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Body Worn Cameras: Helping the Ghana Police Service Tell Their Version of The Story

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Abstract

This research explores the value of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in reporting the facts objectively and refuting allegations made against the police. This closes a gap in the currently available literature, which mostly highlights accountability and transparency. The study investigates how BWCs can contribute to clearing law enforcement officers of false charges and providing more balanced accounts in tense interactions, particularly on social media platforms. By assessing the extent to which BWCs influence the resolution of complaints against officers and identifying challenges related to their implementation and use in storytelling, the study recognises that while BWCs offer valuable visual and audio documentation, they are not an absolute solution to all evidentiary concerns. It makes use of information from the Ghana Police Service's Ashanti Regional Command as well as relevant secondary sources to investigate the study on ground. BWCs improve accountability and openness, especially by refuting false narratives on social media. It makes use of information from the Ghana Police Service's Ashanti Regional Command to demonstrate the advantages and difficulties of BWC in telling the story. BWCs improve police operations by boosting accountability and openness, especially by refuting false allegations made in social media narratives. To maximize the success of BWCs, the results highlight the significance of strong policies, ongoing training, and infrastructure investment. Overall, the study shows that although BWCs have great potential to modernize law enforcement and enhance public trust, privacy concerns and other implementation issues must be addressed for their successful adoption.

Keywords: Police, Policing, Ghana Police Service, Tech-enhanced Policing, Body Worn Cameras (BWCs)

1. Introduction

The occupation of law enforcement is continuously evolving to meet the demands of modern society. Police officers all over the world frequently encounter dangerous situations that far exceed those faced by the general public. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2016, there were roughly 468,000 sworn, full time police officers in the United States with 3% serving a population of 1000 or more (Hyland and Davis 2019). To

address these challenges and public demands, police departments globally have adopted the use of modern technology including body-worn cameras (BWCs).

However, over the years, a series of high-profile incidents involving law enforcement and the subsequent public outcry have intensified calls for greater transparency and accountability within policing. Recent high-profile police officer-involved shootings in Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Ferguson, and other cities have highlighted tensions between law enforcement and segments of the communities they serve (Buchanana et al. 2015). In response, placing BWCs on police officers has been suggested as a powerful tool to address the police legitimacy crisis in many countries including Nigeria. (Stanley 2015).

Advocates of BWCs argue that these devices offer numerous benefits. They are believed to increase transparency and enhance citizen perceptions of police legitimacy, improve behaviours during police and citizen encounters and provide valuable evidence for resolving complaints against police or prosecuting offenders (Stanley 2015). Additionally, BWCs can offer improved opportunities for police training by providing real-life examples of officer conduct (Chapman 2018).

However, the implementation of BWCs has raised questions about their impact on police behaviour and effectiveness and some studies have shown mixed results regarding how BWCs influence police conduct. Guab et al. (2019) reported that officers felt their discretion was limited and that they engaged less with citizens when wearing BWCs, possibly to avoid potential disciplinary actions that could later be used against them. Headley et al. (2017) found that while BWCs might affect officers' behaviours, they do not seem to interfere with their overall work ethics.

Tanner and Meye (2015) noted that in-car digital devices have allowed officers to view crimes in real time which has brought significant changes to policing practices, such as improved situational awareness, faster response times, and enhanced evidence collection. The contradictory and inconsistent accounts of deadly shootings such as those involving Micheal Brown and Tamir Rice have heightened public curiosity and demands for BWCs as tools to provide clear and objective accounts of police encounters (Symkła et al. 2016).

This introduced the Ferguson Effect as described by Wolfe and Nix (2016) which hypothesizes that the increased scrutiny and unfavourable public opinions following events in Ferguson, MO had led to depolicing, where officers are less willing to perform their duties for fear of accusation of excessive force or racial profiling. This illustrates the precarious state of police community relations (Wood & Groff 2019).

This study, therefore, aims to examine the role of BWCs in providing an objective account of countering claims of police brutality or impunity. By focusing on how BWCs help exonerate officers from false accusations and providing a balanced narrative in contentious encounters, this research seeks to fill a gap in current literature that predominantly emphasises accountability and transparency.

2. Problem Statement

Police use of force continues to be a major source of international concern, inviting interest from academics and practitioners alike. Whether justified or unnecessary/excessive, the exercise of power by the police can potentially tarnish their relationship with the community.

Police misconduct, real or perceived, can translate into complaints against the police which carry large economic and social costs. The authors attempt to answer this question: do body-worn cameras reduce the prevalence of use-of-force and/or citizens' complaints against the police? However, while much of the existing literature focuses on how BWCs serve as a tool for oversight and evidence collection, there is a significant gap in exploring how these devices can help law enforcement officers defend themselves against accusations of misconduct and brutality. This article, therefore, aims to fill this gap by examining the role of BWCs in providing a recorded account from the police perspective, offering evidence that may help clarify contested encounters and counterclaims of misconduct or impunity.

3. Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore how BWCs can support law enforcement officers in defending against accusations of misconduct. The specific objectives are:

- To evaluate the impact of BWCs on the resolution of complaints against law enforcement officers; and,
- To identify and examine the challenges of using BWCs in the field.

4. Theoretical Review

The theoretical foundation for the use of BWCs in policing is rooted in deterrence theory which posits that the certainty of being caught and punished for wrongdoing reduces the likelihood of such behaviours (Ariel et al. 2016). BWCs act as a credible threat that deters negative behaviours against police or citizens by increasing the perceived certainty of detection and punishment (Ariel et al. 2014). This is particularly relevant in policing where the presence of BWCs can discourage both officers and citizens from engaging in misconduct with impunity.

Deterrence theory traces its origins to the works of eighteenth-century philosophers, particularly Cesare Beccaria (1764) and Jeremy Bentham (1781), who sought to explain the motivations behind criminal behaviour and the role of punishment in preventing crime. Beccaria's seminal work, *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764), argued that human beings are fundamentally self-interested and, in the absence of legal constraints, may act in ways that disrupt social harmony. He posited that individuals are driven by a rational calculation of pleasure and pain, meaning that without the certainty of punishment, people would be inclined to engage in criminal acts (Beccaria, 1764; Bagaric & Alexander, 2014). To mitigate this, Beccaria emphasised the necessity of clear, proportionate, and consistently enforced legal rules, contending that laws serve as a social contract that maintains order and discourages transgressions (Beccaria, 1764; Ristroph, 2010). Bentham (1781) later expanded on these ideas, reinforcing the principle that the severity, certainty, and swiftness of punishment determine its deterrent effect (Bentham, 1781; Paternoster, 2010). Their contributions laid the foundation for modern deterrence theory, which continues to influence criminal justice policies today. Laws were therefore necessary, and the only goal of punishment for breaking the law should be to deter others from committing the same offence (Johnson 2019).

Furthermore, Beccaria contended that the severity of the punishment should match the seriousness of the crime committed because, in the event that two crimes are penalized equally, nothing will deter people from committing the more serious crime when doing so offers a greater benefit. In addition, he emphasized that the timing of punishment should be such that it occurs as soon as possible after the crime is committed and that the certainty of punishment works more to deter crime than its severity (Johnson 2019).

Some academics contend that deterrence is the best paradigm for analyzing BWCs since using BWCs increases the possibility of facing consequences, which, in turn, indicates that less force will be necessary for an officer to affect compliance. It also means that the existence of body-worn cameras offers some neutral evidence of what actually occurred in the event that a civilian or police officer allegedly behaves inappropriately. It follows logically that with the high probability of being arrested and found guilty based on audio/video evidence, it is equally assumed that suspects and officers, who are aware of the BWC, will not purposefully break the law or, in the case of the officers, their departmental policies.

It follows that it is reasonable to presume that both parties to the interaction are aware of the consequences of disobedience as well as the fact that they are being observed. The expectation is that BWCs will provide a neutral audio-visual record of events, allowing law enforcement agencies, courts, and communities to review interactions more accurately. It is anticipated that with the availability of such evidence, legal and disciplinary outcomes—such as supervisory sanctions or criminal penalties—will be based on clearer, verifiable accounts of incidents. Given that BWCs enhance the certainty of recorded evidence, they are expected to contribute to more transparent and accountable decision-making in law enforcement and judicial processes and help discourage wrongdoing on the part of both people and police. This is predicated on the idea that punishment is not as effective as the certainty of getting caught (Williams 2019; Stinson 2020; Choi et al. 2022).

5. Literature review

The general population is aware police are legally permitted to use force. The rightful use of force to defend officers and residents from potentially harmful individuals inside their community forms the basis of the police role in contemporary democracies (Bittner 1970). Nonetheless, police officers should not use more force than is required to apprehend individuals, keep incidents under control, and shield themselves and the public from harm. (Green et al. 2019). However, when force is applied excessively or without cause, it becomes problematic.

Reiss (1971) defined police brutality as any action that diminishes the status of the citizens; this includes limiting their freedom, harassing them, and using unwarranted and unwelcome force. Despite the broad nature of this term, it is important to understand Reiss considers brutality to require the use of physical force. When a police officer applies more force than necessary to manage a situation, it may be classified as excessive force, which can result from a misjudgment of the threat level, inadequate training, or procedural errors. However, when force is used with the intent to punish or inflict harm beyond securing compliance, it constitutes police brutality, which is a violation of civil rights. This excessive force can cause unnecessary injuries, trauma, or even death. It refers to the deliberate use of force by a police officer in situations involving individuals from marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as racial or sexual minorities. However, the appropriateness of the force used must be assessed within the context of the specific encounter, as not all applications of force in such situations constitute misconduct (Notes 2022; US Legal 2022). However, Alang et al. (2017) define police brutality as a range of behaviours going beyond the use of physical force to entail verbal abuse, psychological intimidation, and acts of emotional and sexual violence.

The adoption of body-worn cameras in policing has been driven by high-profile incidents involving law enforcement and the subsequent public demand for greater transparency and accountability. The deaths of Micheal Brown, Tamir Rice and other unarmed individuals at the hands of police officers have sparked widespread calls for reform and the implementation of BWCs to provide clear and objective recording of police citizen encounter (Symkla et al. 2016). These incidents highlighted the need for transparency in policing practices and led to a significant increase in the adoption of BWCs in police agencies globally.

Following the rise in adoption, the number of publications on BWCs increased noticeably; White (2019) noted that from 2012 to 2018, the number of empirical studies discussing various issues related to BWCs increased from five (White 2014) to seventy (Lum et al. 2019). By late December 2019, there were 119 studies examining the outcomes of BWC adoption including BWC trial evaluation or pilot testing police agencies (Guab and White 2020). These studies have explored various aspects of BWC use including their effect on police reactive and proactive behaviours, citizen attitudes, compliance and satisfaction of police as well as the impact on criminal investigation and police organisation (Cubit et al., 2016; Lum et al. 2019; Malm 2019; Maskaly et al. 2017). Moreover, Karch (2006) contend the motivation to innovate increases when problematic social conditions are identified. This is supported by several scholars' argument that high profile deadly force incidents involving police brutality and its activities have influenced national level politics and consequently the adoption of BWCs by police agencies (Braga et al. 2018; Lum et al. 2019). This environmental factor contributed to the widespread adoption of BWCs as a measure to address public concerns about police brutality and improve accountability.

Despite the positive impact of BWCs on transparency and accountability, research findings regarding their benefits remain mixed. A recent study by Nix et al (2020) found the average rate of officer-involved shootings was not a significant predictor of BWC adoption and use. Similarly, Kyle and White (2019) found no significant difference in the level of support for BWC adoption between officers with or without prior civilian complaints against the police. This also shows that motivational effects of external factors on BWC adoption remain unclear.

Research also indicates that police attitudes towards BWCs are not static and can change over time. Although some officers initially resist BWC adoption due to concerns about disciplinary actions (Keon and Willis 2020; Newel and Greidanus 2018), Studies have shown that officers who use BWCs are likely to receive fewer civilian complaints, as the presence of recorded footage can deter misconduct allegations and provide objective evidence in disputed encounters (Areil et al. 2015; Braga et al. 2018; White et al. 2018). Furthermore, BWC footage can

decrease civilian complaints for misconduct, excessive use of force and rudeness/discourtesy at the agency level (Keon et al. 2019). However, despite these benefits, concerns about the potential misuse of BWC footage for disciplinary purposes remain a significant barrier to widespread acceptance among officers.

6. Methodology

The social constructivist paradigm places importance on employing a qualitative methodology, as it focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality and the necessity of gaining a thorough comprehension of individuals' experiences (Saunders et al. 2009). Individuals are influenced by their interactions with the environment in which they're located and this tends to produce a subjectivist view of their surroundings and the people located therein. In light of the research objectives, this study adopts the social constructivist paradigm, which aligns with qualitative research. Consequently, a qualitative research approach is employed, utilising both primary and secondary data. The study analyses existing case studies, academic literature, and statistical data on the use of BWCs, alongside responses from a focus group discussion with the Ashanti Regional Command. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journals, providing additional context and scholarly insights. This analysis focuses on identifying patterns and themes related to the exonerations of officers through BWC footage and the subsequent impact on public perceptions and media accounts.

7. Discussion

7.1. Evaluating the impact of BWCs on the resolution of complaints against law enforcement officers in telling the story

Body worn cameras (BWCs) have been implemented widely in law enforcement agencies with the expectation that they will enhance transparency, accountability and trust between police and the public. One significant area of interest is the impact of BWCs on the resolution of complaints against officers, particularly in shaping the narrative of events. Studies indicate that BWCs can significantly influence the outcomes of such complaints by providing verifiable audio-visual evidence. The implementation of a BWC programme can be perceived as an effort by law enforcement agencies to demonstrate accountability and transparency, which may, in turn, enhance officers' confidence in the fairness of complaint investigations by reducing reliance on conflicting eyewitness accounts. Following the implementation of BWCs, complaints from the public against officers declined in a number of studies (Katz et al. 2015; Ariel et al. 2014; Mesa Police Department 2013).

The way law enforcement organizations handle complaints against their personnel has changed dramatically with the introduction of body-worn cameras, or BWCs. The Ghana Police Service's Ashanti Region has adopted advanced technologies, such as body-worn cameras (BWCs), which have resulted in a notable move toward modernized policing efforts aiming to improve public trust and operational efficiency. As a result, the community's confidence in the police has increased due to the obvious presence of BWCs and the awareness that encounters are being digitally both audio and visually recorded. Officers participating in the focus group discussion came to the conclusion that the Ashanti region's public is reassured by the police's commitment to fairness and accountability by the transparency these cameras provide.

Furthermore, in order to enhance police capabilities, the Ashanti Regional Command has implemented various technologies including BWCs. These cameras have played a crucial role in documenting police interactions with the public, serving as an essential tool for evidence collection, officer accountability, and the accurate reporting of events. It was discovered during targeted group conversations with police command personnel that these devices are worn by police when on patrol and during public engagements, recording every action/interaction which occurs. Nonetheless, this recording fulfills a number of functions, including offering proof in complaint investigations, holding officers responsible for their actions, and assisting with post-event investigations to enhance enforcement tactics.

Corroborating officer responses from the Ashanti region police command, BWC footage could be useful in prosecuting criminal cases or assessing civilian complaints against officers (Goodall 2007). The presence of BWCs, for example, was found to significantly reduce the number of complaints made against officers (Ariel et

al. 2016). This finding suggests that both officers and citizens may change their behaviour if they are aware that the events in which they are involved are being recorded. This phenomenon, which is sometimes called the "Citizen Effects," suggests that BWCs have the potential to discourage wrongdoing as well as baseless allegations (Ariel et al. 2016).

Another aspect identified in the focus group discussion was the impact it had on complaint resolution. Here, the deployment of BWCs had a profound impact on resolving complaints against law enforcement officers. The ability of BWC to provide objective, real-time footage of police encounters has been instrumental in resolving disputes. For instance, officer interviews revealed BWCs recordings were crucial in swiftly addressing complaints by providing clear and unbiased evidence that either support or refute the allegations made. This capability significantly reduces time and resources spent on investigating complaints as the video evidence often speaks for itself.

Those comments make it clear that BWCs offer impartial proof that is useful in settling conflicts. Jennings et al. (2015) stated that BWC video evidence can support officers' accounts of events, shielding them from unfounded allegations. According to some of the responses gathered, the introduction of BWCs was linked to a notable decrease in the number of complaints that needed in-depth investigations because the recording frequently offered convincing proof of what did and did not occur during a particular event.

Another key aspect highlighted in the focus group discussion was the impact of the use body worn cameras on social media platforms. According to the Ashanti Regional Command through a focus group discussion (FGD), "Social media platforms serve as a powerful tool for police departments to engage with the community, provide real-time updates and promote transparency. They enable law enforcement agencies to disseminate important information quickly such as updates on emergencies, traffic conditions and crime alerts which may help the public take necessary precautions and assist law enforcement efforts."

As a result, social media is essential for improving police transparency and community involvement. Community members are more inclined to cooperate with a police service they perceive as honest and responsible. Transparency and accountability in policing are essential for building public trust, which, in turn, enhances community cooperation (Vora et al., 2024). Even with these advantages, there are still a lot of challenges, especially with regard to the dissemination of false information.

False and misleading narratives can quickly gain traction on social media potentially damaging the reputation of the police officers and undermining public trust. In contentious encounters, social media can amplify one-sided accounts often lacking context or evidence necessary to provide full and accurate pictures of event; this is where BWC video can prove to be invaluable. It provides an objective, unedited account of police interactions, which can be critical in countering false narratives that may emerge on social media. By offering clear, factual evidence, BWCs help ensure that the true nature of police encounters is accurate and represented. The focus group revealed, in the Ashanti Region, BWCs have been instrumental in resolving complaints against officers by providing indisputable evidence that either corroborates or refutes accusations of misconduct. This capability not only helps to exonerate officers from false accusations but also reinforces the integrity and professionalism of the police force.

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) worn by police are sometimes perceived as a reaction to bystanders recording cops. According to retired Idaho Police Chief Scott Haug, there is "an important opportunity for the officers' side" to be captured by BWCs as more citizen videos of their contacts are released (Bock 2016; Smith 2019). Many police agencies' policies require officers to record all official acts in which they become involved and interactions with the individuals they encounter; this is not the case with the public.

BWCs can be used to document interactions between police officers and individuals they encounter during their duties, providing an objective record of events. This serves multiple purposes, including enhancing accountability, verifying officer conduct, and preserving evidence for investigative or judicial review. While behavioural changes have been associated with this new type of monitoring (Lum et al. 2019), officers' coping mechanisms with

continuous surveillance have received less attention. Officers are largely in favour of BWC adoption (Jennings et al. 2014), while there has been some reported pushback (Young and Ready 2015) and increased officer burnout (Adams and Mastracci 2019). Police usage of body cameras (BWCs) also affects civilians who could find it awkward to be videotaped in private or delicate circumstances (Saulnier et al. 2022). As White et al. (2019) highlights, the impact of BWCs can be influenced by factors such as police governing their use, the quality of the footage and the willingness of departments to use the footage transparently even on social media platforms. Some departments may face challenges in maintaining consistent use of BWCs, leading to gaps in the evidence available for complaint resolutions.

7.2. Identifying and examining the challenges of using BWCs to ensure accountability and transparency.

The integration of body worn camera in law enforcement is seen as a promising measure to curb police brutality and impunity enhancing police narrative by providing an objective record of interactions. However, the Ashanti Regional command of the Ghana Police Service through a focus group discussion also identify several challenges and future direction necessary to optimise the use of BWCs.

A primary challenge identified is the balance between effective policing and respecting privacy and civil liberty. Surveillance tools like BWCs raise concerns about privacy and security hence must be used responsibly to avoid infringing on individual rights. Empirical research has polled different sections of the public to find out about their worries about BWCs and privacy. Research on how crime victims view BWCs has shown that they have reservations about having their interactions with police recorded and having video footage managed (Saulnier et al. 2022). "Victims" perceptions of and experiences with BWCs should not be assumed to mirror those of the general public," as Saulnier and colleagues (2022, 305) point out. Victims who are recorded may risk experiencing re-victimisation, not only through their interactions with the criminal court system but also during their initial encounters with law enforcement. The presence of BWCs can be particularly sensitive in cases involving trauma, as victims may feel exposed or reluctant to report incidents if they believe their statements and demeanour will be permanently recorded. Consequently, the potential psychological impact on victims should be carefully considered when evaluating modifications to police procedures and BWC policies.

According to departmental policies and professional best practices, data collected or recorded by BWCs—particularly sensitive interactions—is secured against unauthorised access and breaches. The management of BWC footage is subject to strict guidelines that regulate its storage, access, and dissemination, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. Ensuring the privacy of officers and the security of operational details is an important aspect of maintaining the integrity of police operations. However, this must be balanced with the need for transparency and public accountability, particularly in cases where BWC footage is used for oversight, evidence collection, or judicial proceedings. The proliferation of BWCs in police forces has sparked numerous discussions about privacy protection. Although BWC proponents contend that these devices will increase police accountability, the recording of officers' actions was soon found to pose a privacy risk to the public. While people typically have lower expectations for privacy in public places, this "...doesn't mean, however, that they should expect that every encounter with the police will be part of a permanent video record, accessible to anyone who wishes to obtain it through an open records law," Blitz (2015, 2). To promote strong community-police relations, it is equally necessary to consider the opinions of individuals who are being recorded by police personnel. Prior research has demonstrated that privacy issues continue to be prevalent across several demographic groups (Saulnier et al. 2022; Taylor and Lee 2019).

While BWCs have shown promise in addressing conduct allegations, their role in how police document their activities and actions is more complex and fraught with challenges. One major challenge is the selective activation of BWCs. As highlighted by Lum et al. (2020) officers may have discretion over when to activate their cameras, which can result in critical incidents going unrecorded. This selective activation undermines the potential of BWCs to provide a comprehensive account of police interactions. Another significant challenge is the interpretation and use of BWC footage. According to Harris (2020), footage can be subject to varying interpretations potentially influenced by biases. For example, the angle of the camera and the context in which a recording is made can significantly influence how footage is perceived by different stakeholders, including juries, the media, and the

public. This phenomenon, known as Video Camera Perspective Bias (VCPB), suggests that recordings may not always provide an entirely neutral or comprehensive account of an event. For instance, footage captured from an officer's body camera may emphasise the officer's perspective, potentially obscuring critical contextual details, while bystander recordings may present only a partial view of the interaction. This subjectivity can lead to disputes over the interpretation of footage, raising concerns about its role in ensuring accountability and the potential for misrepresentation in legal and disciplinary proceedings. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial when assessing the evidentiary value of BWC footage and its implications for transparency and justice.

Additionally, there are concerns about the storage, management and accessibility of BWC data. Storing vast amount of video data is expensive and technically challenging and ensuring secure yet accessible storage is critical. McClure et al. (2017) emphasise that inconsistent data management practices can lead to loss of crucial footage or restricted access for oversight bodies, thereby limiting the effectiveness of BWCs in holding officers accountable. Hence, the Ashanti Regional Command highlighted the need for ongoing investment in infrastructure to support the continuous operations and upgrading to BWCs. Ensuring that all data is collected is securely stored and accessible only to authorised personnel was vital in maintaining integrity of the footage.

Also, there is the issue of police culture, and resistance to BWCs. As shown by Gaub et al. (2016) some officers may view BWCs as tools of surveillance rather than instruments of accountability, leading to resistance or reluctance in their proper use. This cultural resistance can diminish the potential impact of BWCs in promoting transparency and curbing impunity. While BWCs hold significant promise, their successful implementation requires addressing some of these challenges. As technology evolves so must strategies for its integration ensuring that BWCs serve as an effective tool for justice and community partnership.

8. Recommendations

Some recommendations were presented by officers, which are addressed below. First, it was recommended that robust policies be established to ensure the proper and legally compliant use of BWCs. These policies should align with professional best practices and relevant national and international legal frameworks, governing aspects such as activation protocols, data storage, access control, retention periods, and permissible use in legal and disciplinary proceedings. By ensuring that BWCs are deployed transparently and ethically, such policies can help balance law enforcement objectives with privacy considerations and public accountability. While BWCs have demonstrated considerable benefits in resolving complaints and building trust, their effectiveness is contingent on consistent use and proper data management. Challenges such as selective activation of cameras, inconsistent policies and data storage issues can still undermine the potential benefits of BWCs in helping law enforcement agencies documenting their activities and actions. Therefore, there must be continuous investment in training officers on the appropriate deployment, operation, and management of BWCs, following established best practices and legal frameworks. Training should cover essential aspects such as when and how to activate BWCs, ethical considerations in recording interactions, data protection protocols, and compliance with national laws and institutional policies. Additionally, ensuring robust data management practices—such as secure storage, controlled access, and retention policies in accordance with regulatory requirements—is essential to fully realise the advantages of this technology. Agencies can obtain guidance on proper BWC usage from international policing standards, such as those outlined by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and country-specific law enforcement regulations. Furthermore, there has to be more investment in infrastructure, thus, ensuring that the necessary technological support systems are in place to mitigate issues related to power supply and connectivity because regular maintenance and updates will keep the technology current and secured. More importantly, to address privacy and security concerns, comprehensive regulations must be implemented in line with international best practices, data protection laws, and law enforcement accountability frameworks. These regulations should clearly define the scope of BWC use, including activation protocols, data retention policies, access controls, and permissible usage in legal and investigative contexts. Establishing such regulatory frameworks ensures that BWC footage is handled securely, minimising risks related to unauthorised access, misuse, or breaches of privacy rights. Additionally, public awareness initiatives can enhance understanding and trust in the technology by clarifying how BWC recordings are used and protected.

9. Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the role of Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) in providing an objective account to counter claims of police brutality or impunity. By focusing on how BWCs exonerate officers from false accusations and provide a balanced narrative in contentious encounters, this research sought to fill a gap in current literature that predominantly emphasizes accountability. The findings from the Ashanti Regional Command of the Ghana Police Service highlighted the significant impact of BWCs on the resolution of complaints against law enforcement officers providing clear, unbiased evidence that helps in swiftly addressing complaints and building public trust through transparency. However, several challenges including privacy concerns, technology misuse, infrastructure needs and footage interpretation concerns must be addressed to optimise the use of BWCs. Therefore, by addressing these challenges through robust policies, continuous training and investment infrastructure, BWCs can effectively enhance accountability and transparency in law enforcement with ethical considerations and practical constraints.

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