



BODY-WORN CAMERA PROTOCOL COMPLIANCE, EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION POLICE OFFICE

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra31493>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra31493

ABSTRACT

Body-worn cameras have become an important accountability technology in contemporary policing, but their value depends on more than the capacity to record police–citizen encounters. The usefulness of recorded footage is shaped by the conditions under which officers comply with recording protocols, the organizational and technological systems that support implementation, and the procedures through which digital recordings are preserved, authenticated, evaluated, and used in the justice process. This study examined the implementation of body-worn camera protocols within the National Capital Region Police Office, focusing on operational compliance, implementation challenges, digital evidence management, prosecutorial utilization, and accountability. A qualitative research approach using Narrative Inquiry was employed to examine the lived and professional experiences of police personnel and prosecutors. Fifteen purposively selected participants, comprising ten police personnel and 5 prosecutors representing the five police districts of the National Capital Region Police Office, participated in semi-structured Key Informant Interviews. The narratives were analyzed thematically through the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space of temporality, sociality, and place. Five overarching themes emerged. First, compliance developed from an initial perception of the camera as a procedural requirement toward recognition of its evidentiary and accountability value. Second, operational pressures, equipment limitations, and post-recording demands constrained consistent implementation. Third, the evidentiary value of recordings depended on systematic documentation, secure storage, metadata preservation, controlled access, and chain-of-custody practices. Fourth, prosecutors regarded BWC footage as valuable for case assessment and corroboration, while emphasizing authentication and police–prosecutor coordination. Fifth, participants viewed BWC footage as a mechanism for fact reconstruction, procedural accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. The study concluded that sustainable BWC implementation requires integrated governance rather than technology acquisition alone. The findings informed the Proposed Integrated Body-Worn Camera Governance Framework, which links operational governance, organizational and technology support, digital evidence integrity, prosecutorial integration, and accountability-oriented continuous improvement.

KEYWORDS: Body-Worn Camera, Narrative Inquiry, Digital Evidence, Accountability, Prosecutors

INTRODUCTION

Body-worn camera (BWC) implementation has become an increasingly important component of contemporary policing because recorded police–citizen encounters can provide an observable account of events that may later be examined by supervisors, investigators, prosecutors, courts, oversight bodies, and other authorized stakeholders. Yet the presence of a camera does not, by itself, establish accountability. A recording becomes meaningful within the criminal justice system only when it is generated under appropriate protocols, preserved without compromising its integrity, made available through legitimate access procedures, and interpreted alongside other evidence. The central issue is therefore not simply whether police personnel possess or use BWCs, but how the technology is incorporated into operational practice and how its outputs move from a recorded encounter to reliable digital evidence.

International research has consistently treated BWCs as both recording technologies and institutional mechanisms with implications for police behavior, accountability, evidence documentation, and public confidence. White and Malm (2020) and Wright and Houston (2021) emphasized the value of BWC

recordings as contemporaneous documentation of police–citizen encounters that can support investigations and subsequent review. Lum et al. (2020), in a systematic review, likewise situated BWCs within broader questions of police behavior, complaints, accountability, and use of force. Ariel et al. (2020) examined the relationship between BWC implementation, use of force, and citizen complaints, while Braga et al. (2018) demonstrated through a randomized controlled trial that BWC use can influence police activity and police–citizen encounters. These studies indicate that BWC effects are neither purely technological nor uniform; they are mediated by organizational rules, officer behavior, operational context, and the conditions under which cameras are deployed.

Other scholarship highlights the importance of institutional and organizational conditions. Young and Puckett (2020), Putranto (2022), and White, Todak, and Gaub (2024) examined behavioral and professional implications of BWC use, indicating that recording may influence officer conduct and perceptions of professional responsibility. Headley, Baker, and Kang (2025), based on an analysis of 697 police agencies, further showed that the effects of BWC adoption may vary according to



operational context and the degree of officer discretion. These findings challenge a technologically deterministic view in which the mere installation of cameras is expected to produce accountability automatically. Rather, BWC implementation must be understood as an organizational intervention embedded in discretionary police work.

Organizational readiness is similarly central to sustainable implementation. Studies emphasized training, supervision, organizational culture, technological acceptance, and administrative support. Their collective perspective suggests that policy compliance depends on whether organizations can translate formal requirements into practical routines. In high-risk police operations, officers must simultaneously manage safety, tactical decision-making, communication, evidence collection, and documentation. Consequently, compliance can be affected by the availability and reliability of equipment, the clarity of operational guidance, supervisory support, and the ability of the organization to respond to technical or procedural difficulties.

Privacy and information governance add another layer of complexity. Pickering (2020), Miranda (2021), Iliadis et al. (2024), and Poirier, Charbonneau, and Boivin (2024) emphasized the need for rules governing storage, access, disclosure, retention, and protection of BWC recordings. The same recording that can increase transparency may contain sensitive information involving victims, witnesses, suspects, police officers, and members of the public. Effective governance must therefore reconcile the public and institutional value of recorded information with legitimate privacy and data-protection interests.

The evidentiary dimension is particularly important to the present study. A BWC file does not automatically become reliable legal evidence merely because it exists. Its evidentiary value depends on the circumstances of recording, continuity of the file, documentation, preservation, authentication, access control, and chain of custody. Poirier et al. (2024) demonstrated the relevance of BWC footage to court-related processes while also showing that its use depends on how recordings are handled and incorporated into formal justice procedures. White and Malm (2020) similarly emphasized that institutional policies surrounding recording, preservation, and courtroom presentation shape the evidentiary contribution of BWCs. The distinction between recording and evidence is therefore fundamental: technology captures information, whereas governance determines whether that information remains credible and usable.

In the Philippine setting, BWC implementation is situated within a developing legal and institutional framework. The Supreme Court Rules on the Use of Body-Worn Cameras in the Execution of Warrants, A.M. No. 21-06-08-SC, established requirements concerning the use of BWCs and alternative recording devices during warrant execution. Philippine National Police policies and Department of the Interior and Local Government issuances likewise provide direction concerning activation, recording, operational compliance, and evidence handling. The Philippine National Police Body-Worn Camera Guidelines (2021) and related operational policies frame BWC use as part of lawful and accountable police practice. The Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management

Investigative Directive No. 2024-002 further emphasizes the proper chain of custody of recorded data from BWCs and alternative recording devices used during arrests and searches.

Local empirical studies have identified both benefits and implementation constraints. Aguilar (2021) and Buan (2021) emphasized adherence to BWC protocols during arrests, searches, and warrant implementation. Bolledo (2021), Caliwan (2021), and the Philippine News Agency (2021) associated BWC deployment with police modernization, transparency, and public confidence. Dela Peña et al. (2022), Abalos et al. (2024), Aquino et al. (2024), Balangan et al. (2024), and Dingrat et al. (2024) identified issues involving equipment availability, technological reliability, personnel readiness, resources, documentation, and institutional support. Gando et al. (2023) and Dolo et al. (2023) further showed that BWC implementation has implications for perceived fairness, transparency, privacy, and accountability.

Although these studies provide an important foundation, the literature remains comparatively fragmented across individual dimensions of BWC implementation. Existing research has examined police behavior, public perceptions, technology utilization, operational compliance, privacy, and accountability, but fewer studies have examined how these dimensions interact across the full evidentiary pathway—from frontline recording, through digital evidence management, to prosecutorial evaluation and accountability. This limitation is particularly relevant in the NCRPO, where police operations occur across five police districts and involve varied operational settings. The present study therefore addressed a knowledge gap concerning how police personnel and prosecutors experience and understand BWC implementation as an interconnected institutional process.

Theoretical Framework

This study was primarily anchored in **Procedural Justice Theory** of Tyler (1990), which posits that public trust, cooperation, and perceptions of police legitimacy are influenced by fairness, transparency, respect, and accountability in police–citizen interactions. The theory provides a relevant foundation for examining **Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs) as accountability mechanisms**, as recorded encounters can promote transparency, facilitate review of police conduct, and strengthen institutional legitimacy.

The study was further supported by complementary perspectives addressing technology use, evidence management, and organizational implementation. **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** (Davis, 1989) explains how perceived usefulness and ease of use influence police personnel’s acceptance and utilization of BWC technology, including their willingness to comply with established protocols. The **Evidence Integrity Perspective** provides a basis for examining the reliability and legal value of BWC recordings through proper documentation, preservation, authentication, secure storage, and chain-of-custody procedures. **Structural Contingency Theory** further explains how effective BWC implementation depends on organizational readiness and the alignment of policies, supervision, resources, and operational practices.



Together, these perspectives provide an integrated lens for examining BWC implementation: **Procedural Justice Theory** addresses transparency, legitimacy, and accountability; **TAM** addresses technology acceptance and compliance; the **Evidence Integrity Perspective** addresses the management and reliability of digital evidence; and **Structural Contingency Theory** addresses the organizational conditions supporting effective implementation. Collectively, they guided the examination of BWC protocol compliance, evidence management, and accountability within the NCRPO.

Significance of Study

The study contributes to criminological scholarship by conceptualizing BWC implementation as an institutional accountability process that connects frontline police practice with digital evidence governance and prosecutorial decision-making. For the Philippine National Police and the NCRPO, the findings identify organizational, operational, technological, and evidence-management conditions that can guide policy refinement, training, supervision, equipment support, and monitoring. For prosecutors and other justice-sector practitioners, the findings clarify the conditions under which BWC footage can become a credible and usable evidentiary resource. For policymakers and oversight bodies, the study highlights the need to align technology deployment with accountability mechanisms, data governance, and interagency coordination. For communities, the findings underscore the potential of properly governed recordings to support transparent review of police encounters and protect the interests of both civilians and police personnel.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to examine the implementation of Body-Worn Camera protocols within the NCRPO through the lived and professional experiences of police personnel and prosecutors.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. To determine the nature of NCRPO personnel's compliance with BWC protocols during critical incidents;
2. To investigate the operational, technological, and organizational challenges encountered in implementing BWC protocols;
3. To examine professional practices concerning the management, preservation, and integrity of BWC recordings as digital evidence;
4. To explore how BWC footage is utilized within prosecutorial processes; and
5. To interpret the shared perceptions of police personnel and prosecutors regarding the evidentiary value of BWC footage and its contribution to accountability, transparency, and justice, and develop a findings-based governance framework.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **qualitative research method using Narrative Inquiry** to explore the professional experiences of selected police personnel and prosecutors regarding Body-

Worn Camera (BWC) protocol compliance, evidence management, and accountability within the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO). Narrative Inquiry was appropriate because the study sought to understand how participants experienced, interpreted, and reflected on BWC-related practices within their professional contexts. Consistent with Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the narratives were examined in terms of temporality, sociality, and place, considering the development of experiences over time, interpersonal and professional relationships, and the organizational and operational settings in which they occurred.

Data were collected through **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** using a researcher-developed semi-structured narrative interview guide. Participants were purposively selected based on their direct knowledge and experience in BWC implementation, police operations, evidence management, and prosecutorial processes. With informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and reviewed for accuracy.

The narratives were analyzed through repeated reading and systematic examination of participants' accounts to identify significant experiences, challenges, practices, contextual conditions, and recurring meanings. Individual narratives were considered both independently and across participants while maintaining their contextual and experiential distinctiveness. This approach provided an in-depth understanding of BWC protocol compliance, evidence management, accountability practices, and their implications for police and prosecutorial processes within the NCRPO.

Fifteen purposively selected participants participated in the study: ten (10) police personnel and five (5) prosecutors representing the five police districts under the NCRPO. Police participants were selected because of their direct operational experience with BWC implementation, particularly in units involved in arrests, warrant services, anti-illegal drugs operations, special operations, and other activities in which recording requirements were applicable. Prosecutors were selected because their professional responsibilities provided direct experience in evaluating evidence and assessing the relevance, reliability, authentication, and potential legal use of BWC recordings.

The study was conducted within the NCRPO, which oversees police operations in Metro Manila through the Northern Police District, Eastern Police District, Manila Police District, Southern Police District, and Quezon City Police District. Relevant participants were drawn from operational and justice-sector settings associated with BWC implementation and evidence evaluation. Police participants who lacked the required direct BWC-related experience and prosecutors who lacked the prescribed prosecutorial experience were excluded. Individuals who declined informed consent were also excluded.

A researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was used. The guide was organized around the study objectives and invited participants to describe past experiences, present practices, operational pressures, evidence-management responsibilities, prosecutorial experiences, and expectations for future implementation. The instrument was reviewed by designated experts and relevant professionals for clarity,



relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. The final guide used open-ended prompts and follow-up questions to elicit narrative accounts rather than predetermined responses.

Necessary institutional permissions were secured before data collection. Participants were purposively selected according to the inclusion criteria and were invited to participate through formal communication. Before each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality procedures, and the intended use of the information. Written informed consent was obtained. Individual interviews lasted approximately 20–30 minutes. With permission, interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, reviewed for accuracy, and organized for analysis. No focus group discussion was conducted because the study sought individual professional narratives and context-specific experiences.

The narratives were analyzed through a narrative thematic process guided by Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) dimensions of temporality, sociality, and place. The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts, identified significant events and experiential statements, compared accounts across participants, and organized recurring meanings into subthemes and overarching themes. The analysis preserved the temporal and contextual dimensions of participants' stories while also examining convergence and divergence between police and prosecutorial perspectives. Five overarching themes and 15 subthemes were synthesized from the narratives. Trustworthiness was supported through repeated transcript review, detailed field documentation, contextual description, systematic organization of the analytical process, and careful preservation of participants' meanings.

Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Participants were informed of their right to decline questions or withdraw without penalty. Coded identifiers were used in reporting to protect identities, and information obtained from the interviews was treated as confidential. Interview records were stored securely, and access was restricted to the researcher. The study also observed applicable data-protection requirements, including the principles of responsible collection, processing, storage, and use of personal information under the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Participant selection was based on relevance to the research objectives rather than discriminatory criteria. The findings were intended for academic dissemination and for appropriate institutional consideration by NCRPO and justice-sector stakeholders.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented according to the study objectives and organized into five overarching themes derived from the participants' narratives. The analysis shows progression from frontline compliance, through operational and technological constraints, toward digital evidence integrity, prosecutorial utilization, and broader accountability. Read through the three-dimensional narrative space of temporality, sociality, and place, the findings indicate that BWC implementation was experienced not as a single technological intervention but as an evolving institutional practice.

Theme 1. From Compliance to Accountability: BWC as an Evolving Operational Practice

The first theme indicates that participants' understanding of BWC compliance changed through operational experience. At the beginning of implementation, the camera was commonly understood as an additional piece of equipment and a procedural requirement. With repeated exposure to warrant services, arrests, checkpoints, anti-criminality operations, and other critical incidents, participants increasingly recognized that recordings could document police actions, clarify disputed events, preserve evidence, and protect both officers and civilians.

One police participant recalled that initial implementation involved uncertainty about the practical value of the device and additional responsibilities concerning battery capacity, device condition, and proper operation. Over time, however, the participant observed that BWC footage could provide an account of an encounter beyond memory and written reports. The narrative captures the movement from procedural compliance to professional meaning: the camera became useful because its recording could later be revisited when accounts of an incident differed.

This finding is consistent with the broader literature showing that BWC technology can influence professional conduct and accountability when it becomes embedded in operational routines (Lum et al., 2020; White & Malm, 2020). It also supports Headley et al. (2025), who emphasized that the consequences of BWC adoption vary with the context in which officers exercise discretion. In the NCRPO narratives, compliance was not experienced as a simple binary condition. It was negotiated within rapidly changing operational circumstances in which safety, tactical priorities, and recording responsibilities had to be balanced.



Table 1. Summary of Emergent Themes and Sub-themes

Overarching Theme	Subthemes
1. From Compliance to Accountability: BWC as an Evolving Operational Practice	1.1 When the Camera Became a Witness; 1.2 Every Recording Has a Life; 1.3 No One Wears Accountability Alone
2. When Reality Meets Protocol: Operational and Technological Challenges in BWC Compliance	2.1 When Every Second Counts; 2.2 When the Camera Becomes the Weakest Link; 2.3 The Story Does Not End When the Camera Stops
3. From Recording to Evidence: Building Digital Evidentiary Integrity	3.1 When the Camera Speaks, the Truth Stays; 3.2 Beyond Recording: Preserving Truth Through Digital Evidence Integrity; 3.3 Beyond Individual Compliance: Institutional Capacity as the Foundation of Digital Accountability
4. From Visual Documentation to Prosecution: The Evidentiary Journey of BWC Footage	4.1 From Written Narratives to Visual Truth; 4.2 Beyond Recording: Prosecutors' Understanding of Authenticity and Evidentiary Integrity; 4.3 From Potential to Practice: Institutional Challenges in Utilizing BWC Footage
5. From Recorded Encounters to Credible Justice: The Epistemic and Accountability Value of BWC Footage	5.1 Seeing the Truth Through the Lens; 5.2 From Recording to Responsibility; 5.3 From Recorded Encounters to Credible Decisions

The second subtheme, Every Recording Has a Life, further demonstrates that compliance continues after an incident is recorded. Participants described the need to upload, store, protect, retrieve, and preserve footage. One participant emphasized the importance of ensuring that footage was uploaded correctly and was not lost or altered. This indicates that the evidentiary life of a BWC recording begins at capture but extends through subsequent stages of digital evidence management. A recording that is captured successfully but improperly preserved may not retain its full practical or evidentiary value.

The third subtheme, No One Wears Accountability Alone, shows that compliance is distributed across an organizational system. Participants identified supervisors, technical personnel, evidence custodians, investigators, and prosecutors as actors who may contribute to the effective use of BWC recordings. This finding is important because it shifts the analytical focus from individual officer behavior to institutional capacity. The narratives reveal a personnel–protocol paradox: personnel may understand and support BWC requirements while equipment, training, technical support, or organizational systems constrain their ability to comply consistently.

This finding corresponds with organizational research emphasizing training, supervision, culture, and administrative support as conditions of sustained BWC implementation (Backman et al., 2022). It also reinforces Procedural Justice Theory because institutional legitimacy depends not merely on imposing rules but on establishing procedures through which those rules can be applied consistently and fairly (Tyler, 1990, 2006).

Theme 2. When Reality Meets Protocol: Operational and Technological Challenges in BWC Compliance

The second theme demonstrates that BWC compliance was affected by the realities of frontline policing. Participants

described circumstances in which operations developed rapidly, required immediate responses to threats, or involved multiple simultaneous activities. In these situations, strict procedural requirements had to be reconciled with officer safety, tactical judgment, and the priorities of the operation. Compliance was therefore situated within the temporal pressure of actual police work.

The narratives also identified equipment availability and reliability as organizational constraints. A participant from the Manila Police District explained that limited numbers of BWC units sometimes required personnel to share equipment or assign cameras to only some operatives. Even when personnel were willing to comply, insufficient equipment could make consistent implementation difficult. The participant expected future implementation to include adequate units, regular maintenance, replacement of aging equipment, and stronger technical support.

These accounts are consistent with local studies that identified equipment availability, maintenance, resources, and personnel readiness as important implementation conditions (Abalos et al., 2024; Cueme, 2024; Dingrat et al., 2024). They also reinforce the organizational literature indicating that technology acquisition is not equivalent to institutional implementation. Technology must be supported by infrastructure, training, supervision, and responsive administrative systems.

The third dimension of the theme concerns post-recording demands. Participants indicated that the work does not end when the camera stops recording. Uploading, storage, retrieval, documentation, and preservation create additional responsibilities. These requirements can become difficult when connectivity is weak, storage is limited, equipment is unreliable, or technical support is unavailable. The challenge is consequently systemic: operational compliance, technology support, and evidence management are interdependent.



Privacy and information governance further complicate these challenges. BWC recordings may contain sensitive information, and participants' accounts imply that access must be controlled according to legitimate institutional and legal purposes. This finding aligns with Pickering (2020), Miranda (2021), Iliadis et al. (2024), and Poirier et al. (2024), who emphasized that the accountability value of BWC systems must be balanced against privacy and information-governance requirements.

Theme 3. From Recording to Evidence: Building Digital Evidentiary Integrity

The third theme centers on the distinction between recorded information and reliable digital evidence. Participants increasingly understood that a BWC recording could assist in reconstructing an incident, but prosecutors placed particular emphasis on the conditions that make footage trustworthy. One participant explained that BWC footage made it possible to reconstruct actual events, while another emphasized that the camera captured the incident as it unfolded. These accounts show the epistemic value of BWC footage: it provides a contemporaneous reference that can be compared with recollections, reports, affidavits, and other evidence.

Prosecutorial narratives, however, qualified this value. One prosecutor stated that properly preserved and authenticated footage could become strong evidence in court. This distinction is methodologically and legally important. The presence of a digital file does not itself establish authenticity or admissibility. Evidence management must maintain the connection between the recording, the incident, the device or system through which it was created, the persons who handled it, and the procedures through which it was preserved and presented.

Participants identified secure storage, metadata preservation, controlled access, documentation, and chain-of-custody procedures as central to evidentiary integrity. These requirements extend accountability beyond the camera wearer. Evidence custodians, investigators, technical personnel, supervisors, and prosecutors may each affect the reliability of the recording at different stages. Digital evidence governance is therefore a collective institutional responsibility.

The finding corresponds with the study's Evidence Integrity Perspective and with White and Malm (2020), Lum et al. (2020), and Poirier et al. (2024), who emphasized that BWC footage becomes useful in formal justice processes through appropriate organizational and evidentiary arrangements. It also supports the Philippine institutional framework, particularly the emphasis on proper handling and chain of custody in the Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management Investigative Directive No. 2024-002.

The third subtheme, Beyond Individual Compliance, indicates that institutional capacity is the foundation of digital accountability. A system can require officers to record encounters, but the accountability chain remains incomplete if recordings cannot be uploaded, protected, located, authenticated, or made available to authorized justice actors. The participants' experiences consequently support a governance interpretation in

which digital evidence integrity is produced through coordinated organizational practices.

Theme 4. From Visual Documentation to Prosecution: The Evidentiary Journey of BWC Footage

The fourth theme describes the movement of BWC footage from police documentation to prosecutorial evaluation. Prosecutors reported that recordings could provide an objective reference when evaluating police actions, witness accounts, and the circumstances under which evidence was obtained. This was particularly relevant when the legality of a search or arrest was questioned or when competing accounts existed.

Participants' narratives showed that prosecutors did not treat BWC footage as an automatic substitute for testimony or other evidence. Rather, footage was understood as a corroborative and clarifying source. One prosecutor explained that BWC recordings could assist in assessing the legality of a search and arrest. Another noted that footage could demonstrate how an operation was conducted and whether the evidence obtained was legally and procedurally supported.

The evidentiary journey nevertheless involved institutional challenges. Prosecutors emphasized authentication, preservation, and the quality of evidence-management procedures. The footage had to be sufficiently connected to the incident and maintained without compromising integrity. This finding is consistent with Poirier et al. (2024), who demonstrated the relevance of BWC recordings to court proceedings while highlighting practical concerns surrounding their use. It also corresponds with Morrow, Katz, and Choate (2023), as cited in the original study, regarding authentication requirements and institutional variation in the integration of digital recordings into criminal proceedings.

The narratives also highlighted the need for stronger police-prosecutor collaboration. The evidentiary value of footage is maximized when investigators understand prosecutorial requirements and prosecutors have timely access to properly documented recordings. This suggests that BWC governance should include an interagency interface rather than ending at the police evidence custodian. Prosecutorial integration is therefore an institutional bridge between operational documentation and justice-system decision-making.

The finding is compatible with Governance Theory as presented in the study: technological innovation produces durable effects when supported by institutional rules, standardized procedures, coordinated actors, and mechanisms of oversight. It also reinforces Procedural Justice Theory because reliable evidence can contribute to fairer evaluation of police conduct and legal processes when it is obtained and managed according to established standards.

Theme 5. From Recorded Encounters to Credible Justice: The Epistemic and Accountability Value of BWC Footage

The fifth theme represents the broadest meaning participants attached to BWC implementation. Police personnel and prosecutors converged on the view that recorded footage can provide an epistemic foundation for establishing facts. Rather



than relying exclusively on memory, written reports, affidavits, or testimony, justice actors can examine a contemporaneous visual and audio record of relevant events. One police participant described BWC footage as an actual visual record, while prosecutors recognized its ability to clarify events that witnesses may not fully remember because incidents unfold rapidly.

Participants also described the accountability value of BWC footage. A recording could document the sequence of events and demonstrate whether legal and operational procedures were followed. It could also help address allegations against police personnel, including allegations of evidence planting. In this sense, accountability was understood as reciprocal. The camera could expose improper conduct, but it could also protect officers from unfounded allegations when the recording supported the lawfulness of their actions.

Prosecutors similarly viewed footage as useful for examining whether searches and arrests were conducted lawfully. One participant stated that BWC footage could help assess the legality of a search and arrest, while another explained that it could show how an operation was conducted and whether evidence was obtained through lawful procedures. These narratives connect transparency with procedural fairness: accountability concerns not only what result was obtained but how authority was exercised to obtain it.

The final subtheme concerned evidence-based decision-making. Participants emphasized that BWC footage could strengthen a case by corroborating witness testimony and clarifying the sequence of events. At the same time, they did not describe the recording as self-sufficient. Its value depended on

completeness, preservation, authentication, and integration with other evidence. Thus, credible decisions emerged from convergence among multiple reliable sources rather than dependence on a single recording.

This finding is consistent with Procedural Justice Theory, Accountability Theory, and Governance Theory. Procedural justice emphasizes fair and transparent decision-making; accountability theory focuses on the reviewability of official conduct; and governance perspectives emphasize the institutional systems through which evidence is generated, preserved, and used. The finding also corresponds with Lum et al. (2020), White and Malm (2020), and Cubitt et al. (2023), as discussed in the source manuscript, regarding the relationship between BWC documentation, accountability, and organizational implementation.

Synthesis of Findings

The five themes converge on a central finding: sustainable BWC implementation is an institutional governance problem rather than a technology-acquisition problem. Operational compliance depends on frontline realities and institutional support; evidence integrity depends on systems that preserve recordings; prosecutorial utilization depends on authentication and coordination; and accountability depends on the ability of authorized actors to review and interpret reliable recordings. The findings therefore informed the Proposed Integrated Body-Worn Camera Governance Framework (IBWCGF).

Table 2. Empirical Findings, Governance Domains, and Institutional Priorities

Empirical Finding	Governance Domain	Primary Institutional Focus
Compliance is shaped by frontline operational realities and shared responsibility.	1. Operational Governance and Protocol Compliance	Activation standards, supervision, training, operational judgment
Operational, technological, and administrative constraints affect implementation.	2. Organizational Capability and Technology Support	Equipment availability, maintenance, connectivity, storage, technical support
Evidentiary value depends on systematic digital evidence governance.	3. Digital Evidence Integrity and Management	Documentation, metadata, secure storage, access control, chain of custody
Prosecutorial value requires authentication and police–prosecutor coordination.	4. Prosecutorial Integration and Criminal Justice Collaboration	Authentication, timely access, case evaluation, interagency coordination
BWC footage strengthens fact-finding, transparency, accountability, and evidence-based justice.	5. Accountability, Transparency, Public Trust, and Continuous Governance Improvement	Review, oversight, procedural fairness, public confidence, continuous improvement

The first governance domain, Operational Governance and Protocol Compliance, translates the finding that compliance is a professional responsibility but is conditioned by operational realities. The domain calls for clear activation and uses standards, continuing training, supervisory reinforcement, and operational guidance that recognizes the need to balance recording requirements with officer and civilian safety.

The second domain, Organizational Capability and Technology Support, responds to equipment shortages, reliability problems, storage limitations, connectivity concerns, and technical-support gaps. Sustainable implementation requires adequate and functional equipment, preventive maintenance, replacement planning, technical assistance, and organizational readiness.



The third domain, Digital Evidence Integrity and Management, addresses the evidentiary lifecycle of BWC recordings. It calls for standardized documentation, secure storage, metadata preservation, controlled access, retrieval procedures, authentication, and chain-of-custody controls. This domain recognizes that evidence management is a core accountability function rather than a purely technical task.

The fourth domain, Prosecutorial Integration and Criminal Justice Collaboration, connects police recording practices with prosecutorial evidence evaluation. It emphasizes procedures through which prosecutors can obtain, authenticate, interpret, and appropriately use BWC footage. Stronger police-prosecutor coordination can reduce evidentiary uncertainty and improve the continuity between operational documentation and criminal case development.

The fifth domain, Accountability, Transparency, Public Trust, and Continuous Governance Improvement, integrates the broader justice implications of BWC implementation. Recordings can strengthen accountability when they are preserved, accessible for legitimate review, and considered through fair procedures. The domain therefore includes monitoring, feedback, periodic

policy review, institutional learning, and safeguards that protect both transparency and legitimate privacy interests.

The framework represents a shift from a device-centered model to a governance-centered model. The camera is the entry point, but accountability depends on the organizational chain surrounding it. This interpretation extends the local literature by integrating operational compliance, digital evidence management, prosecutorial utilization, and accountability within one institutional model grounded in the experiences of both police personnel and prosecutors.

BWC Implementation Action Plan Matrix

To operationalize the findings of this study, the following action plan will outline a strategic framework for enhancing Body-Worn Camera (BWC) implementation within the NCRPO. This roadmap transitions from policy theory to practice by prioritizing technical infrastructure, inter-agency collaboration, and rigorous compliance oversight to ensure BWC footage serves as a reliable, transparent, and admissible cornerstone of the criminal justice system.

Table 3. BWC Implementation Action Plan Matrix

Program / Activity	Specific Objectives	Activities / Strategies	Responsible Office	Timeline	Budget	Qualitative Indicators of Implementation and Improvement
1. Equipment & Infrastructure Upgrades	Strengthen the reliability and operational adequacy of BWC equipment, charging facilities, storage capacity, and technical support systems.	• Procure appropriate BWC units, battery packs, charging stations, and redundant storage infrastructure • Establish routine preventive maintenance and technical support procedures. • Document equipment-related operational interruptions and corresponding interventions.	Regional Logistics Division (RLD)	Annual / Q1 Procurement	₱800,000	• Personnel narratives reflect improved confidence in device reliability and availability. • Recurring equipment problems are systematically documented and addressed. • Technical support concerns are followed by documented corrective actions. • Field personnel report fewer operational disruptions attributable to equipment limitations.



2. Joint Police–Prosecutor Coordination	Strengthen police–prosecutor coordination in the interpretation, authentication, preservation, and legal utilization of BWC evidence.	• Establish joint BWC evidence review protocols and secure information-sharing procedures. • Conduct semi-annual police–prosecutor case review workshops. • Discuss authentication, relevance, integrity, and evidentiary requirements based on actual or representative cases.	NCRPO Legal Office / Appropriate Prosecutorial Office (DOJ)	Semi-Annual	₱600,000	• Police and prosecutors demonstrate greater shared understanding of BWC evidentiary requirements. • Participants report improved communication regarding evidence authentication and documentation. • Case reviews identify common evidentiary gaps and corresponding solutions. • BWC evidence requirements are increasingly incorporated into police documentation and case preparation practices.
3. Protocol Compliance & Operational Readiness	Strengthen personnel understanding and consistent application of BWC activation protocols during critical incidents and high-risk field operations.	• Conduct mandatory quarterly scenario-based activation training. • Conduct periodic supervisory review of BWC recordings in relation to incident reports and operational circumstances. • Establish structured debriefing for situations involving delayed, interrupted, or non-activation.	NCRPO Directorate for Operations (DO)	Quarterly	₱500,000	• Personnel demonstrate clearer understanding of activation requirements and permissible operational exceptions. • Training narratives indicate improved confidence in applying protocols during routine and high-risk situations. • Supervisory reviews identify recurring compliance issues and corresponding corrective actions. • Personnel report that activation procedures are increasingly integrated into operational practice.



4. Digital Evidence Handling & Custody Systems	Strengthen the integrity, traceability, preservation, and accessibility of BWC recordings throughout the digital evidence life cycle.	• Deploy a standardized Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS). • Standardize docking, uploading, metadata documentation, access control, and evidence preservation procedures. • Conduct periodic evidence-management reviews and feedback sessions with evidence custodians.	Regional Information & Communications Technology Management Division (DICTMD) / Evidence Custodians	Continuous / System Rollout in Q2	₱500,000	• Evidence custodians demonstrate clearer understanding of digital chain-of-custody requirements. • Personnel narratives reflect improved confidence in uploading, preserving, retrieving, and safeguarding BWC footage. • Evidence-management reviews identify gaps and corresponding corrective measures. • Documentation practices show clearer traceability from recording acquisition through storage and retrieval.
5. Policy Governance & Continuous Evaluation	Institutionalize an adaptive governance process through which BWC policies are periodically reviewed and refined in response to operational experience, technological developments, and legal requirements.	• Conduct annual multi-stakeholder policy reviews. • Review operational experiences, evidence-management concerns, and prosecutorial feedback. • Use findings from implementation reviews to recommend revisions to BWC SOPs, training, and governance mechanisms.	NCRPO Command Group / Planning & Policy Division	Annual (Q4)	₱400,000	• Stakeholders identify emerging implementation issues and propose corresponding policy responses. • Annual reviews generate documented lessons learned and recommendations for policy refinement. • Policy revisions demonstrate responsiveness to operational, technological, and evidentiary developments. • Feedback from police personnel, evidence custodians, and prosecutors is reflected in subsequent policy or training adjustments.



6. Public Accountability & Oversight Mechanisms	Strengthen institutional transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in addressing concerns involving BWC implementation.	• Integrate BWC-related concerns into appropriate internal accountability and complaint-review mechanisms. • Conduct periodic oversight reviews of BWC-related incidents and complaints. • Prepare periodic public transparency summaries consistent with applicable privacy, evidence, and operational-security requirements.	Internal Affairs Service (IAS) / Public Information Office (PIO)	Quarterly Oversight / Bi-Annual Reporting	₱300,000	• BWC-related complaints and concerns are systematically documented, reviewed, and acted upon. • Oversight narratives demonstrate greater consistency in addressing allegations involving BWC non-use or improper handling. • Lessons from complaints and reviews are incorporated into training, supervision, or policy adjustments. • Public-facing information demonstrates clearer institutional commitment to transparency and accountability.
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CONCLUSIONS

The study found that BWC implementation within the NCRPO was experienced as an evolving institutional practice. Police personnel initially associated the technology with an additional procedural requirement but increasingly recognized its value as a source of documentation, evidence preservation, and accountability. Compliance, however, was not determined solely by individual willingness. Operational urgency, officer safety, equipment availability, technological reliability, training, supervision, and organizational support shaped the ability of personnel to comply consistently.

The study further found that the evidentiary value of BWC footage depended on the integrity of its entire digital lifecycle. Recording was only the first stage. Uploading, documentation, storage, metadata preservation, controlled access, retrieval, authentication, and chain-of-custody procedures were necessary to sustain the reliability of the recording. Prosecutors recognized BWC footage as a valuable evidentiary resource for reconstructing events, corroborating testimony, and assessing the legality of police actions, but its usefulness depended on proper preservation and authentication and on effective coordination between police and prosecutors.

Finally, participants understood BWC footage as a mechanism for strengthening fact-finding, transparency, procedural fairness, accountability, and evidence-based decision-

making. The central contribution of the study is therefore the demonstration that BWC effectiveness cannot be reduced to the presence of recording devices. Sustainable implementation requires an integrated governance architecture connecting operational compliance, organizational capability, digital evidence integrity, prosecutorial collaboration, and continuous accountability-oriented improvement.

Recommendations

1. The NCRPO should strengthen operational governance by maintaining clear, scenario-based BWC activation and use protocols, supported by continuing training and supervisory monitoring.

2. The Philippine National Police and NCRPO should prioritize adequate BWC availability, preventive maintenance, timely replacement of defective or aging units, reliable storage capacity, connectivity, and responsive technical support.

3. A standardized digital evidence-management protocol should be institutionalized across relevant units, covering upload, documentation, metadata preservation, secure storage, access control, retrieval, authentication, retention, and chain-of-custody procedures.

4. Police investigators and prosecutors should establish stronger coordination mechanisms for the timely identification,



transfer, authentication, and evaluation of BWC footage relevant to criminal cases.

5. Access and disclosure procedures should incorporate privacy and data-protection safeguards so that transparency is pursued without unnecessary exposure of sensitive information involving victims, witnesses, suspects, police personnel, or members of the public.

6. The Proposed Integrated Body-Worn Camera Governance Framework should be subjected to institutional review and validation by appropriate NCRPO, PNP, prosecutorial, legal, information-technology, and data-protection stakeholders before operational adoption.

7. Future research should examine the framework across other police regions and justice-sector settings and may use longitudinal or mixed-method designs to assess implementation outcomes, behavioral effects, evidentiary utilization, and public confidence over time.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS (MGA TANONG SA PANAYAM)

SOP 1. What is the nature of compliance among NCRPO personnel regarding Body-Worn Camera (BWC) protocols during critical incidents?

(Ano ang kalikasan ng pagsunod ng mga tauhan ng NCRPO sa Body-Worn Camera (BWC) protocols sa panahon ng mga kritikal na insidente?)

Probing Questions

- 1.1 Describe a personal experience where you used a BWC during a critical incident. What happened?
(Ilarawan ang isang personal na karanasan kung saan gumamit ka ng BWC sa isang kritikal na insidente. Ano ang nangyari?)
- 1.2 How do you follow protocols when activating and using the BWC during operations?
(Paano mo sinusunod ang mga protocol sa pag-activate at paggamit ng BWC sa operasyon?)
- 1.3 What pressures or difficulties do you encounter in complying with BWC protocols?
(Ano ang mga pressure o kahirapan na iyong nararanasan sa pagsunod sa BWC protocols?)

SOP 2. How do NCRPO personnel describe the multifaceted challenges encountered in operationalizing BWC protocols?

(Ano ang mga hamon na nararanasan ng mga tauhan ng NCRPO sa pagpapatupad ng BWC protocols sa operasyon?)

Probing Questions

- 2.1 Describe a situation where it was difficult to follow BWC protocols. What was happening?
(Ilarawan ang isang sitwasyon kung saan nahirapan kang sundin ang BWC protocols. Ano ang nangyayari noon?)
- 2.2 What common challenges arise when using BWCs during critical incidents?
(Ano ang mga karaniwang hamon sa paggamit ng BWC sa mga kritikal na insidente?)
- 2.3 How do urgency, safety concerns, or crowd control affect your compliance?
(Paano naaapektuhan ng agarang sitwasyon, kaligtasan, o crowd control ang iyong pagsunod sa mga protocol?)

SOP 3. How do police personnel recognize the professional practices of evidence management with the use of BWC footage?

(Paano kinikilala ng mga police personnel ang propesyonal na mga kasanayan sa pamamahala ng ebidensya gamit ang BWC footage?)

Probing Questions

- 3.1 Describe an experience where BWC footage was used in an investigation or court proceeding.
(Ilarawan ang isang karanasan kung saan ginamit ang BWC footage sa imbestigasyon o sa korte.)
- 3.2 How do you handle, store, or submit BWC footage to ensure admissibility in court?
(Paano mo hinahawakan, iniimbak, o isinusumite ang BWC footage upang matiyak na ito ay matatanggap sa korte?)
- 3.3 What challenges have you encountered in preserving or managing BWC footage?
(Ano ang mga hamon na iyong nararanasan sa pagpreserba o pamamahala ng BWC footage?)

SOP 4. In what way does the use of BWC footage shape the prosecutorial process?

(Sa anong paraan nakaaapekto ang paggamit ng BWC footage sa proseso ng prosekusyon?)

Probing Questions

- 4.1 Describe a case where BWC footage was used. What happened?
(Ilarawan ang isang kaso kung saan ginamit ang BWC footage. Ano ang nangyari?)



4.2 How does BWC footage affect case preparation and development?

(Paano nakaaapekto ang BWC footage sa paghahanda at pagbuo ng kaso?)

4.3 What challenges have you encountered when using BWC footage in legal proceedings?

(Ano ang mga hamon na iyong naranasan sa paggamit ng BWC footage sa legal na proseso?)

SOP 5. What are the shared perceptions of police personnel and prosecutors regarding the evidentiary value and impact of BWC footage on the pursuit of justice?

(Ano ang pinagsasaluhang pananaw ng mga police personnel at prosecutors hinggil sa halaga at epekto ng BWC footage bilang ebidensya sa pagpapatupad ng hustisya?)

Probing Questions

5.1 Describe an experience where BWC footage played a significant role in a case.

(Ilarawan ang isang karanasan kung saan naging mahalaga ang BWC footage sa isang kaso.)

5.2 How does BWC footage help establish what actually happened?

(Paano nakatutulong ang BWC footage sa pagpapakita ng tunay na nangyari sa isang sitwasyon?)

5.3 How does BWC footage contribute to fairness and justice in case handling?

(Paano nakatutulong ang BWC footage sa pagiging patas at makatarungan sa paghawak ng mga kaso?)