the skills and abilities expected from professionals in conducting an effective serious criminal investigation in Turkey and so aims to offer a number of suggestions about choicing and in-service trainings of investigators.

## METHOD

Initially, skills and abilities revealed in four practice sphere were compiled in literature (eg. Fahsing & Gottschalk, 2008; Westera et al., 2014; Smith & Flanagan, 2000). 25 emerged ability and skills were asked to professionals (n=204) with semi-structured form according to 5 provinces with the highest and 2 provinces with the lowest number of serious crime cases. Three data categories were collected during experience: 1- Five most important skills and abilities, 2- The most important skills for knowledge and inquiry management and 3- Ability and skills that stand out for five stages of serious criminal investigation. For third section, homicide investigation steps are described by Smith and Flanagan (2000), Innes (2002) and Greenwood et al. (1977), a police investigation of a homicide investigation, and the processes followed. These steps are a) Initial evaluation of homicide and crime scene; b) the evaluation of information collected from scene, witnesses, victims and autopsy reports; c) the determination of the limits and dimensions of the inquiry; d) the identification and arrest of the suspect; e) preparation of the investigation document and the management of the stages of the investigation

## RESULTS

n=205 participants took part in the present research. Table 1 reflects the information of the participants

Table 1: Informations about participants

		n	%
Age	0-35	84	41,2
	35-45	95	46,6
	45-above	25	12,3
Experience	0-5 years	122	59,8
	5-10 years	42	20,6
	10-above	40	19,6
Cases conducted	0-50 cases	85	41,5
	50-200 cases	65	31,7
	200-above	50	24,4
	Not answered	4	2,4

### A. Top Five Skills and Abilities

In total, 1010 skills and abilities were written by participants in 22 core abilities from semi-structured form. First five of them are 1- Investigative competence (n=134, %13), 2- Ability of planning (n=95, %9,2), 3- Communicative skills (n=91, %8,8), 4- Knowledge management (n=88, %8,5) and 5- Team building (n=67, %6,5)'tir (table 2).

Table 2: Top three skill and ability in five range

		n	%
1	Investigative competence	71	34,6
	Team building	27	13,2
	Leadership	22	10,7
2	Investigative competence	32	15,6
	Knowledge management	28	13,7
	Planning	18	8,8
3	Planning	25	12,2
	Communicative skills	21	10,2
	Knowledge management	20	9,8
4	Communicative skills	22	10,7
	Decision making	18	8,8
	Planning	18	8,8
5	Communicative skills	27	13,2
	Choicing appropriate staff	19	9,3
	Organising of investigation	14	6,8

### B.Management, Analyzing and Knowledge Management and Experience of Serious Crime Investigations

In this section, it is aimed to see top three skill and ability specifically in terms of management, analyzing and knowledge management and experience. In total n=2453 skills and abilities (For management n=881, for analyzing n= 793 and for knowledge management and experience n=779) were written by participants (Table 3).

Table 3: Top three skill and ability in terms of management, analyzing and knowledge management

		n	%
Management	Investigative competence	133	14,9
	Planning	80	8,9
	Knowledge management	73	8,2
Analyzing	Knowledge management	115	12,8
	Investigative competence	110	12,3
	Resource management	65	7,3
Knowledge management and experience	Knowledge management	73	8,2
	Communicative skills	65	7,3
	Planning	56	6,3

### C. Ability and skills that stand out for five stages of serious criminal investigation

	Number of Skills and abilities written (n)	3 abilities and skills the most written
1. Initial evaluation of homicide and crime scene	625	Knowledge management, investigative competence, communicative skills
2. The evaluation of information collected from scene, witnesses, victims and autopsy reports etc.	624	Knowledge management, underpinning knowledge, planning
3. The determination of the limits and dimensions of the inquiry	604	Organizing of investigation, planning, management skill
4. The identification and arrest of the suspect	757	Knowledge management, planning, team building
5. Preparation of the investigation document and the management of the stages of the investigation	615	Knowledge management, staff development, strategic awareness
Total	3225	

## DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

In the light of findings of present study, it can be said that knowledge management is the most prominent skill and ability. The most important feature that differentiates and privatizes an effective criminal investigation, along with policing practices, is the management of information. It is important that the information collected can be transformed into evidence. Thus, an investigator can be an effective investigator through the success of this process. Besides, it is thought that investigative competence, planning, management skills and communicative skills are also important skills and abilities for the effective criminal investigations.

Finally, skills and abilities resulted in section A and B can be used for choicing of investigators for serious crime investigation units such as homicide departments. Those resulted in section C also can be used for in-service trainings of investigators.

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