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Research Article

The Role of Body-Worn Cameras in Shaping the Public Image and Credibility of the Philippine National Police

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ABSTRACT

This study examined The Role of Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs) in Shaping the Public Image and Credibility of the Philippine National Police (PNP), focusing on their impact on transparency, accountability, public trust, professionalism, and integrity. Conducted in Quezon City under Police Station 7, the study employed a quantitative research design involving 524 respondents—125 police officers and 399 community members selected using Slovin's formula. Data were collected through validated survey questionnaires administered both in-person and online during the first quarter of 2025. Findings revealed that respondents strongly agreed that BWCs enhanced transparency ($x=3.65$), accountability ($x=3.60$), public trust ($x=3.59$), professionalism ($x=3.55$), and integrity ($x=3.55$) within the PNP. The results indicated that BWCs promoted ethical conduct, reduced misconduct, and strengthened public confidence in law enforcement. However, challenges such as limited funding, inadequate training, and data management issues hindered optimal implementation. Despite these barriers, 91% of respondents expressed strong support for the continued use of BWCs in all police operations. A statistically significant difference ($p = 0.008$) was identified between police officers' and community members' perceptions, indicating that their differing roles and experiences shaped how they viewed BWC effectiveness. Overall, the study affirmed that body-worn cameras are critical tools for strengthening the PNP's transparency, credibility, and institutional integrity.

Keywords: *Body-worn cameras, Transparency, Accountability, Public trust, Professionalism, Integrity, Philippine National Police, Credibility*

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Introduction

In recent years, law enforcement agencies have increasingly adopted body worn cameras (BWCs) as a strategy to enhance police transparency, accountability, and public trust. BWCs are compact, wearable devices that capture audio and video during police interactions, aimed at encouraging ethical conduct among officers and offering reliable documentation of police activities (Lum et al., 2019). Various countries worldwide, including the Philippines, have begun to view BWCs as a crucial element of police reforms in response to public calls for greater transparency and effective crime prevention.

The worldwide implementation of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in law enforcement has been fueled by an increasing public demand for transparency, accountability, and trust in police practices. In nations like the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, BWCs have demonstrated positive outcomes in enhancing police conduct and boosting public trust. Meta-analyses indicate that BWCs can lead to a decrease in use-of-force incidents and citizen complaints, while also improving the public's perception of police legitimacy (Koen et al., 2023; Lum et al., 2019). These results highlight the importance of BWCs as a technological resource not only for recording police interactions but also for influencing public perceptions of law enforcement agencies.

In the United States, body-worn cameras (BWCs) received significant attention following the Ferguson incident in 2014, which ignited nationwide protests and calls for enhanced police transparency. Since that time, numerous studies have investigated the impact of BWCs on public perception. For example, Lum et al. (2019) discovered that communities where officers consistently utilized BWCs experienced higher levels of satisfaction and trust in law enforcement. Likewise, in the United Kingdom, the Metropolitan Police Service has reported a decrease in stop-and-search complaints and an increase in public approval ratings after the introduction of BWC programs (Ariel et al., 2020). These global examples demonstrate that BWCs can function not only as tools for accountability but also as means to restore and uphold police credibility.

Even though BWC implementation has largely resulted in positive outcomes overseas, it is accompanied by various challenges. Issues such as inconsistent activation, concerns regarding data privacy, and limited access to footage have raised doubts about the real effectiveness of BWCs in enhancing transparency. Still, the experiences from abroad provide valuable lessons for developing nations like the Philippines, where the relationship between Philippine National Police and the community is often fraught.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has initiated the use of body-worn cameras in its operation through various policy measures, reinforcing its dedication to transparency and professionalism. As stated in the PNP Police Operational Procedures (POP) Manual (2021), the implementation of BWCs is required during essential operations like arrests, searches, and checkpoints to maintain operational integrity and comply with legal standards. Nevertheless, despite the advancement represented by BWC deployment, concerns persist regarding the impact of this technology on public perception, particularly in light of ongoing issues related to police abuse, misconduct, and a lack of public trust.

In Metro Manila, certain police districts, including Quezon City and Manila, have initiated pilot programs for Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs), which have elicited varied reactions from the community. Some residents view this initiative positively, seeing it as a step towards modern and accountable policing, while others express doubts regarding its regular application and effectiveness. Local research and reports point out logistical issues, such as insufficient training and maintenance, yet they also observe a gradual enhancement in officer behavior and public engagement when BWCs are prominently displayed (Manila Bulletin, 2022). This study aims to explore how the implementation of BWCs at both local and national levels influences the public perception and trust in the Philippine National Police (PNP), offering insights into the larger role of technology in transforming law enforcement practices in the Philippines.

This research investigates how body-worn cameras influence the public perception and trustworthiness of the PNP. Given that credibility and public confidence are crucial for effective policing, it is important to evaluate if BWCs genuinely enhance the police force's image. Research indicates that the visible deployment of BWCs can result in fewer complaints and better officer behavior (Koen et al., 2023; White & Gaub, 2020). By examining the effects of BWCs from the perspectives of both law enforcement officers and the community, this study seeks to offer evidence-based suggestions for improving the institutional reputation and accountability frameworks within the Philippine law enforcement system.

Statement of the Problem

The study aims to conduct an assessment on the role of body-worn cameras in shaping the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police (PNP). By doing so, the researcher will be able to identify the extent to which body-worn camera implementation influences public perceptions, trust, and confidence in the PNP.

Specifically, it tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of effectiveness of BWC on the image of PNP in terms of:
 - 1.1 Transparency
 - 1.2 Accountability
 - 1.3 Public Trust
 - 1.4 Professionalism
 - 1.5 Integrity
2. What are the challenges encountered by PNP officers in the implementation of body-worn cameras in relation to their role in shaping the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police?
3. Does the public support the continued use of body-worn cameras by PNP officers in all of their operations to enhance the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police?
4. Is there a significant difference between the perception of the respondents on the impact of body-worn cameras in shaping the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police based on the above-mentioned variables?

5. Based on the findings of the study, what policy may be proposed to enhance the effective use of body-worn cameras among PNP personnel to improve the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police?

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive research design to examine the role of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in shaping the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police (PNP). As explained by Babbie (2020), quantitative research involves the numerical analysis of data collected through surveys and questionnaires, which was used in this study to gather respondents' perceptions on BWCs. The descriptive method, as defined by Sirisilla (2023), enables researchers to present an accurate picture of a population's characteristics and behaviors. This approach was appropriate for identifying the effectiveness of BWCs in promoting transparency, accountability, public trust, professionalism, and integrity, as well as for determining the challenges faced in their implementation.

Research Locale and Population

This study consisted of two groups of respondents. The first group included 125 police officers from Police Station 7 (PS-7) of the Quezon City Police District, selected from a total population of 180 officers. The second group comprised 399 community members out of 116,827 residents within the station's jurisdiction. The sample sizes for both groups were determined using Slovin's formula. Data were collected through survey questionnaires administered either face-to-face in respondents' homes or preferred locations, or through online submissions via Google Forms. Data collection sites were identified by the researcher to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the information gathered. The study was conducted during the first quarter of 2025.

Research Instrument

This study employed a self-made survey questionnaire, which was patterned after the existing guidelines outlined in the PNP POP

Manual 2021. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and underwent validation by experts in the field to ensure that both police officers and community members could clearly understand and answer the questions, and that the instrument met the required standards. Some items were revised to suit the specific objectives of the present study. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. Part 1 gathered information about the respondents, including their age, gender, and respondent category. Part 2 assessed the level of effectiveness of body-worn cameras (BWCs) on the image of the Philippine National Police. A

4-point Likert scale was used, where 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree. Part 3 identified the challenges encountered by PNP officers in the implementation of BWCs in relation to their role in shaping the public image and credibility of the organization. A

4-point Likert scale was used, where 4 = Very Challenging, 3 = Challenging, 2 = Slightly Challenging, 1 = Not Challenging. Finally, Part 4 determined the level of support for the continued use of BWCs by PNP officers in all of their operations.

Results and Discussion

1. The combined assessment of both respondent groups showed that the indicator "The use of body-worn cameras enhances transparency in PNP operations." achieved a highest weighted mean of 3.74, while the overall computed mean for all indicators was 3.65, which was verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. This implied that both police officers and the community recognized BWCs as valuable instruments for reinforcing transparency in police conduct. The findings suggested that the implementation of BWCs strengthened the PNP's image as a transparent and responsible institution. By providing reliable and objective records of police activities, BWCs served as safeguards against misconduct and as tools for verifying proper procedures during operations. This transparency, in turn, enhanced the credibility of the police force and helped bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community

2. It showed the overall assessment of both groups of respondents. Indicator "The implementation of body-worn cameras strengthens the sense of personal responsibility among PNP officers" obtained the highest overall weighted mean of 3.63, while indicator "Body-worn cameras make it easier to review and evaluate PNP officers' behavior during operations" had the lowest weighted mean of 3.58. The computed total weighted mean of 3.60 was verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. This implied that both the police officers and the community acknowledged the significant role of body-worn cameras in improving accountability and promoting responsible conduct within the police force. The findings suggested that the use of BWCs encouraged officers to adhere to proper procedures, minimized misconduct, and provided an objective record of events during police operations. This increased level of accountability in the PNP, as transparency in law enforcement activities was visibly demonstrated through video evidence.
3. The combined assessment of both groups showed that the indicator "The use of body-worn cameras improves the public's trust in the PNP" achieved the highest overall mean of 3.67, while the lowest overall mean of 3.54 was recorded for the indicator "Recordings from body-worn cameras help assure the public that PNP personnel act fairly." The overall computed mean of 3.59, interpreted as Strongly Agree, suggested that both groups consistently viewed BWCs as an effective measure for improving the public trust of the PNP. The results implied that the presence and proper utilization of BWCs played a vital role in strengthening the bond between the police and the community. Through the recording of real-time encounters, BWCs provided objective evidence of police activities, thereby reducing doubts and allegations of misconduct.
4. The combined overall assessment of both respondent groups showed that the indicator "Body-worn cameras help PNP officers demonstrate discipline and proper behavior in public settings" and "The use of body-worn cameras reflects the PNP's

commitment to upholding professional standards at all times." achieved the highest weighted mean of 3.59, while the indicator "The use of body-worn cameras promotes more respectful interactions between PNP officers and the public" received the lowest weighted mean of 3.43, still interpreted as Strongly Agree. The overall computed mean of 3.55, verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree, reflected that both groups consistently recognized BWCs as essential tools that promoted professionalism among police officers. This finding implied that the integration of BWCs in police operations positively influenced the professional image of the PNP by encouraging officers to uphold the standards of conduct prescribed in the PNP Manual. The use of BWCs not only improved behavioral discipline during field operations but also projected a strong message of institutional commitment to transparency and professionalism. This helped reduce instances of misconduct and promoted fair treatment of citizens during law enforcement encounters, ultimately improving public confidence in the PNP.

5. The overall assessment of both groups of respondents, indicator "Body-worn cameras promote integrity and ethical behavior as core values of the PNP" and indicator "The implementation of body-worn cameras reinforces the PNP's commitment to ethical policing and integrity" shared the highest weighted mean of 3.59, interpreted as Strongly Agree, while indicator "Body-worn cameras help ensure that PNP officers conduct themselves with honesty and integrity" obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.43, interpreted as Agree. The overall computed weighted mean of 3.55, interpreted as Strongly Agree, implied that both police officers and community members recognized BWCs as instrumental in promoting the integrity of PNP. This finding implied that the use of body-worn cameras positively influenced the PNP's integrity. The data suggested that BWCs served as a deterrent against unethical conduct and corrupt practices, while also strengthening public trust through documented transparency and fairness in police activities. Furthermore, BWCs encouraged officers to adhere to established ethical standards and reinforced the institution's commitment to clean and credible policing.

6. The overall computed mean of 3.51, verbally interpreted as Very Challenging, suggested that despite the recognized potential of BWCs to strengthen public confidence in police integrity, practical issues related to funding, training, and data management posed significant obstacles to their full implementation. Financial and logistical constraints limited the capacity of the PNP to provide adequate devices, maintenance, and storage systems, echoing the findings of Lum et al. (2020), who emphasized that sustainable funding and infrastructure are critical for successful BWC deployment. Overall, these findings implied that while BWCs had a positive impact on promoting accountability and shaping the credibility of the PNP, addressing the challenges in resources, training, and privacy was essential to ensure their long-term effectiveness and public trust. Strengthening institutional policies, technical support, and ethical frameworks for data handling would not only enhance transparency but also sustain the integrity and professionalism of law enforcement operations in the Philippines.

7. The assessment of the two groups of respondents Police Officers and the Community regarding their support for the continuous use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in all police operations of the Philippine National Police (PNP). From the table above, it was revealed that out of 524 total respondents, 479 (91%) answered Yes, expressing strong support for the continued implementation of BWCs in police activities, while only 45 (9%) responded No, indicating minimal opposition. The high percentage of affirmative responses from both police officers and community members reflected a shared recognition of the importance of BWCs in ensuring transparency, accountability, and professionalism within the PNP. Overall, the high level of

support from both the police and the community underscored the vital role of BWCs in fostering mutual trust and confidence. The continued use of BWCs in all police operations was therefore not only a technological advancement but also a symbolic commitment of the PNP toward upholding transparency, accountability, and integrity in its service to the Filipino people.

8. The results revealed a significant difference in the assessment of the two groups of respondent's police officers and community members regarding the variables in sub-

problem 1, as indicated by a p-value of 0.008 from the t-test. Since the significance value was less than 0.05, it suggested that the differences in their ratings were statistically significant, meaning that police officers and the community perceived the implementation of body-worn cameras differently. This implied that their experiences, roles, and perspectives influenced how they assessed the effectiveness of body-worn cameras in shaping the image and credibility of the Philippine National Police.

T-Test of Difference.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
PO	Equal Variances assumed	5.019	.030	-2.786	48	.008	-.20640	.07408	-.35536	-.05744
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.786	39.975	.008	-.20640	.07408	-.35613	-.05667

Conclusion

Based on the results and summary of findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The assessment of the role of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in shaping the public image and credibility of the Philippine National Police (PNP) across various indicators transparency, accountability, public trust, professionalism, and integrity revealed a generally high level of effectiveness as perceived by both police officers and community respondents. The results consistently showed that both groups strongly agreed that BWCs enhanced transparency in police operations, strengthened accountability among officers, and promoted professionalism and ethical conduct. These findings indicated that BWCs served as reliable tools in improving the credibility and integrity of the PNP by fostering openness, responsibility, and ethical behavior during law enforcement operations.

The study further concluded that while the implementation of BWCs significantly improved the PNP's public image, certain challenges were encountered. These included issues related to funding, technical training, equipment maintenance, and data management. Such obstacles limited the optimal use of BWCs in all police operations. Nonetheless, the positive impact of BWCs on accountability and transparency underscored the importance of addressing these logistical and administrative challenges to ensure the sustainability of the program. This aligned with Lum et al. (2020), who emphasized that continuous investment in training and infrastructure is vital for the long-term success of BWC initiatives.

The findings also showed that both police officers and community members overwhelmingly supported the continued use of body-worn cameras in all PNP operations. The 91% affirmative response rate from both groups

reflected a shared belief in the importance of BWCs as instruments for ensuring transparency, enhancing public confidence, and upholding the credibility of the police institution. This strong public support demonstrated that BWCs were not merely technological tools but also symbols of institutional commitment to ethical policing and accountability.

Finally, a significant difference was found between the assessments of police officers and community respondents regarding the impact of BWCs on the public image and credibility of the PNP, as shown by the t-test result with a p-value of 0.008. This indicated that while both groups recognized the positive role of BWCs, their perspectives varied due to differing experiences and levels of engagement with law enforcement practices. Despite these variations, the overall conclusion confirmed that the use of body-worn cameras contributed meaningfully to improving transparency, accountability, and public trust, thereby strengthening the overall credibility and image of the Philippine National Police.

Recommendations

In relation to the findings and conclusions of the study on The Role of Body-Worn Cameras in Shaping the Public Image and Credibility of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the following recommendations were formulated:

Conduct continuous training and orientation programs for all PNP personnel regarding the proper usage, handling, and management of body-worn cameras (BWCs). These trainings should emphasize ethical standards, data privacy laws, and protocols for camera activation and deactivation to ensure consistent and transparent use of the technology during operations.

Develop and implement clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing the use of BWCs in all police operations. These SOPs should include detailed guidelines on storage, data access, and review processes to protect both the rights of officers and the public, while maintaining the integrity of the evidence collected.

Allocate sufficient budget and logistical support for the maintenance, upgrading, and expansion of the BWC program. The PNP, in

coordination with national and local government units, should ensure sustainable funding for the procurement of additional devices, establishment of secure data storage systems, and provision of technical support for long-term implementation.

Establish an independent monitoring and evaluation body within the PNP to regularly assess the effectiveness of BWCs in promoting transparency, accountability, and professionalism. This unit should ensure that BWC footage is reviewed objectively and that the technology is used for legitimate operational and evidentiary purposes only.

Enhance public awareness campaigns that inform citizens about the purpose and benefits of BWCs in police work. Strengthening communication between the PNP and the community would foster mutual understanding and further increase public confidence in law enforcement transparency and accountability.

Integrate the BWC policy and ethical use modules into police education and training programs at the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) and other PNP training institutions. Embedding BWC principles early in training would help instill a culture of professionalism, honesty, and integrity among future law enforcers.

Promote inter-agency collaboration between the PNP, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to improve data security, storage capacity, and compliance with existing laws such as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Such cooperation would help establish an efficient digital management system for BWC footage.

Encourage continued public participation and oversight by involving community leaders, civil society organizations, and human rights advocates in consultations and evaluation of BWC implementation. Their feedback would provide valuable insights for policy refinement and further strengthen public trust in the police force.

Institutionalize periodic assessment and research on the long-term effects of BWCs on police behavior, accountability, and public perception. This would enable the PNP to identify best practices and address emerging

challenges in the evolving landscape of law enforcement technology.

Ensure transparency and accountability in BWC footage utilization by adopting a standardized reporting mechanism that documents instances where BWC recordings lead to disciplinary actions, commendations, or policy reforms within the PNP. This measure would reinforce the image of the PNP as a credible, ethical, and people-centered law enforcement institution.

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