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Police Officers' Suggestions for Improving Compliance With Policies Mandating the Use of Body-Worn Cameras

Edward Lee Potter
Walden University

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Walden University

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Edward L. Potter

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Walden University
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Abstract

Police Officers' Suggestions for Improving Compliance With Policies Mandating the Use
of Body-Worn Cameras

by

Edward L. Potter

MS, Walden University, 2015

MS, Kaplan University, 2009

BS, Kaplan University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Psychology

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

There has been distrust in the United States between citizens and law enforcement since the 1991 beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers. The subsequent killing of unarmed African American males by police officers has further heightened awareness of deadly force. Politicians, civil rights advocates, citizens, family members of those killed, and the media have demanded that law enforcement officers be held accountable for their actions by requiring the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) during interactions with the public. Studies have shown that deployment of the BWC has benefits, including increased transparency and accountability, reduced use of force, improved officer/citizen relations, training benefits for officers, improved evidence collection, and increased police legitimacy. However, the cumulative effect of mandatory BWC policy has created a culture of resentment where rank-and-file officers react against the loss of personal discretion to do their jobs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to gain insight into officers' refusal to comply with BWC activation mandates. Brehm's reactance theory maintains that when police officers' discretion is threatened, they will resist in an attempt to restore it. Due to COVID-19, interviews were conducted virtually with eleven police officers ages 32 to 66. Findings indicated that police officers acknowledged BWC benefits but resented their use by administrators to surveil officers' daily activities. Insights into officers' grievances have the potential to revise BWC policies and create positive social change with the benefit of increasing officer compliance. The benefits of the BWC are widely documented, but only if they are activated.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the Lord, who has allowed me to survive a life that has been full of struggles, challenges, rewards, and mistakes, all that have taught me lifelong lessons. Living a grateful and blessed life as a child and surviving poverty and meningitis, the Lord has provided direction with smooth roads and roads with potholes and intersections; some have taken the wrong path with consequences. I thank the Lord for giving me wisdom, knowledge, and a passion for helping others. The Lord has protected me in many different situations during my law enforcement career. People were placed in my life to help me with this journey, and he has always put me in the right place to help others. To the Lord, I am forever grateful!

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I want to express my deepest gratitude to my wife Grace for her dedication, support, encouragement, and love during this educational journey for this doctoral degree. She has endured lows, highs, and excitement during the different stages of this quest to support so many various aspects that I cannot even begin to mention over the years. I am thankful to my children and grandchildren, Jessica (Kaylee, Khalid), Stefani, David, Brian, (Joey), and Scott, Bridget (Bryn, Luke), for their support and understanding during many vacations with having to work on classwork for this doctoral degree. I want to thank my dad Clifford Sr., my mom Annie, my second mom Jeanwood Daniels, and my siblings Mary, Jim, Carl, Cathy, Jenny, and Clifford Jr for being a part of my childhood to help be the person I am today.

I almost gave up on this doctoral journey. I prayed to the Lord to give me someone in my life who would help me to finish this doctoral degree and this dissertation with a heavy heart and tearful eye. The Lord answered my prayers by assigning me to Dr. Amy Sickel, program director, who then provided me with Dr. Hedy Red Dexter. Dr. Dexter has guided me with her wisdom, experience, understanding, patience, and a special heart to help me to complete this doctoral degree to the end. Dr. Hedy Red Dexter then contacted Dr. Ethel Perry for my second chair; she has given her time, her kind heart, knowledge, and expertise to complete this doctoral degree. Both Dr. Hedy Red Dexter and Dr. Ethel Perry have provided excellent feedback to understand the dissertation process and have expressed their support, encouragement, and patience to

help me finish this doctoral degree. I will always be grateful for both of these individuals in my life, with a deep appreciation for them.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study	2
Problem Statement	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Question	4
Theoretical Foundation	5
Nature of the Study	5
Definitions.....	6
Assumptions.....	7
Scope and Delimitations	7
Limitations	9
Significance of the Study	9
Summary	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	12
Establishing the Relevance of the Problem	13
Preview of Major Sections of the Chapter	14
Literature Search Strategy.....	14
Theoretical Foundation	15
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts.....	19
BWC History and Overview	19

The Reasons for Using BWCs	20
Law Enforcement Perception of BWCs.....	25
The Relationship Between Leadership Approaches/Attitudes and Rank- and-File Officers' Attitudes Toward BWCs	27
Summary	32
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	33
Research Design and Rationale	33
Research Question	33
Central Concept of Study.....	33
Research Tradition	34
Role of the Researcher	35
Methodology	36
Population	36
Sampling Strategy.....	36
Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	36
Sample Size and Rationale.....	37
Procedures for Recruitment/Data Collection	37
Instrumentation	38
Procedures for Data Collection and Debriefing.....	38
Data Analysis Plan.....	39
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	40
Credibility	40

Transferability.....	41
Dependability and Confirmability	41
Ethical Considerations	42
Summary.....	43
Chapter 4: Results	44
Research Setting.....	45
Demographics	45
Data Collection	47
Changes to the Initial Interviews	49
Data Analysis	50
Coding Process.....	50
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	53
Credibility	53
Transferability.....	54
Dependability and Confirmability	54
Results.....	55
Theme 1	55
Theme 2	60
Theme 3	62
Theme 4	66
Summary	70
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	71

Introduction.....	71
Interpretation of Findings	72
Theoretical Framework.....	77
Limitations of the Study.....	78
Recommendations.....	78
Implications.....	79
Conclusions.....	81
References.....	82
Appendix A: Interview Guide.....	98
Appendix B: Contact Letter to Police Chiefs	100
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter.....	102

List of Tables

Table 1. Main Study Demographic 46

Table 2. Categories, Code, and Examples 51

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

There has been distrust in the United States between some citizens and law enforcement since the 1991 physical abuse of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers, which outraged the nation (Martin, 2005). The use of excessive-force complaints against law enforcement has again become a focal point for politicians, civil rights advocates, citizens, and the media (Tooley et al., 2009). Some people feel betrayed due to local law enforcement's use of force in their communities (Shjarback et al., 2017). The deaths of African American males Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, and Samuel DuBose by law enforcement further heightened awareness of the use of deadly force (Jennings et al., 2017).

Politicians, civil rights advocates, citizens, family members of those killed, and the media have demanded that law enforcement officers be held accountable for their actions by requiring the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) during interactions with the public (Ariel et al., 2015; Gaub et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2014). A BWC is a portable electronic audio and video recording device that police officers wear; they provide a first-person perspective, capturing in as much detail as possible the actions and conduct of the police and citizen interaction during calls, traffic stops, or any incident that requires a police action (BJC Body-Worn Camera Toolkit, 2017).

The Police Executive Research Forum, in 2013, surveyed 500 of the 12,501 police departments across the United States. Of the 250 who responded, only 63 of the police departments reported implementing the BWC program (Miller et al., 2014). The activists who supported the deployment of the BWC suggested there are benefits such as

increased transparency and accountability, reduced use of force, officer and citizen compliance, training benefits for officers, improved evidence collection, and increased police legitimacy (Ariel et al., 2015; Gaub et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2014). However, implementing the BWC has reduced officers' morale and conveys a sense among officers that management does not trust the rank-and-file to appropriately use their discretion (Hyatt et al., 2017).

Background of the Study

Historically, police academies have trained police officers to use their discretion as to probable cause, stop and frisk arrests (felony or misdemeanor), and the appropriate use of force (Kahn et al., 2017). However, some command staff have reported that BWCs could hurt trust between themselves and their subordinates, the rank-and-file officers, who are concerned that they could use the BWC footage they recorded to provide supervisors with justification for arbitrary punishment (Goetschel & Peha, 2017). With the implementation of policies mandating BWC technology, police leadership now have complete control over when officers can and cannot turn the cameras on and off, stripping officers of any autonomy they had previously enjoyed (Taylor, 2016).

Policies have mandated at a minimum that officers must record vehicle stops, searches, calls for service, foot and vehicle chases, use of force, all arrests, and all transportation of individuals in police vehicles (Fan, 2016). The cumulative effect of a mandatory BWC policy has created a culture of resentment where the loss of morale has implications not only for the officers themselves but for the communities they serve (Goetschel & Peha, 2017). While studies have shown that there are demonstrable benefits

to the use of BWCs (e.g., more transparency and accountability and less use of deadly force), officer resentment toward policies mandating their use have reduced officer compliance. Studies have suggested some reasons for officer resentment; however, no researchers have yet explored officers' ideas for increasing compliance with policies mandating the use of BWCs (Hyatt et al., 2017). In this study, I explored rank-and-file officers' experience with BWCs, including their ideas for increasing compliance with policy mandates.

Problem Statement

After the killing of African American males Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, and Tamir Rice, many victims' families, citizens, civic groups, politicians, policymakers, and the media have insisted that police agencies across the country enhance transparency and accountability by using the BWC (Hedberg et al., 2017). In 2015, President Obama's administration provided a multiyear program for police departments to adopt the BWC and granted more than \$50 million to over 260 city, county, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies to deploy more than 52,000 BWCs (United States Department of Justice, 2016). However, law enforcement's use of BWCs has unintended consequences, such as potential privacy issues for police officers and citizens captured in the video footage (Smykla et al., 2016).

Police officers' resentment of perceived surveillance by the new technology is widely evident. Officers' unions in California have filed an injunction against the use of BWCs on the grounds of privacy and officer safety (Bruinius, 2016). In Florida and Washington, police unions have claimed that mandating the use of BWCs violates the

collective bargaining agreements (Chimurenga, 2017). The Boston Police Department wanted to have a voluntary BWC trial program; however, the police union refused to let their members participate (Lindsay, 2016). In the Phoenix PD, Katz et al. (2014) reported that only 30% of the officers activated their BWCs, and Hedberg et al. (2017) found that BWC activation was limited to about 32% overall, with 47% activation for domestic violence and 39% for violent offenses. Given the well-documented benefits of BWC use again (e.g., increased transparency and accountability and improved police-community relations), it is essential to solicit suggestions for expanding BWC acceptance and policy compliance with the officers themselves (Huff et al., 2018).

Purpose of the Study

In the interest of the citizens served by law enforcement I aimed to explore rank-and-file officers' experience with BWC policy mandates, including ideas they may have for increasing compliance. If made public, the BWC video can increase police transparency and build better community relations. To this end, and because the police officer is a critical stakeholder, it is essential to explore rank-and-file officers' experience with BWC policy mandates that may explain the lack of officer compliance.

Research Question

Research Question (RQ; Qualitative): What are rank-and-file police officers' experiences with BWC policy mandates implemented in the rural police departments in Northern Alabama?

Theoretical Foundation

Reactance theory, first proposed by Brehm in 1966, maintains that when individuals are constrained somehow, they feel a strong need to counterattack to regain their freedom (as cited in Steindl et al., 2015). The theory states that when people's choices (in this case, police officers) are perceived to be restricted, they will resist by attempting to regain control (Brehm, 1966; Miron, 2011). Before the innovation of BWC technology, police officers enjoyed the trust afforded them by the leadership and citizenry to appropriately use their discretion (Newell & Greidanus, 2017). With decisions about the appropriate use of BWCs now made by their supervisors, some police officers feel they have lost the ability to determine when BWCs are activated (Rowe et al., 2018). The loss of their professional discretion has resulted in negative attitudes toward the policy mandates and BWC technology in general (Hyatt et al., 2017). This loss of discretion has resulted in some police officers resisting policy mandates as they attempt to regain some measure of autonomy held before the deployment of BWC technology.

Nature of the Study

A basic qualitative methodology was relevant to this study as I considered the behavioral, informational, or situational conditions that convey rank-and-file police officers' opinions/perceptions of BWC policy mandates. This study was a basic qualitative approach to explore trust issues resulting from the mandatory use of the BWC to be worn by each police officer during their daily activities. In this study, I investigated the lived experiences through in-depth interviews with rank-and-file officers. I

triangulated the information to ensure a thorough, accurate portrayal of participants' experiences and perceptions of experiences with BWCs (e.g., recorded responses to interview questions, observed participants' body language during interviews). Interviews consisted of open-ended questions and follow-up questions for the purposes of clarification or amplification. The interviews were 30 to 45 minutes in duration for each participant and were recorded (i.e., through audiotape and field notes) for transcription and analysis. When the interviews were finalized, a transcribed copy was provided to each participant. The participant was requested to evaluate the transcribed copy for accuracy and completeness. The corrected copy of the interview was returned to me by email.

Definitions

Body-worn camera (BWC): In 2012, the Office of Justice Programs National Institute of Justice, within the U. S. Department of Justice, defined body-worn cameras as “a portable audio and video apparatus that allows officers to record what they observe and hear” (as cited in Hayes & Ericson, 2012, p. 5).

Deadly force/lethal force: Force used by a law enforcement officer to cause death. This term also applies to situations when an officer knows that the use of force may cause a substantial risk of death or serious bodily harm (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Law enforcement: Activities of agencies responsible for maintaining public order and enforcing the law, particularly the actions that prevent, detect, and investigate crime and apprehending criminals (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Law enforcement officer: An employee of a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency sworn to carry out law enforcement duties such as enforcing local, state, or federal laws (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Sworn officers: Persons or individuals formally authorized to make arrests while acting within the scope of explicit legal authority (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Use of excessive force: The application of the use of force beyond what is reasonably believed to be necessary to gain compliance from an individual in any given incident (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Use of force: The amount of effort of force required by law enforcement to gain compliance from an unwilling subject (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019).

Assumptions

I assumed that qualitative research was the most effective and efficient methodology to use for this research study. I also assumed that law enforcement officers have first-hand experience transitioning from not having BWCs to being mandated to wear and to activate BWCs during all interactions with the public. In addition, I assumed that law enforcement officers would be honest and provide in-depth information about their experience transitioning from not using BWCs to policy mandates requiring their use.

Scope and Delimitations

In this basic qualitative study, I explored the experience of law enforcement officers who have transitioned from using BWCs to their agencies' implementation of policies mandating BWC use during all interactions with citizens. The research data were

collected from 10 law enforcement officers through the Zoom video application and FaceTime on Apple iPhones or Apple iPads for interviews, using recorded interviews and field notes using NVivo 12 for data analysis. The participants were law enforcement officers within Alabama who had completed the Alabama Peace Officers Training (APOST) certification. The officers had transitioned from working with no BWC to policies mandating their use with all citizen interactions. In this study, I did not include all law enforcement officers because they are not currently required to wear BWC during their daily activities or because they did not experience firsthand the transition from not using to the mandated use of BWCs.

The self-awareness theory has been applied in several BWC studies. According to Mead (1934), self-awareness describes the method of directing attention internally toward oneself. Individuals became more self-aware of their actions, behaviors, mannerisms, and appearance once they became aware that they are being observed and recorded (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Self-awareness directly affects an individual's behavior, such as self-regulation, prompting socially desirable responses to cooperate and follow the society's laws and rules of conduct (Morin, 2011). When BWCs are turned on to record the interaction between the police officer and citizen, just knowing that they are being recorded and, therefore, accountable for their actions can change both individuals' behavior (Hyatt et al., 2017). Self-awareness is essential for police officers to conduct themselves within all aspects of their state and police department's law and policy. However, in this study I focused on investigating the rank-and-file police officers'

experience of BWC policy mandates. The reactance theory provided the best fit to explore this phenomenon.

Limitations

Obtaining a diverse participant sample could have limited the dependability of my findings; law enforcement officers in rural Alabama tend to be a homogeneous population where most are White. Recruiting a sufficient number of participants within a circumscribed geographic area could be another limitation. With limited time and resources, I attempted to recruit those individuals with the most enriching law enforcement experiences for both the participants and me. Confidentiality could have also been a limitation; in the field of law enforcement, police officers are like a family. Police department's personnel communicate among themselves daily about a wide variety of topics. While I provided each participant with the confidentiality agreement, indicating that their information would not be available to any outside source, there was no similar guarantee to protect confidentiality from having conversations among the officers themselves.

Significance of the Study

Several studies have documented law enforcement officers' perceptions of BWCs (Adams & Mastracci, 2019a; Gaub et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2015). However, few have addressed rank-and-file officers' experience with mandating BWC activation policies during all citizens' interactions. For many officers, mandated BWC activation has meant a loss of discretion when the activation is appropriate. However, the BWC activation policies has created trust between the officers and leadership who monitor their

compliance with policy mandates (Smykla et al., 2016). Several studies documented the benefits of BWCs: They increase officer transparency and accountability, reduce the use of deadly force, and improve officer-citizen relations and police legitimacy (Sousa et al., 2017). Therefore, it was critical to understand why some officers are reluctant to comply with BWC mandates and what suggestions officers had for reversing that. The study's findings yielded insights that could benefit leadership and rank-and-file officers to work cooperatively to better serve their communities by using the BWC technology to its fullest potential.

Summary

There have been several studies involving BWC technology demanding that law enforcement be held accountable for their use of force (Jennings et al., 2017; Shjarback et al., 2017; Tooley et al., 2009). Informed by reactance theory (Brehm, 1966), in this qualitative study, I explored the rank-and-file police officers' opinions/perceptions of BWC policy mandates, including suggestions for improving compliance. While studies have documented the benefits of BWC use, both to the officers and the communities they serve, researchers had not yet explored rank-and-file officers' experience transitioning from not using to policies mandating BWC use. Insights into law enforcement officers' experience with BWC policy mandates, including reasons for their noncompliance, could allow leadership to require BWC activation with less officer resistance.

In Chapter 1, I have provided information concerning the background, the problem statement, and the purpose of this research. The research question, theoretical foundation, and the rationale for the research design have been presented. I also discussed

the definitions, assumptions, delimitations, and the significance of this study. I concluded the chapter with a summary of the study's implications for positive social change.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There has long been distrust between some U.S. citizens and law enforcement. In recent decades, video footage of the 1991 attack on Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers outraged the nation (Martin, 2005). The advent of the 21st century has seen continued excessive-force complaints against law enforcement and has remained a focal point for politicians, civil rights advocates, citizens, and media (Tooley et al., 2009). These various constituencies have been recently demanding that police officers use BWCs to ensure accountability during interactions with the public (Ariel et al., 2015; Gaub et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2014). A BWC is a portable electronic audio- and video-recording device that provides a first-person perspective and captures in as much detail as possible the actions and conduct of the police and citizen interaction during calls, traffic stops, or any incident that requires a police action (BJC Body-Worn Camera Toolkit, 2017).

The Police Executive Research Forum in 2013 surveyed 500 of the 12,501 U.S. PDs, and of the responding PDs ($N = 250$), only 63 reported having implemented BWC use (Miller et al., 2014). Codified BWC policies require that (at the minimum) officers record vehicle stops, searches, calls for service, foot and vehicle chases, use of force, all arrests, and all transportation of individuals in police vehicles (Fan, 2016). In short, policies mandating the use of BWC technology give police leadership complete control over when officers can and cannot turn the cameras on and off, stripping officers of autonomy (Taylor, 2016); consequently, the advent of BWC policies has created a culture of officer resentment/low morale with implications not only for the officers themselves

but for the communities they serve (Goetschel & Peha, 2017). While studies have shown benefits in BWC use (e.g., more transparency/accountability and less use of deadly force; Henstock & Ariel, 2017), officer resentment toward BWC policies may reduce officer compliance. In addition, while studies have suggested some reasons for officer resentment toward BWCs (Bruinius, 2016), no studies have yet addressed officers' ideas for increasing compliance with BWC policies. In this stud, I aimed to address this gap.

Establishing the Relevance of the Problem

After the killing of African American males Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, and Tamir Rice, many victims' families, citizens, civic groups, politicians, policymakers, and the media insisted that police agencies across the country enhance transparency and accountability by using the BWC (Hedberg et al., 2017). In 2015, President Obama's administration provided a multiyear program for police departments to adopt the BWC and granted more than \$50 million to over 260 city, county, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies to deploy more than 52,000 BWCs (United States Department of Justice, 2016). However, law enforcement's use of BWCs has unintended consequences, such as potential privacy issues for police officers and citizens captured in the video footage (Smykla et al., 2016).

Police officers' resentment of perceived surveillance by the new technology is widely evident. Officers' unions in California have filed an injunction against the use of BWCs on the grounds of privacy and officer safety (Bruinius, 2016). In Florida and Washington, police unions have claimed that mandating the use of BWCs violates the collective bargaining agreements (Chimurenga, 2017). The Boston PD wanted to have a

voluntary BWC trial program; however, the police union refused to let their members participate (Lindsay, 2016). In the Phoenix PD, Katz et al. (2014) reported that only 30% of the officers activated their BWCs, and Hedberg et al. (2017) found that BWC activation was limited to about 32% overall, with 47% activation for domestic violence and 39% for violent offenses. Given the well-documented benefits of BWC-use again (e.g., increased transparency and accountability and improved police-community relations), it is essential to solicit suggestions for expanding BWC acceptance and policy compliance the officers themselves (Huff et al., 2018).

Preview of Major Sections of the Chapter

In this chapter, I summarize the extant research about BWCs and their impact on law enforcement, their citizenry, and the criminal justice system. Issues associated with policy, leadership, and compliance will be examined, along with studies that have applied psychological reactance theory (PRT) in interpreting reactions to the loss of autonomy (see Brehm & Brehm, 2013b).

Literature Search Strategy

Databases searched for this study included ProQuest, EBSCO, and the Walden University Database and Library. The literature search focused on peer-reviewed studies published within the last 5 years. Google Scholar was used to locate articles germane to this study. Keywords, acronyms, and phrases were used in a variety of combinations to obtain literature focused on *BWCs*, *police video cameras*, *police body cameras*, *noncompliance of police policy*, *body-worn cameras*, *employee compliance*, *police body-worn cameras & privacy accountability*, *officer perceptions of body-worn cameras*,

private and public access to state laws, police use of force body cameras, public perceptions and body cameras, the impact of police body-worn cameras arrests, prosecuting, convicting suspects of intimate partner violence, police body-worn cameras and autonomy/discretion/accountability, body-worn cameras and reduced violence in police-citizen encounters, body-worn cameras pre-and post-Ferguson, video retention, in-car videos, closed-circuit television (CCTV), and justification of police activities. The qualitative research included naturalistic inquiry, emergent design flexibility, qualitative data, qualitative analysis, personal experience and engagement, empathic neutrality and mindfulness, dynamic systems perspective, unique case orientation, inductive analysis and creative synthesis, holistic perspective, context, sensitivity, reflexivity perspective and voice, social constructionism, constructivism, postmodernism, narrative inquiry, purposeful/snowball/chain/respondent-driven emergent phenomena, saturation sampling, and opportunity sampling.

Theoretical Foundation

This basic qualitative research's theoretical framework was based on Brehm's (1966, 1981) PRT. PRT explains individuals' reactions to a perceived loss of freedom within their environment (Brehm, 1966). The theory describes how individuals, when autonomy is curtailed or perceived as curtailed, experience a feeling described as reactance (i.e., distress, anxiety, and the desire to regain freedom). PRT is based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that individuals have a set of behaviors they are free to engage in at will (Brehm, 1966); free behaviors are actions that individuals have engaged in previously and can engage in again (Brehm, 1966). The second assumption is

that when an individual's free behaviors are endangered or eliminated, the individual is motivated to restore the lost freedom (Brehm, 1966). According to Rains (2013), reactance is an aversive state, comprising both an emotional component (e.g., feeling of anger) and a cognitive component (e.g., rejecting authority).

Reactance theory posits four crucial components: (a) presence of freedom, (b) elimination of/threat to freedom, (c) arousal of reactance, and (d) restoration of freedom (Dillard & Shen, 2005). First, the presence of freedom is defined as a person's perceived ability to engage in a type of behavior and to choose how/when the behavior is performed (Brehm, 1966; Kayser et al., 2016). PRT asserts that an individual has a set of free behaviors that are present to support engagement and are cognitively imprinted to facilitate similar behaviors in the future (Brehm, 1966). However, individuals do not always consider all their behaviors as freedoms.

The second component of PRT is the threat of or actual elimination of freedom (Brehm, 1966). A person, action, or event that blocks an individual from the behavior can result in the elimination of that behavior (Mazis et al., 1973), but even if the behavior is merely impeded without being eliminated, the threat of loss is still present (Brehm, 1966).

The third PRT component is the arousal of reactance, which consists of two parts: (a) individual perception of their freedom and (b) individual perception of the threat to their freedom. The degree of reactance post arousal depends on the individual's assessment of the magnitude of factors (a) and (b) in the preceding sentence; in cases involving citizen-police interactions, both citizens' and officers' perceptions of the

freedom at stake and of the potential risks to that freedom generally are of great magnitude (Clee & Wicklund, 1980).

The fourth PRT component is the eventual restoration of freedom, which manifests in one of two ways (Brehm & Brehm, 1981): One method is to engage in restricted behavior (Brehm, 1966); another technique is to display hostility toward the threat or discredit the source of the threat (Rains, 2013).

Informed by PRT, Marasi et al. (2018) explored the impact of workplace deviance on organizational structure and found that when employees were denied participation in organizational decision making, workplace deviance increased. According to Robinson and Bennett (1995), workplace deviance is defined as voluntary, norm-violating behavior that threatens the well-being of a company and its members. PRT suggests that because workplace policies and regulations limit employees' autonomy, employees will engage in reactance to regain control of their job and work environment (Brehm & Brehm, 1981).

Moore and Pierce (2016) applied PRT to law enforcement officers' use of discretion when confronted with event-specific citizen expectations of leniency (e.g., when pulled over on their birthday or anniversary). By looking at drunk driving arrest records ($N = 134,000$) between 2001 and 2009 in Washington State, the authors found that officers gave drivers citations, rather than just warnings, more often on their birthdays (Moore & Pierce, 2016). The study results indicated that citizens' expectations of leniency may threaten officers' freedom to exercise discretion, thereby triggering psychological reactance by the latter (Moore & Pierce, 2016).

To assess messaging strategy/mitigate reactance, Quick et al. (2014) explored whether narratives about instances of organ donation presented in radio announcements elicited feelings of guilt or happiness. Participants ($N = 1,306$) were randomly played one of four public service announcements about organ donations; half the messages emphasized the positives (i.e., gain-frame) connected with registering as an organ donor, and half emphasized the negatives (i.e., loss-frame) related to not registering as an organ donor. Study findings showed that the loss-frame narrative—framing the situation as one where not doing something will have adverse consequences—threatened participants' freedom to choose (i.e., registering, or not, as an organ donor) and evoked psychological reactance.

Clayton et al. (2018) hypothesized that antitobacco media messaging would threaten smokers' perception of freedom and prompt reactance. Participants ($N = 52$, 18+ years old, who smoked at least five cigarettes a day for the last year) viewed a randomized series of 30-second, second-hand smoke messages for 8 hours. After each video, the participants were given questionnaires to report unpleasantness, arousal, anger, counterargument, and the threat to freedom. Study findings showed that some smokers “retreated” from the antitobacco messages with little anger and few counterarguments (i.e., flight); however, other reactant participants expressed great anger and many counterarguments (i.e., fight). In sum, the antismoking messages evoked reactance among some participants by invoking a perceived threat to their freedom to smoke.

Brown et al. (2016) examined the potential for heightened levels of psychological reactance accompanying the stigma/restrictions associated with an HIV diagnosis among

women living with HIV ($N = 118$), as measured by the 18-item Questionnaire for Measurement of Psychological Reactance and the HIV Stigma Scale. Study findings showed a relationship between HIV-related stigma and participant reactance, manifested as opposition toward others and irritability.

In this study, I used the PRT to frame my exploration of police officers' (a) feelings of resentment/reactance related to BWC policy implementation and (b) efforts to regain discretionary freedom when dealing with citizen offenders. Examples of reactance-driven efforts to restore freedom include disputing the policy that mandates the use of BWCs or simply not activating the BWC once it is in place. In this study, officers' reflections on the perceived loss of autonomy were explored as informing reactance, and reactance was explored as a precursor to refusal behaviors related to proper BWC deployment and activation.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

BWC History and Overview

Mobile video cameras are not new to law enforcement. The Connecticut State Police first installed a video camera and recorder in a patrol vehicle in the early 1960s (IACP, 2002), but widespread use at the time was impractical due to the size of the equipment and the ongoing cost (IACP, 2002). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Mothers Against Drunk Driving provided grants to purchase in-car dash camera systems for law enforcement to help with the prosecution of drunk drivers. These dash camera systems were also installed in response to the March 1991 Rodney King incident, which became known to the world only by being captured by the personal camcorder. The

public demanded the adoption of the in-car dash camera system for police accountability according to allegations of police misconduct.

The BWC used today is a small, unobtrusive device that records both audio and video. Information provided by BWCs can enhance police legitimacy, bolster evidence for court, reduce police use-of-force complaints, and discourage unacceptable behaviors by both police officers and the public (Hyatt et al., 2017). Of course, the BWC consists of the camera itself, which is worn on the officer's uniform, with the lens facing forward and providing a 180-degree view, in a location that differs according to departmental policy (e.g., on the center of the chest, shoulder lapel, sunglasses, or hat). Also, the BWC can have options: docking capabilities with different devices, touch-screen controls, blue tooth, and/or media storage where evidence can be encrypted but not edited or changed (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2017).

The Reasons for Using BWCs

The recent stories of civilians being killed by police officers have raised questions about the scale and scope of police use of force, apparent lack of transparency, and perceived absence of accountability (Brucato, 2017). Deadly force was used by police officers 874 times in 2017, 963 times in 2016, and 995 times in 2015 (Nix et al., 2017). More salient in sparking/shaping the national discourse about police use of deadly force have been several high-profile shootings of African American males: Michael Brown in Ferguson, MS (August 2014); 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland, OH (November 2014); Walter Scott in North Charleston, SC (April 2015); and Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, MN (July 2016), to name (unfortunately) just a few.

A December 2014 Pew Research Center/USA Today survey found that 87% of respondents (90% of African Americans, 89% of Hispanics, 85% of Caucasians) agreed or strongly agreed that police officers should use BWCs when interacting citizens (Sousa, 2015). In a 2016 Cato/YouGov survey ($N = 2,000$), 92% of respondents supported requirements for law enforcement officers to wear BWCs (Ekins, 2016). Furthermore, a 2016 telephone-and-online survey ($N = 1,000$) found that 70% of respondents believed law enforcement should be required to wear BWCs while on patrol, up from 52% in 2013 (Rasmussen Reports, 2016). Then-President Obama proposed a three-year/\$263 million investment in the use of BWCs (House, W, 2014). Citizens and government leaders across the country request the service of BWCs to increase law enforcement transparency (Bakardjiev, 2015), maximize accountability in cases of unjustified use-of-force (Bolton, 2015), and mitigate the perception/reality of cultural bias among officers (Tooley et al., 2009). Negative public perceptions of law enforcement officers should be taken seriously, and law enforcement leaders who want to rebuild trust in their institution see the BWC as a tool for helping with that rebuild (Renauer & Covelli, 2011).

However, BWC policies are informed not only by a need to protect/palliate the public; they can also ensure representation of law enforcement perspectives. After all, the increased ubiquity and use of smartphones have democratized access to evidence of public gatherings or incidents (Harris, 2010). Recent examples of smartphone video being used to expose excessive use of force—or disparate application of force against minority populations—by law enforcement are numerous and well-known: New York Police Department (NYPD) Officer Daniel Pantaleo used a fatal chokehold on Eric

Garner, an African American (Sorensen & Pica, 2005); North Charleston City Police Officer Michael Slager fired his duty weapon multiple times at Walter Scott, an African American male, fatally killing him (Knapp, 2018). While these instances of camera use by citizens captured police misconduct, it is also possible for citizen-shot video to provide a narrative that is unfairly biased against law enforcement officers. As a result, BWCs can memorialize and corroborate officers' accounts as well as those of citizens. Sousa et al. (2017) examined citizens' confidence in the ability of BWCs to improve transparency, increase trust, and reduce tensions between police and minority communities. By administering a nationwide Qualtrics survey to study participants ($N = 599$), the authors found that the public supports the police officers' use of BWCs. A vast majority of study participants believed that the BWCs would improve the transparency of law enforcement activities ($n = 547, 91.3\%$), and a sizable majority indicated that BWCs would also diminish the use of excessive force ($n = 480, 80.1\%$). However, the data revealed less public confidence in the ability of the BWC to increase trust levels, improve police-citizens relationships, or reduce racial tensions between law enforcement and minority communities.

Ariel et al. (2015) looked at the impact of BWC use on the number of citizen complaints against police officers. The 2015 study encompassed 1,429,868 police officer work hours across 4,264 shifts, and it was replicated in seven police departments that served a total population of over two million citizens. The study required officers to keep the BWC on whenever interacting with citizens and to inform citizens that they were being recorded; the BWCs were switched off when the wearer was (a) not interacting

with the public, (b) speaking with an informant, (c) investigating a highly sensitive matter (e.g., violent sexual assault), or (d) at a crowded public event where consent from everyone present could not be obtained. Study results revealed a 93% reduction in the overall number of complaints during the experimental period as compared to the previous year. The findings suggest that BWC use affected officer behavior through the surveillance effect, and this behavior modification persisted even when officers were not wearing the BWC and therefore no longer under surveillance.

One of the seven locations in the Ariel et al. 2015 study was the Rialto (CA) Police Department, with a population of 100,000 residents served by 115 police officers. The officers were assigned either to a treatment group (i.e., required to wear BWCs) or a control group (i.e., not required to wear BWCs). Study findings indicated that the treatment group recorded 88% fewer citizen complaints and 60% fewer use-of-force incidents than the control group.

Henstock and Ariel (2017) employed a randomized field trial (RCT) to explore the effect of BWCs on law enforcement use of force at a local policing unit (LPU; $N = 46$). Study results showed that BWC technology, by facilitating compliant behavior on both officers and citizens, could help reduce instances of force by 35%. Study authors also concluded that the BWCs enhanced law enforcement transparency and accountability.

White et al. (2017) investigated the effects of BWCs on the use of force, complaints against officers, and officers' injuries at the Spokane (WA) Police Department (SPD). SPD participated in a three-year study gathering data pre- and post-

BWC implementation. SPD directed the police officers ($N = 149$) to record any police activity, including self-initiated citizens interactions, until completion of the call, and the department gathered data on the use of force, internal complaints, citizen complaints, and officer injuries from January 1, 2013, through April 30, 2016. The results showed a 39% reduction in force and 78% decline in the number of complaints post-deployment of BWC. There was no correlation between the BWC and police officer injuries.

Katz et al. (2014) examined how BWC implementation at the Phoenix (AZ) Police Department (PPD), with 3,000 officers serving a community of more than 1.5 million, could potentially increase accountability and raise effectiveness in responding to domestic violence (DV). Data for DV incidents ($N = 2,063$) were collected (a) through DV pocket cards that officers were required to fill out and (b) via BWC footage. Strikingly, study findings revealed that complaints about police officers who wore the BWC during the study period declined by 23% compared to a 10.6% increase in complaints among the non-BWC-using comparison group.

Jennings et al. (2017) examined the impact of BWCs on Tampa (FL) Police Department officers' ($N = 761$, serving a population of 350,000) response to citizen resistance, comparing the number of instances of forceful police response to resistance in the 12 months post-BWC implementation with the number recorded in the 12 months pre-implementation. The results showed that police officers equipped with BWCs were involved in significantly fewer response-to-resistance incidents post-implementation of BWCs.

Law Enforcement Perception of BWCs

Jennings et al. (2014) obtained survey data from Orlando Police Department (OPD) officers ($N = 91$) who volunteered to participate in a randomized experiment evaluating the effect of BWCs. The authors looked at police perceptions of BWCs (i.e., openness to BWCs, the impact of BWCs on citizen behavior/the responding police officers' behavior/fellow police officers' conduct, and citizens'/officers' complaints about BWCs). Study results indicated that OPD officers were (a) open and supportive of BWC use, (b) comfortable wearing BWCs, and (c) confident that BWC use had the potential to improve the behavior of citizens, fellow officers, and themselves.

Adams and Mastracci (2019a) used the Perceived Intensity of Monitoring (PIM) scale to measure police officers' perceptions of the risks posed (i.e., to themselves) by having BWCs record footage that the police administration and the public could subsequently view. An 11-item questionnaire PIM scale was administered to law enforcement officers ($N = 617$) to assess police perceptions of BWC impact on (a) officer autonomy (i.e., how BWCs affect officer discretion on the job), (b) disapproval (i.e., whether BWCs would capture personal, potentially embarrassing details of officer behavior/job performance), and (c) distribution effects (i.e., whether the officer thinks her/his department has her/his best interest in mind when choosing to release/not to release BWC footage publicly). Study results show that the police officers perceive that BWCs significantly limit their professional discretion by increasing administrative monitoring capacity. Besides, the officers reported that the increased monitoring also makes them more vulnerable to public disapproval. Finally, study participants perceived

a high probability that BWC footage would be released to the public, which they perceived would intensify the BWC-centered monitoring regime, further constrain their autonomy, and amplify their risk of potential embarrassment/violation of privacy. Adams and Mastracci (2019b) conducted a second 2019 study that applied the PIM scale to capture police officers' BWC-related emotional exhaustion. Study results showed that officers equipped with BWCs and subject to constant monitoring experienced significant emotional exhaustion. While this study did not directly address police perceptions of BWC use, the authors hypothesized the BWC-induced emotional exhaustion would reinforce and intensify study participants' concerns about and mistrust of on-the-job BWC use.

Gaub et al. (2016) used the Police Officer Body Cameras Perceptions survey instrument to gather data on perceptions of BWCs in the Phoenix (AZ) Police Department (PPD), the Spokane (WA) Police Department (SPD), and the Tempe (AZ) Police Department (TPD). There were 33 survey questions assessing officers' perceptions of (a) the effect of body cameras on completing incident reports, (b) the use of body camera footage as evidence, (c) the effect of body cameras on citizen and officer behavior, (d) the ease of use of the cameras, and (e) officers' general perceptions and recommendations about the value of the technology in law enforcement. Study results suggested that pre-deployment of BWCs, the preponderance of officers in all three departments thought the technology would provide a more accurate account of incidents and evidentiary value, especially in domestic disturbance/violence cases. However, fewer than half of the study participants across all three-study sites felt that BWCs were easy to

use, and the majority expressed privacy concerns about downloading the BWC footage at the end of their shifts.

Goetschel and Peha (2017) used surveys and one-on-one interviews to explore perceptions of BWCs among officers in the Pittsburgh (PA) Bureau of Police. Study results indicated that officers with no previous BWC experience thought that the BWCs would decrease the number of citizen complaints and help maintain police-community relations, yet they still did not support the deployment of BWCs within the police department. The police officers who did have prior hands-on experience with the BWC supported citywide deployment. Those officers who opposed citywide adoption of BWC use believed that it would erode trust between police officers and the department's leaders. In contrast, BWC deployment supporters indicated that training, acceptable policy, and codified procedures would maximize BWC use benefits.

The Relationship Between Leadership Approaches/Attitudes and Rank-and-File Officers' Attitudes Toward BWCs

Smykla et al. (2016) evaluated law enforcement leadership attitudes toward BWCs by collecting survey data from commanders ($N = 24$) in local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Among study participants, three indicated that they were “currently using” BWCs; one stated that the department had “plans” to purchase/adopt BWC use in the future; nine departments were “considering” using BWCs in the future; six indicated they were “not planning” to use BWCs in the future, and five show “other” on the survey (unclear or undecided). The 29 survey questions were divided into eight perceptual domains: Use of Force, Public/Media Impact, Police Officer Behavior, Officer

Effectiveness, Evidentiary Impact, Privacy, Safety, and Impact on Citizens. Study results showed that, overall, half of the respondents ($n = 12$) supported BWC use but that only one-third ($n = 8$) agreed/strongly agreed with the specific survey item, “I support the use of the BWCs in my department.” Additionally, only one-third of the respondents felt that BWCs would improve police officer behavior during interactions with citizens. Half of the participants expressed belief in the following: maintenance and upkeep of BWCs would take away from patrol duties; BWCs would reduce unwarranted complaints against police officers, and BWCs would assist in the collection of quality of evidence and increase of guilty pleas from those individuals charged with crimes. On the subject of whether BWCs invade police officers' privacy, 62% disagreed/strongly disagreed; but on the issue of whether BWCs invade civilians' privacy, 48% disagreed/strongly disagreed. Significantly, minority participants were more apt to agree that BWCs would attack citizens' privacy, while white respondents generally disagreed with this statement. Nearly half of the respondents thought that (a) BWCs could be used by supervisors to “fish” for evidence that could be used to discipline police officers (46%), (b) BWCs would reduce the use of force between police officers and citizens (48%), and (c) BWCs would improve citizen behavior during encounters with law enforcement and improve citizens' views of police legitimacy (44%). Approximately 60% of the respondents believed that the media would use information gathered from BWCs to embarrass or persecute police officers, and two-thirds agreed/strongly agreed that the use of BWCs is advocated for by the public because society does not trust law enforcement.

These rich data from the Smykla et al. (2016) study touch on many vital areas of law enforcement officers' perceptions of BWC use; however, they do not provide super-majorities among respondents' survey items. Indeed, further exploration is needed to obtain more insight into officers' skepticism of BWCs, and that is the intent of the proposed study.

Huff et al. (2018) indicate that leadership strategy to recruit officers to BWC programs may influence rank-and-file receptivity to activate BWCs while on duty; it may be that squad and precinct culture influence receptivity to BWCs. The authors suggest that leadership strategies to recruit officers to the BWC program may influence rank-and-file receptivity to activate BWCs while on duty; squad and precinct culture influence receptivity BWCs. For example, when leadership takes the time to listen to officers' concerns about privacy and distribution of BWC footage, officer compliance may increase. Studies show BWCs perform as intended, that when activated, BWCs increase transparency and accountability, decrease the use of force, and improve officer-citizen relations (Henstock & Ariel, 2017). However, these benefits accrue if officers comply with activation policies; conversely, benefits are squandered when noncompliance is rampant. Huff et al. (2018) call for more research to examine the factors that influence compliance with BWC policy mandates; this is the proposed study's intent.

Lawshe et al. (2019) examined whether intra-organizational structures and dynamics affect rank-and-file officers' ($N = 492$) attitudes toward BWC use. The authors' study built upon a review by Haas et al. (2017), who suggested that (a) perceptions of organizational fairness inform a notion of organizational legitimacy and that, in turn, (b)

a belief in organizational legitimacy improves organizational commitment and yields compliance with administrative policies. Thus, Lawshe et al. (2019) hypothesize that police officer perceptions of administrative justice/fairness will be positively correlated with attitudes toward BWCs. However, study results did not find a significant relationship between the police officers' perceptions of organizational justice and attitudes toward the BWCs, suggesting the need for further research to explore officers' perceptions of administrative fairness related to administrative policies compliance.

Headley et al. (2017) examined receptivity to/satisfaction with BWC policy among sworn officers ($N = 60$) in the Hallandale Beach (FL) Police Department, employed approximately 144 employees with 60 sworn officers. Study findings indicated that despite reports of positive changes in officers' behavior (e.g., less intrusive methods for resolving conflict), the officers were resistant to using BWCs and that their resistance to BWC use increased over time. In particular, officers were displeased with how the videotaped materials were used by leadership to mete out discipline for what officers believed were petty instances of misconduct; in other words, it was not the use of the BWC on the job as much as leadership's handling of BWC video materials that led to/ramped up officers' displeasure with the technology. The authors recommend that future research explore ways that leadership can frame BWC use to maximize rank-and-file officers' satisfaction with and deploy the BWC, thereby reaping its well-documented benefits. The proposed study will contribute to the knowledge gap identified by Headley et al. (2017).

Young and Ready (2015) examined whether patterns of BWC activation by police officers are top-down-driven (i.e., dependent on the perception of the fairness/legitimacy of the administrative policy) or bottom-up-driven (i.e., depending on individual officer preferences, belief, comfort levels). Data were drawn from 1,475 reports over nine months, completed both by officers whose BWC use was compulsory ($n = 25$) and officers whose BWC use was voluntary ($n = 25$). The dependent variable is whether the police officer will activate his or her BWC during citizen interaction. Findings showed that as departmental procedures shifted from discretionary to mandatory BWC use, officers in the field—including those who volunteered initially to use the BWC—chose increasingly not to activate/turn on the BWCs. The results demonstrate that the administrative handling of BWCs and BWC policy can significantly affect officers' attitudes and, ultimately, the success of a BWC program.

Pelfrey and Keener (2016) enlisted focus groups and conducted a qualitative study on officer perceptions of (a) BWC use, (b) administrative decision-making processes, and (c) agency use of BWC data. Qualitative data from the focus groups indicated that officers generally believed the following statements to be factual: BWCs would improve the quality of evidence; BWC data would help disprove complaints against police officers; BWCs would have little effect on police and citizen behavior; BWCs do not make officers safer; BWCs could be used by command staff for “Monday morning quarterbacking” of officers' performance; officers feel more-or-less comfortable about wearing BWCs; all in all, the advantages of wearing BWCs outweigh the disadvantages; and overall, officers endorse adoption of BWC use by their police

departments. One of the most significant concerns expressed in the focus groups was that BWC data would be used against officers in internal investigations and performance evaluations. But the most significant finding from the study is a methodological one: the authors suggest that, while the preponderance of literature on this topic uses survey data, qualitative research has the potential to provide a richer understanding of officers' perceptions, reservations, and expectations than that captured by survey instruments. The proposed qualitative study aims to gain insights into rank-and-file officers' and leadership's perceptions of BWC use and explore why many officers refuse to comply with BWC policy mandates despite BWCs' demonstrated effectiveness at decreasing the number of use-of-force incidents and improving officer-citizen relations.

Summary

An exhaustive review of this literature shows the changing relationship between law enforcement and the citizens they serve, who now demand transparency and accountability for officers' actions, hence the implementation of mandates requiring the use of BWC technology. The literature also documents a growing resistance among rank-and-file officers who resent limitations on their discretion to use BWC technology as they deem appropriate. In Chapter 2, the problem's relevance, theoretical framework, and rank-and-file officers' perception of BWCs were discussed. Chapter 3 will present the methodology and data analysis plan.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Studies have shown that BWCs perform as intended when activated, increasing transparency and accountability, decreasing the use of force, and improving officer-citizen relations (Henstock & Ariel, 2017). In this basic qualitative study, I aimed to gain insights into rank-and-file officers' and leadership's perceptions of BWC use and explore why many officers refuse to comply with BWC policy mandates despite BWCs' demonstrated effectiveness. Huff et al. (2018) called for (a) conducting research to explore officers' perceptions of BWCs and (b) leveraging the findings of such research to increase officers' compliance with BWC-related policies. In this basic qualitative study, I responded to the Huff et al. call and addressed that gap. In Chapter 3, I present the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, and the study methodology. Issues of trustworthiness are also discussed.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Question

RQ (Qualitative): What are rank-and-file police officers' experience with BWC activation policy mandates implemented in rural police departments in Northern Alabama?

Central Concept of Study

The phenomenon under study was rank-and-file police officers' noncompliance with BWC policy mandates. I investigated noncompliance by using a reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) framework. According to reactance theory, perceived threat to personal freedom stimulates individual action to preserve/restore that freedom (Brehm & Brehm,

2013a). This is particularly emblematic of American culture, emphasizing independence, autonomy, personal agency, and self-reliance (Pascual et al., 2012). Therefore, American individuals are more likely to comply with a demand when it seems that they have a meaningful role in the decision-making process (Farley et al., 2019). Top-down, noninclusive development/implementation of BWC policies have tended to minimize or eliminate rank-and-file officers' sense of and discretion, yielding noncompliance.

Research Tradition

In this study, I employed a basic qualitative approach exploring rank-and-file police officers' experience using BWC technology (see White, 2014). A basic qualitative approach emphasizes first-hand accounts of lived experience and examined phenomena through interaction between the researcher, participant, and the phenomenon under investigation (Sundler et al., 2019). A basic qualitative study is a standard for exploring a particular phenomenon from the participant's perspective while explaining what was experienced and how it was experienced (Sundler et al., 2019). In capturing lived experience, subsumed human-human interaction and human-technology interaction (e.g., computers, smartphones, and BWC; Patton, 2015). Furthermore, beyond the comprehensiveness of its experiential scope incorporating all means by which participants manifest their lived experiences, there are all of the idiosyncratic elements that make one person's lived experience unique: intuition, reflection, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, judgment, and cognition (Patton, 1999). A basic qualitative design doubles up on the first personness, leveraging (a) the participant's unique lived experience and (b) the participant's unique processing of their unique lived experiences

(Patton, 2015). Finally, the basic qualitative approach entails using in-depth interviews or examinations of personal narratives in examining individual experiences/perceptions of experiences (Cristancho et al., 2018). The BWC records in-depth, semistructured narratives among law enforcement officers, lending insight into noncompliance with BWC policy mandates.

Role of the Researcher

I collected and examined the accounts of people with first-hand experience relevant to the present study (i.e., rank-and-file police officers who have worn BWCs and been subject to BWC policy mandates). These study participants were uniquely positioned to make suggestions for improving officer compliance with BWC policy mandates and allowed me to explore trust issues resulting from mandatory BWC use. I adhered to all research-related ethical obligations and police agencies' policies and standards (see Chauvette et al., 2019). I did not lead study participants to any desired response nor suggest a narrative direction via facial expressions or gestures. I also did not coerce participants into answering questions if they were reluctant, share my accounts with participants, or disclose participants' stories with other participants in the study. The interviews were audio-recorded. I marked notations in a personal journal to track possible associations among participants and their data, and I followed potential bias instances. I fostered a pleasant, open communication environment so that study participants could feel relaxed and provided insight into their personal experiences with BWC technology.

Methodology

Population

The target population was law enforcement officers in rural Northern Alabama who have arrest powers in Alabama and had completed the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (APOSTC). In this study, I focused on those law enforcement officers whose service period extends from pre- to post-BWC adoption. Study participants were members of police departments in rural Northern Alabama.

Sampling Strategy

In this basic qualitative study, I used purposeful sampling techniques. Purposeful sampling is used to recruit participants with the most direct experience of the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2015). For the current study, individuals with first-hand knowledge of the BWC were recruited; subsequently, participants were sampled purposefully based on their experience and expertise. Furthermore, study recruitment employed snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a form of purposeful sampling wherein targeted participants enlist their cohort members, thereby recruiting additional individuals who have firsthand knowledge and insight into the phenomenon being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015).

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

This study's targeted population was recruited from police departments in rural Northern Alabama who had completed the APOSTC and who were active, certified law enforcement personnel. Participants were to be 21 years of age or older (police officers must be 21), of any gender, ethnicity, race, education obtained, or rank. BWCs represent

a new technology that law enforcement has been aggressively adopting. Study participants in this study (a) had in-depth, first-hand knowledge of BWCs and BWC programs and (b) had worked through the transition to BWC implementation, thus positioning them to provide suggestions for improving compliance with BWC policy mandates.

Sample Size and Rationale

In this basic qualitative study, I used snowball-sampling techniques; to be deemed reliable, a sample size of 10 resulted in saturation (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Saturation occurs when there are no new themes, no further data, and no new coding necessary concerning the phenomena under consideration (Astroth & Chung, 2018).

Procedures for Recruitment/Data Collection

I was employed in the field of law enforcement in a rural area in Northern Alabama. I began by compiling a list of participants who could qualify for this study within the State of Alabama. I contacted the police chiefs (see Appendix A) to ensure I was not violating any of their police department policies by recruiting study participants. I also provided the police departments and prospective participants with a brief presentation describing the study's nature and the need for participation. Once the Walden IRB gave its approval, I began the recruiting process. I obtained authorization from police chiefs for their employees to participate. I requested permission to distribute flyers (see Appendix B) that promoted my study and provided my contact information to the participant. I had participants refer additional individuals who have worked in law enforcement over a period spanning the implementation of BWCs. Participants were

provided with a consent form, study objectives, study procedures, their rights of confidentiality, and the nature of the questions that were asked.

Instrumentation

This study included questions established to examine police officers' experience using BWCs, including suggestions for improving compliance with BWC policy mandates. Interviews were conducted using semistructured interviews. I was the sole interviewer, with the aid of an audio recorder and field notes to assure accurate recording and transcription. The questions used in the research study (see Appendix A) were drawn from BWC-related issues within the literature. Interview questions included the following: "What are your thoughts on the BWC?" "Are you in favor of their use in your law enforcement agency?" "What were your thoughts when you discovered that the BWC was going to be a device that you were going to be required to use in your daily activity?"

Procedures for Data Collection and Debriefing

Triangulation is a technique that is used with several different modes/methods of data collection and analysis to improve dependability and credibility (Yin, 2009). In the current study, I triangulated the data to ensure a thorough, accurate portrayal of participants' experiences and perceptions of experiences with BWCs (e.g., recording responses to interview questions, observing participants' body language during interviews). Interviews used open-ended questions and follow-up questions for the purposes of clarification and amplification. The interviews lasted for about 30 to 45 minutes in duration for each participant and were recorded (i.e., through the audio tape and field notes) for transcription and analysis. Once the data analysis was completed, I

provided a transcript to each of the participants. The participants conducted an evaluation of their transcribed interview for accuracy and completeness. The participants made corrections, and the corrections were used for and during the data analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis is the technique of making sense of the data that was collected from the study participants. According to Creswell (2013), the data analysis comprises of organizing the data (i.e., transcripts from participant's interviews) for research, consolidating the raw data into codes (i.e., assigning names to segments), merging the codes into comprehensive categories or themes, making assessments of the data, and then reporting the results. The semi-structured interviews will be face-to-face, where participants will answer questions related to "rank-and-file police officers' experience with BWC policy mandates implemented in rural police departments in Northern Alabama." The data was gathered from two rural cities in northern Alabama. The participants were contacted by phone or email to set up the 30 to 45-minute interviews. All interviews were digitally recorded.

Ravitch and Riggan (2016) suggested that data analysis starts with precoding, a process that entails reading, questioning, and engaging with the data, noting short phrases, ideas, and critical concepts. Utilizing both bottom-up (i.e., data-driven) and top-down (i.e., theory-driven), qualitative analysis was both inductive and deductive. To code inductively, I reviewed the transcripts, using participants' own words to capture meaningful data segments; deductively, I immersed myself in the data, reviewing transcripts multiple times to identify aspects of participants' responses that reflected the

literature that guides this study. These two approaches to coding the data was made in tandem, as they are not mutually exclusive. At this point, my familiarity with the data allowed me to assess whether (a) participants' responses directly addressed the study's research question, (b) additional information needed to be collected, and (c) my coding reflected only participants' responses and not my own biases. I reviewed the audio recordings and interview notes to confirm that these terms have been met and that the codes are bias-free.

With its ability to manage and organize multiple data sources (e.g., text, audio, video, emails, spreadsheets), the NVivo qualitative analysis software platform was used; NVivo allowed me to identify different data patterns and emerging themes using word frequency queries. The platform also provided visualization tools, including charts, mind maps, word clouds, and comparison diagrams. I used this platform and my interview notes to interpret and develop themes that have emerged in the data; once identified, I judged whether the emergent themes were meaningful relative to participants' responses and the theory that guided this study (Grbich, 2013).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility refers to the genuineness of (a) the data collected, (b) participants' interpretations of the targeted phenomenon, and (c) researcher analysis of the data (Polit & Beck, 2012). I used member checking or respondent validation in requesting that participants review transcripts to ensure their accuracy (Smith & McGannon, 2018). My law enforcement background may facilitate member checking or respondent validation,

allowing participants (i.e., law enforcement officers) to be comfortable and candid during interviews and post-interview data checking (Patton, 1999).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which a research study's findings can be transferred to other settings (Patton, 2015). Descriptions of process and methodology in qualitative studies facilitate transferability (Creswell, 2013). I provided detailed reports of procedures and findings to allow for the current study's transferability and replication in other settings/with other populations.

Dependability and Confirmability

Audit Trails

Audit trails capture step-by-step study procedures and decision-making processes (Johnson et al., 2019). The transparency engendered by audit trails allows independent third parties to evaluate a study's fidelity. Using NVivo software, I generated an exhaustive report covering research design, study implementation, interview procedures, and raw and processed data.

Triangulation

Triangulation is both a data collection procedure and a measure of ensuring the objectivity, authenticity, and validity of research results (Noble & Heale, 2019).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity challenges the researcher to examine their values, training, experiences, perspectives, beliefs, agendas, assumptions, and emotions (Hsiung, 2008). Reflexivity is the researcher's self-assessment of the impact of her/his identity on the

research process and outcomes (Etherington, 2007). Braun & Clarke (2020) suggests that participants must also be involved in reflexivity, needing post facto to help the researcher evaluate the data they helped generate. As a law enforcement officer, I have experiences with and opinions about the phenomenon I was examining in the current study (i.e., BWC technology and the policies that mandate its use in law enforcement). I believe that my level of self-awareness allowed me ably to conduct this research.

Ethical Considerations

Before researching each study location (i.e., neutral sites in close proximity to participants' places of employment), written permission was requested from the police chief, sheriff, or an authorized individual to approve their participation in the study. Written permission documents were included as part of the application to the Walden IRB. Once the application to IRB was approved, I began recruiting and providing consent forms to individuals who met study criteria. I have no direct or indirect power or influence over any participant's law enforcement career. All participants were recruited from local law enforcement agencies.

There was minimal risk anticipated for participants involved in this research project. However, there might have been some participants who felt uncomfortable about answering some questions. Before face-to-face interviews, participants were informed about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the fact that they could skip any question they felt reluctant to answer, (c) and the fact that they could end the interview without penalty at any time. If, as a result of the interview process, a participant experienced any kind of unanticipated mental distress for any reason, I would refer them (as city or county

government employees) to their employee assistance program. I would inform the participants that this is a voluntary research project and that any identifying/confidential information would not be shared. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a label such as P1 or S1. All digital data was transferred to an external hard drive, and hard copies of identifying data was secured according to IRB requirements. In accordance with Walden University policy, audio tapes, videos, transcriptions, and other forms of participant information was secured: digital files were password-protected on a private computer; non-digital information was placed in a personal safe for five years and then will be destroyed.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I provided a rationale for the current study. I have described the methodology that was employed. The strategy for recruitment of participants was clarified to ensure absence of bias. The interview instrument was discussed, wherein questions inquired about (a) the role of BWCs in modern community policing and (b) perceptions of the BWC pursuant to policy mandates. Data collection and analysis techniques were detailed, and potential ethical issues were addressed. Chapter 4 reported the results of this study, including themes that emerged from the participants' interviews.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore rank-and-file officers' experience with BWC policy mandates, including suggestions that may help for increased compliance. In particular, I solicited responses from police officers who experienced the transition from no BWC mandates to a mandated activation policy. According to Brehm (1966), reactance theory maintains that when individuals are constrained in some way, they feel a strong need to counterattack to regain their freedom; in this case, police officers were constrained by a mandatory BWC activation policy, limiting their discretion as to where or when to activate the BWC. In an attempt to regain control of BWC activation, police officers may choose not to comply with the policy (Brehm, 1966; Miron & Brehm, 2006; Steindl et al., 2015). Consistent with reactance theory, police officers will resist in various ways in an attempt to regain the autonomy and discretion denied to them by BWC-mandated activation policies.

In this chapter, I explain the process used in conducting this study, starting with a description of the setting and demographics. The data collection and analysis process are presented in detail with supporting statements from the transcripts. Information about deviations from the recruitment strategies are clarified, along with unexpected circumstances such as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic of 2019. The concerns with trustworthiness are offered, and the findings are discussed in the response to the research question.

Research Setting

Because many new police officers have been hired since the adoption of BWC policies, the number of participants who met the inclusion criterion (i.e., working before the adoption of the BWC) has diminished. When the present officers were hired, the BWC mandated activation policy was in place; the departments had already adopted the BWC, therefore no transition occurred. This situation was anticipated during the planning stage of this research, so snowball sampling was used to help to obtain the participants needed for this study.

Demographics

The participants were White, ranging in age from 32 to 66, two females and nine males, with an average age of 47. The participants were law enforcement officers who have arrest powers in the State of Alabama and who had completed the APOSTC. Having worked in law enforcement before the adoption of the BWC by their police agencies in Northern Alabama, all participants met the criteria for this study. Participants worked at law enforcement agencies in rural Northern Alabama that adopted the BWCs at various times and were representative of the rank and file, including patrol, corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and assistant chief; all had several years of various work experience, such as detention officer, school resource officer, investigator, police academy instructor, special weapons and tactics member, traffic homicide investigator, narcotics enforcement, crime suppression member, traffic unit enforcement, Field Training Officer coordinator, instructor in stinger spike system. Several participants had obtained 2- and 4-year degrees in public safety and health, criminal justice, and criminology, along with

two who currently hold a master's degree in criminal justice. This was a true representation of the law enforcement agencies and the population in this specific setting.

Table 1 are the demographics of the study participants.

Table 1*Main Study Demographics*

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Education	Years on force
P1	32	M	W	HS	10
P2	56	M	W	BA	28
P3	46	F	W	BA	21
P4	59	M	W	BA	28
P5	38	M	W	AD	20
P6	66	M	W	AD	36
P7	33	M	W	BA	10
P8	49	M	W	MS	20
P9	42	F	W	MS	20
P10	44	M	W	AD	23
P11	62	M	W	AD	29

Note. The demographics of this study had various ages, education, and experience.

Data Collection

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB, 04-24-20-0069766) to begin data collection approved the study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was changed from face-to-face, in-person interviews to virtual platforms; 30 to 45 minutes of video interviews were scheduled at participants' convenience. Letters (Appendix B) were hand-delivered to two rural Northern Alabama police departments to request permission to conduct interviews with their rank-and-file officers. Both police

chiefs granted permission, and recruitment letters (Appendix C) were placed on the bulletin boards in their daily roll call or briefing rooms at each police department. The interested officers called and texted me at the cell phone number provided in the recruitment letter.

While recruitment was gradual at the outset of the study, the use of snowball sampling enabled me to recruit a sufficient number of participants who met the inclusion criteria. The initial contact was by phone or text where participants indicated an email for receipt of the consent form. Each participant received an informed consent letter detailing the terms of the research study, including my name and contact information, cell phone number, and IRB contact information. Participants indicated their consent by signing the form with “I consent” and emailing it back to me. These forms were retained and placed in a lockbox along with the external hard drive. Once consent was received, interviews were scheduled at the participants’ convenience. To protect their confidentiality, each participant was assigned a code such as P1 or P2.

Of the 14 who initially expressed interest, 11 rank-and-file police officers with experience before and after BWC, policy mandates were implemented participated in the study. One individual was interested in the research but had concerns that defense attorneys in future law enforcement court cases would use his interview against him. Two other individuals agreed to participate but never set a date to conduct the interview; a follow-up email was sent to request a date for the interview, but there was no response. Three participants chose to use the Zoom application. For two of the three, the audio and video worked well. However, the Zoom connection was lost with one participant who

continued on FaceTime. The remaining participants used FaceTime on their Apple iPhones and Apple iPads. In rural Northern Alabama, poor signal strength reduces video and audio quality, which made interviews difficult at times. However, the questions were asked again for clarification with some follow-up questions to ensure accuracy.

Participants appeared calm and relaxed during the interviews; most seemed excited to provide their point of view on the BWC; they shared both personal and other officers' experiences.

Digital audio recordings were transcribed using the NVivo 20 transcription software. The NVivo 20 transcription was used only as a reference; I transcribed from the original digital recordings verbatim from each participant's interview for accuracy. Each participant was emailed a copy of the transcribed interview and was asked to verify the transcriptions for accuracy. This member-checking process led to five participants returning their interviews with corrections. Once the corrections were made, they were hand-coded and downloaded to the NVivo 20 software. No names were entered into any computer software programs or field notes to protect the participants' legal rights to confidentiality (42 C.F.R., 2017). Only the participants' codes (P1-P11) were used to identify them. The interview transcripts were transferred to an external hard drive. Both the hard drive and the digital recorder were placed in a secure lockbox to which only I have access. No information was placed in the Dropbox application (iCloud).

Changes to the Initial Interviews

Initially, I had planned to conduct face-to-face, in-person participant interviews. However, I had to change to virtual interviews via either FaceTime (Apple product video

and audio application) or Zoom (video and audio application) to comply with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Analysis

Coding Process

Upon completion of the 11 audiotaped interviews, I transcribed them using the NVivo 20 transcription software. During the transcription process, I listened to each participant's interview numerous times, sufficient to ensure their accuracy by repeating the process several times during editing. After the transcriptions were completed, I printed hard copies of all participant interviews.

I used Microsoft Word software to develop the data-coding table, including the diary. In the first phase, I manually coded each of the 11 participants' responses to the 11 interview questions. According to Schreier (2012), an inductive approach is data-driven whereby the raw interview data are examined for similarities that are consolidated into codes, categories, and then themes. Working with the transcribed interviews, I first identified phrases that were repeated by all participants, assigning labels to these codes. The codes were then consolidated into categories that captured the essence of the coded phrases. A category reduction process followed whereby the similar and/or redundant subcategories were consolidated into main categories. From the main categories, four themes emerged that reflected the overall experience with BWCs expressed by the 11 participants. Table 2 displays the categories, codes, and examples.

Table 2*Categories, Codes, and Examples*

Categories	Codes	Examples
BWC benefits law enforcement officer; backs up and protects from false allegations	A safety net for police officers	Protects the officer BWC backs up the officer
The BWC is a necessity for law enforcement	Shows exactly what happen	Cameras saved me each time
The BWC changes the officer's behavior	entire conversation and visual of the interaction recorded	The BWC is a good idea away of checking on the officer's behavior
Police officers are in favor of the	It is recording and it is there for everybody, good, bad, and ugly.	shows the truth
The BWC protects law enforcement from false allegations	BWC does not care what you say, good or bad, the camera calls it as it happens.	BWC provides evidence from false allegations
Some police officers who were not in favor of the BWC were resistant to the mandatory policy enforcement at first; it was an invasion of their privacy	officers did feel as if the BWC was an invasion of their privacy; it was like 1984 big brother	police have a right to privacy too
The BWC does not show every detail	negative is sometimes the view is going to be straight from that body camera	BWC does not provide the whole scene or full details of the situation

BWC offers transparency and accountability	in every account of what happened in that incident.	accountability for the officer and the department
The BWC provides video evidence	BWC is very useful in evidence collection	The BWC is a silent witness if the subject blurts out a confession on video no longer hearsay
The BWC bring ethics and professionalism in policing	the officer has been trained well enough that the officer does his job ethically and professionally so he will not have to worry about what the body camera is recording	crooked cops or doing unethical or illegal stuff the camera is going to hold them accountable.
Juries want to see the BWC video	all juries expect there always to be video evidence	the body camera evidence to back it up
The BWC shows an honest and unbiased view	BWC unbiased perspective	BWC is the best possible honest and unbiased to show I did not do anything wrong
The quality of the BWC should be set to the certain national standard	purchase a quality body-worn camera	good quality camera, especially with a sound like one that picks up sound really good
The rank and file had input into the BWC activation policy	it's good to get input from the guys on the street just to get some input	Yes, lieutenants, detectives, patrol officers, and supervisors all help with the mandatory policy.

Not every police department has a mandated BWC policy	No, our department does not have a mandatory activation policy	we do not have a mandatory activate policy we use officer discretion
Police departments have Mandatory BWC activation policies	Yes, we have a mandatory activation policy	arrive on the scene the BWC is too activated
Mandated policies hold police officers accountable.	the camera is going to hold them accountable	hold this person accountable
To improve BWC policy compliance have remedial retraining	give them some more training instead of just throwing them a camera	like scenario training with muscle memory
The transition to the BWC	mainly the transition was slow at first	transition was hard

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility in qualitative research refers to how accurately the findings reflect the participant has lived experience with the BWC. The participants all had worked in the field of law enforcement before the BWC being adopted by their police departments. A copy of their transcribed interview was emailed to participants for verification of accuracy; five of the participants returned their transcripts with their corrections. Maxwell (2013) suggested member checking is the best way to rule out any misrepresentation of participants' intended meaning and identifying one's

own biases. Having read participants' responses multiple times, I was assured saturation had been achieved when their responses became redundant.

Transferability

This study examined the lived experiences of law enforcement officers in Northern Alabama regarding the transition from no BWC use to a mandated BWC activation policy. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is achieved when sufficient detail allows for replication of the study using other populations in different settings; a thick description of the methods and procedures is the strategy used to accomplish this (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability and Confirmability

Audit Trail

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state an audit trail documents each aspect of the study, including how: data collected, categories derived, and choices were made throughout the study. The audit trail made available the audio digital recording of the Zoom and FaceTime participant interviews, field notes, verbatim transcriptions, consent forms, and various coding within NVivo 20, analysis, charts, summary reports, and graphs.

Reflexivity

According to Patton (2015), reflexivity allows the researcher to identify, acknowledge, and set aside personal biases. I used a reflexive journal throughout the study, noting my thoughts and reactions to participant remarks to guard against the influence of any possible preconceptions or assumptions during data collection, analysis,

and interpretation. Reflexivity allowed me to distinguish between my thoughts and views versus the participants' viewpoints to ensure that the findings reflect only the latter.

Results

Theme 1

Theme 1 was that BWC benefits law enforcement by backing up and protecting the police officer from false allegations, changes the officer's behavior, and mandatory policies hold a police officer accountable for their actions.

All of the participants agreed that the BWC was a positive tool for law enforcement given the country's current social climate. During the interviews, participants appeared to be excited to express their views and thoughts regarding the BWC. Some participants thought that it supported the officer more than it harmed them. Most of the participants were a little skeptical at first; they were unsure if the BWC would be a beneficial tool for them or if it was going to be used against them by their police administration for small policy violations. Once the participants received the BWC and started using it, all had a positive outlook; this was due in part to the BWC backing them up when complaints were lodged against them by the public. According to Steinheider and Wuestewald (2008), the leaders in law enforcement directly affect how police officers are empowered to carry out their daily duties, such as communication, implementation, and adoption of reform strategies. When new technology and new policies mandating their use are introduced, individuals will have different reactions as to how their daily activities will be affected; law enforcement is no different. The fear of the unknown can produce trepidation (Gaub et al., 2016).

P1: I was skeptical about the body camera. I think they back us up more than they hurt us.

P3: We need the cameras to cover ourselves, cover liabilities; it is a good way of doing it because you cannot deny what is on video or what your words where it validates it for everybody.

P8: The BWC is the next evolution and innovation of technology it is more of a necessity now less of an optional thing for police officers good and bad cameras.

P11: I see the value of body cameras now, as it protects the officer a lot of times, from complaints that are made unjustly against the officer. The body camera backs up the officer and it makes the complainant look like an idiot.

Studies have shown that police officers hold primarily positive views regarding the implementation of BWCs, while other studies have shown skepticism and concerns about the prospects of BWC mandates (Gaub et al., 2016). The data collected from the 11 police officers found: (a) that all were in favor of using the BWC in their law enforcement agency, (b) believed that the BWC helped support the police officer's side of the story, most often because the police officer's truth telling was supported by the BWC, (c) provides an unbiased viewpoint, (d) supports the police officer's actions in case of lawsuits, (e) reduces or stops frivolous complaints against police officers, (f) provides a better community relationship with police officers, (g) provides accountability for the police officer and the police agency, (h) bears silent witness, (i) provides a safety net for police officers, and (j) reconstructs different crime scenes. There has been prior

research that discovered a common premise about the BWC technology that found police officers overtime felt more positive about the BWC (Lum et al., 2019).

P4: The positive thing is that they are going, to tell the truth. Whatever the situation that the officers are involved with, the truth is going to come out. There is no denying it. One way or the other.

P6: I worked in law enforcement before the deployment of the camera. Well, I was against it at first. When something new comes out it is almost as if you are against any new change at first.

P10: It is a positive for good police officers it cuts down on frivolous complaints against officers because they have the body camera evidence to back it up it can show exactly what happened on the scene.

P11: The positive aspect is that it is a silent witness at the scene; whatever happens, and it is recorded for posterity. It happens or it did not happen.

The field of law enforcement is a career that is very fluid with laws, policies, society, equipment, and technology. One participant had worked since 1982 when police officers only had a weapon, handcuffs, and flashlights. However, over the years the police departments have added body armor, computers, different types of radios, dash cameras, and now the BWC. All of the participants agree that the BWC will support the police officer if the police officer conducts himself or herself professionally, maintains an appropriate attitude, and works within the umbrella of their department policy and the law. Some of the participants believe the BWC protects the police officer against the false allegations lodged against them by the public. The BWC video supports the

officer's perspective as told to his supervisor, along with the written incident report. The BWC provides evidence, details of the crime scene; however, it may not show the whole story due to the camera's limitations. When adopting the BWC, participants recommended that scenario-type training is vital with the police department's BWC, case law, and policies.

P2: It is an objective witness of the interaction with the police officer and the public. It provides transparency and accountability.

P4: The main thing is to control your attitude while you are using it. It is a good tool because it does change the officer's perspective on how to handle situations and how to treat people. It is to help the officer to save the city and yourself from liabilities; to use it as a positive tool and not a negative tool.

P5: Transparency can be a benefit not only to build a better community relationship but also benefits law enforcement during trials.

P7: I think having a solid policy that is going to help both the officer and police department showing the police department is fair toward everyone in the community. Times have changed. The police officer's words are no longer enough. The public wants to see the video of what happened.

The majority of the participants' police departments did have a mandatory activation policy; however, three did not. The majority of the participants were patrol officers or sergeants during the time their police departments adopted the BWC and developed the mandatory activation policy. During this period, three of the police officers had input into their police department's BWC mandatory activation policy. One of the

three participants whose police department did not have a mandatory activation policy was provided an opportunity to have input into his police department BWC policy. Three of the participants did not have personal knowledge of who developed their BWC mandatory policy. According to Young and Ready (2018), mandatory activation is the most effective approach for ensuring that BWC technology is utilized to its fullest potential. Lum et al. (2015) suggested that the rapid adoption of the BWC technologies, and the lack of high-quality data about the effect of the BWC technologies, could lead to both unanticipated and unintended concerns that may work for or against both the police and citizens.

P1: We have a mandated policy. When we got a call, we turned on our body-worn cameras. We had input with the mandated policy. When we first got them, there was no mandated policy, and the policy was revamped later.

P2: We have a mandated policy; when you interact with the public, you arrive on the scene of a call, whatever the call is it should be activated. It is an objective witness to the interaction with the police officer and the public. It provides transparency and accountability.

P5: Transparency can be a benefit not only to build a better community relationship but also benefits law enforcement during trials.

P6: If the officer was doing, what he is supposed to be doing there would be no negative with the camera. But if he is doing something wrong, it will catch him.

P9: The BWC provides accountability for the police officers and the police department. The BWC reduces liability for both the police officer and the police department.

P11: The positive aspect is that it is a silent witness at the scene, whatever happens, and it is recorded for posterity. It happens or it did not happen.

Theme 2

Theme 2 was that the BWC provides ethical and professional behavior in policing, including accountability, honest and unbiased viewpoints, and evidence in court cases; however, the quality of the BWC should be held to a national standard to ensure the quality of sound and video of the interaction between law enforcement and the public.

Nationwide law enforcement departmental policies vary in content as pertains to controlling police officer behavior; this is to ensure that departmental agency activation policies are in place during interactions between the police officers and the public (Young & Ready, 2018). The demand from the public for police officers to activate the BWC was to provide accountability and transparency, often depending on the local, social, and political climate in which BWCs are deployed (Newell & Greidanus, 2017). According to Ariel et al. (2015), police officers who complied with their BWC mandated activation policy had fewer use-of-force complaints than officers who did not engage the BWC.

Several participants were concerned with the quality of the BWC that police departments may purchase. Some participants said that during the transition, they had problems with the BWC, having gone through several cameras when they first got them

because the plastic clip that held the camera broke during a typical day. Another participant's camera would not download; therefore, the company had to do an upgrade on the BWC system before downloading the video, which took several months. Participants insisted that the BWC must produce quality video and sound for the protection of the police officer and police departments to guard against false allegations, against lawsuits, and provide quality evidence in court cases. Participants say that today the BWC is also being used as a tactical tool to look around corners or into the attic when the BWC is linked to their smartphones. The BWC is technology advancement, but one participant wanted to let the adopting agency know that the BWC is not a foolproof solution for all of society's issues with law enforcement. A participant wanted to let everyone know that there are limits to the BWC that it might not catch everything that is happening on a crime scene or an active situation. However, details of the crime scene that the police officer may have missed might be revealed by the BWC later once the video is reviewed. However, for the BWC to work the police officer has to remember to turn on the BWC, making it muscle memory.

P5: I think that every police officer needs a camera. I would not work in law enforcement without a camera. Since we got our camera, complaints against the officers have gone down 90 percent. I think that the quality of the camera is important. They should be made to a certain standard for the use in law enforcement.

P6: The body-worn camera pretty much backs up the officer's side of the story with video and sound that is worth a thousand pictures. I have seen many people

go to court to fight their case. When the citizen went to his court date, he reviewed the BWC video footage evidence that was presented in the court of the incident or offense from the police officer's BWC. The citizen just asks the judge how much is my fine that I have to pay?

P10: I think people need to understand that just because you are wearing a body camera on your chest, it does not mean that if you turn your head to the left, your camera is still videoing straight ahead. If you turn to look to the left, you may not see something or it may mean just because you can show that video down and nitpick every little frame and you see the gun or see that it was just a cell phone or whatever. People have to understand that when things are going on at the scene you might not catch every little detail that the camera catches.

Theme 3

Theme 3 was that not every police department has a mandatory activation policy, however, for those adopting to transition to the mandatory activation, the policy should solicit input from officers and a grace period for the officers to adapt to the policy should be extended.

All the participants did work in law enforcement before adopting the BWC program, which was a requirement to participate in this study. When new technology is being discussed within the police department, most of the members know that the administration is considering purchasing it; it is never a secret. According to Hyatt et al. (2017) police technology is often adopted without police officer's input, rarely is police officer buy-in gathered before police technology is purchased for police departments. For

this research, I wanted to know how participants felt about knowing that this technology was to be mandated for use in their everyday activities. When it comes to new technology, employees often develop ideological frameworks based on their prior personal experience, word of mouth, or working with similar technology, whereas police officers gathered their information from other police officers' word of mouth, magazines, the internet, and other police departments (Lum et al., 2015). Several of the participants were concerned about how the BWC was going to affect them in their daily activities. There was concern that the BWC was going to be used against them, some were a little hesitant, some felt it was invasive, and others were a little skeptical about using it. While some participants loved it and supported it while others did not react; it was just another piece of equipment, or it was another piece of technology that they had to learn to use.

P5: I think that every police officer needs a camera. I would not work in law enforcement without a camera. Since we got our camera, complaints against the officers have gone down 90 percent. I think that the quality of the camera is important. They should be made to a certain standard for the use in law enforcement.

P6: The body-worn camera pretty much backs up the officer's side of the story with video and sound that is worth a thousand pictures. I have seen many people go to court to fight their case and when they review the video footage, they pretty much asked, "How much my fine is?" I am in favor of the body-worn camera for evidence collection.

P7: We had a guy hiding in an attic at once, we did not want to stick our head up in the entrance we were concerned that he may have a gun. We used our body camera to look up there. We use it as a tactical tool where before we had mirrors to look around corners and behind stuff now we can use our camera due to they are Bluetooth to our smartphones.

P8: I would tell them this is a tool like any other. It is for their protection in our current atmosphere and the things we deal with you have to have them. We do not have a mandatory policy; however, in some situations, you turn it on to protect the officer from false allegations, for instance, if a male officer is talking with a female where she stated this happens or that happens, the camera can back the officer up in this situation.

However, it appears that the majority of the participants did not have much trouble with the transition except for trying to remember to turn on the BWC. For example, one police department addressed this issue by having their dispatch use “Code A” to remind the police officer to turn his or her BWC on in the likelihood of a high-stress situation. Another police officer put an index card taped to his steering wheel that read, “Turn on the Camera.” What made the transition easy for the police officers was that all the supervisors were lenient because it was something new, especially at first. This appeared to be the key to the police officer accepting the adoption of the BWC program for the majority of the participants. However, one of the participant’s police department had a strict BWC mandatory activation policy that hurt the police officers. This strict policy stated that failure to turn on the BWC would result in being written up

for a first offense, three days off for a second offense, and terminated if there was a third offense. The participant working for this police department felt the reprimands were far too harsh for the offense. Some of the officers were self-conscious, having everything they said recorded. They were afraid of saying something wrong or their actions would result in reproach. However, over time officers adjusted to turning on the BWC, having become more comfortable with it and knowing that it would back up their story if an allegation of police misconduct or wrongdoing was lodged against them by the public. One police department could not afford to purchase cameras for the entire department simultaneously. This appeared to increase the police officers' acceptance of the BWC when they saw others using them. Another obstacle to acceptance was the required synchronization to update the cameras, leading some senior police officers to experience difficulties.

P2: The fact that we could only outfit a certain number of officers at one time was beneficial. I think many of the guys learned quickly, after a few encounters, 99 percent of the time it backs up what the officers were saying, and the rank and file that originally got the body-worn cameras helped the upper-level supervisors convince the rest of the department that this is not a bad thing.

P3: It was a constant thing just trying to remember to turn it on then try to adjust to everything you say and every action is electronically recorded. At first, I would be annoyed and just wanted to throw it away and it would get on my nerves just because of the different things to remember about it.

P4: It was not a hard transition; however, it was just getting used to the procedure, and remembering to turn it on. Especially if you were involved in a shooting or a high-speed chase, your adrenaline is flowing. You do not think about turning the camera on. Each dispatcher would tell the officer Code A during the high-stress situation to remind us to turn their camera on and this helped us through the transition.

P7: The transition for me was okay. I think for the older guys it was a little bit difficult because there is a technology aspect with the takes. The newer cameras must be synced up with your smartphone. Some of the guys had trouble with that. Remember to turn it on was on the biggest thing.

P9: Just getting used to the technology, getting used to wearing it properly, and maintaining the equipment. When we first started wearing them, there was not any type of policies as far as when to turn them on or off. It was kind of officer discretion type of deal and obviously during high priority calls when you feel that you might need the video as evidence for a case.

Theme 4

Theme 4 was that police officers are not in favor of the BWC and are resistant to the BWC mandatory policy enforcement. They believe BWC is an invasion of privacy and BWC does not show every detail.

Studies have shown that police officers' opinions on BWCs are more negative when law enforcement agencies have yet to employ them compared to agencies that have already adopted the BWC technology (Smykla et al., 2016). According to Huff et al.

(2018), there has been significant resistance to the implementation of the BWC technology and policies that jeopardizes the police administration's ability to put the BWC into service. The police officers and police unions have pushed back on the implementation of the BWC programs, citing police officer safety concerns and privacy rights (Bruinius, 2016). In some cities, police unions use collective bargaining to hold police departments to union agreements, including that mandating the BWC would violate union and police department agreements (Chimurenga, 2017). In the past, the police officer has always used his or her discretion to make an arrest or let an individual go. However, the police officers lose their discretion when the police departments made wearing the BWC a mandate. Forced to activate the BWC whenever the police officers have interacted with the public or citizens, the police officer loses their autonomy and discretion. When police officers lose both their autonomy and discretion, they work to regain that freedom by resisting in various ways, including not charging their BWC, not turning it on when they are required to do so, and/or by turning it off before the call ends.

P3: Not everyone follows the policy. Several officers get frustrated, turn it off, or do not charge it on purpose. They just get annoyed by having to wear it. Along with some having a little ego thing going on; it just did not sit well with them.

P4: Unfortunately, you have some officers to test the system and some just do not want to wear it. They are going to do whatever they can to not turn it on or use it. They may do things that are unethical and do not want it recorded.

P5: The biggest problem is where we have violations of the policy is that the officer does not charge it. Some may be on purpose and others may just be officers being lazy not taking the time to place it in the charger properly.

P7: Yes, I worked in law enforcement before the deployment of the camera. Well, there was some hesitation at first; I was concerned that it was going to be used against us for small policy violations. We were assured by our assistant chief that the camera videos were not going to be solely used to punish us. Therefore, after that, I love it personally. It has backed me up.

Two of the participants believe that the BWC has diminished the word of police officers in court. If a police officer goes to court without some type of BWC video evidence, juries believe law enforcement is covering something up, or someone has tampered with or deleted the video.

Three of the participants suggested that the BWC does not always show the scene in its entirety, because the BWC is often directly centered on the police officer's chest. However, some officers chose to place it in another position. The BWC does not have the capabilities to move focus on a subject. The officer can turn his or her head to see something occurring and the BWC remains facing where it was originally positioned, recording only what is directly in front of the lens.

Three of the participants had an issue with the BWC being used against them by superiors or others within the government entity. The participants see this as a negative aspect of the BWC when people of authority try to use the video to look for issues that may not be a true procedure or a violation of policy and may only be a discretion call by

the police officer. The police officer is afforded the use of his or her discretion to make an arrest or let someone go, but individuals will look at the BWC and disagree with the way a situation was handled. The police officer will have to defend his or her use of their discretion.

P7: The view from the camera is going straight ahead so it is not going to give you the full view of the situation; depending on the angle of the camera.

P8: I think juries expect there always to be video evidence and if there is not any video evidence available, they think there is a cover-up; that someone involved has tampered with it or deleted the video. I could understand having it on while I was interacting with people, however, some conversations were private and police officers have a right to privacy too.

P10: I just think people need to understand that just because you are wearing a body camera on your chest it does not mean that if you turn your head to the left, your camera is still videoing straight ahead. If you turn to look to the left, you may not see something, or it may mean just because you can show that video down and nitpick every little frame and you see the gun or see that it was just a cell phone or whatever. People have to understand that when things are going on at the scene you might not catch every little detail that the camera catches. It is a silent witness it is not your word against the complainants, there is evidence if the subject blurts out a confession it is recorded for court.

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the study's findings. The police officer participants discussed the transition from working with no BWC to their police departments adopting it with a mandated activation policy in rural North Alabama. The participants answered the questions openly and honestly with enthusiasm and with great interest in the topic of BWC. They shared both what they perceived as the positive and negative aspects of the BWC along with their challenges adapting to the new technology and mandated activation policies. There was a wide assortment of work experience and education in the law enforcement field with this group of participants. All 11 of the participants believed the BWC was a crucial tool for law enforcement to protect themselves from false accusations and lawsuits that may be lodged against them by the public in the course of their official duties. Informed by the literature that guided this study, the interpretation of these findings will be presented in chapter 5. The study's limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change will also be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of rank-and-file police officers' experience of the BWC-mandated activation policy. Whereas officers had been trained to use their discretion as to when and under what circumstances to charge citizens with violations of the law, the mandate to activate the BWC during all interactions with citizens has diminished officers' autonomy and discretion. Reactance theory suggests that once a police officer loses their freedom, that individual tries to regain that freedom by whatever means possible (Brehm, 1966). In this case, police officers could react to their loss of discretion by refusing to comply with the mandate to activate the BWC by simply not turning it on.

By all accounts (e.g., Hyatt et al., 2017), the BWC works extremely well; it addresses the community's demands for transparency and accountability for interactions with its citizens. The BWC has also reduced the use of lethal force. These benefits notwithstanding, police officers may resent the intrusion into their activities, viewing the BWC as a surveillance strategy with the intent to punish them for minor infractions. Regardless of officers' reasons for noncompliance with BWC mandates, the benefits of its use to the community warrant research to hear from the officers themselves about what is needed to increase their compliance. To that end, in this qualitative study, I explored participants' experience with law enforcement's implementation of policies mandating the use of BWCs for all interactions with community citizens. This was done

with the aim of discovering how to increase officers' compliance with the BWC mandate given that its benefits are widely documented (see Sousa et al., 2017).

Key findings include (a) officers favor using the BWC in their law enforcement agency, (b) the BWC supports the officers' side of the story, most often because the police officers' truth-telling was supported by the BWC, (c) BWCs provide an unbiased viewpoint, (d) BWCs support the police officers' actions in case of lawsuits, (e) BWCs reduce or stop frivolous complaints against police officers, (f) BWCs provide a better community relationship with police officers, (g) BWCs provide accountability and transparency for the police officer and the police agency, (h) BWCs bear silent witness, (i) BWCs provide a safety net for police officers, and (j) BWCs reconstruct crime scenes.

Interpretation of Findings

RQ (Qualitative): What are rank-and-file police officers' experience with BWC activation policy mandates implemented in rural police departments in Northern Alabama?

Some studies have shown evidence indicating that police officers hold primarily positive views regarding the implementation of BWCs. Consistent with Ariel et al. (2015), participants in this study thought the BWC was beneficial in that it presented an unbiased view of police officer/citizen interactions, thereby increasing transparency and accountability and reducing the use of force and citizens' complaints. Participants suggested that it is a safety net that reduces liability for both the officer and the police department.

The BWC program's main aspirational benefits are to provide greater transparency with the public, improving legitimacy, confidence, and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve (Grossmith et al., 2015). According to Ariel et al. (2017), use of the BWC gives greater awareness to both the police officer and the public that there is evidence of the interaction that can show any incidence of police misconduct. Lum et al. (2017) believed that BWCs are valuable for examining complaints from the public when or if the police officer conduct comes into question, giving transparency to the public and decreasing racial tensions.

For example, P2 claimed, "You have an objective archive of the interactions between the uniformed police officer and the public. It is objective and does not care what is said. The camera calls it as it is." To that, P5 added, "Transparency can be a benefit to building a better community relationship." P9 concurred, "Accountability for the police officer and the police department, which reduces liability for everyone." Agreeing with the others, P4, P6, and P8 thought that there were good and bad viewpoints on the BWC; P4 suggested controversy and conflict.

In contrast, other studies have reported skepticism and concerns about the BWC program's prospects (Gaub et al., 2016). One of the police officers' main concerns was that the police department would release potentially embarrassing details of the officers' behavior to the public (Adams & Mastracci 2019a). For example, P4 explained,

The negative part is that depending on the circumstances, sometimes it may not be in favor of the police officer. Sometimes it releases too much information to the public. The way an officer handled a call for service may not always sit well with

political views, especially in a small-town setting. One of the city council members may not like that officer and use the BWC against him or her. The other negative thing about the camera is to remember to turn it on.

Adding to that, P6 stated,

I think the BWC is a good tool that can help an officer in a case. Yet, in some cases, BWC can hurt an officer. If the police officer follows policy and the law, the BWC will back them up every time. If the officer does the wrong thing, it catches the officer in the wrong. It can be used against him or her for a violation of policy or the violation of the law.

In addition, P9 said, "I could be seen as a negative being the supervisor is nitpicking the officer on small policy violations," and P10 added, "When supervisors would look at random videos to see what officers are doing to look for small violations to generate complaints against the officer."

However, the BWC can also create distrust between the police officers and the police administration if the BWC is misused. Participants suggested that the BWC videos have the potential to be used against the police officers for "fishing expeditions" by the sergeant, lieutenants, captains, chiefs, looking to "jam-up police officers" under their authority (Smykla et al. 2016). According to Adams and Mastracci (2019b), electronic performance monitoring informs police administrations about the effects of the BWCs on the police officer. The BWC is a tool that shows continuous monitoring of the police officer's behavior, productivity, and motivation that provides a large volume of management information (Adams & Mastracci, 2019a).

Adams and Mastracci (2019b) suggested that the electronic performance monitoring increases stress and burnout and is perceived as less supportive by the police administrations. The police officers are being surveilled, spied on, and untrusted. Hyatt et al. (2017) suggested that every police officer's action has the possibility of being scrutinized. According to Jennings et al. (2015), many police officers support the BWC while others resist the BWC use, perceiving it as a harmful surveillance tool used by police administrators to restrict officers' autonomy and discretion. For example, according to P5, "I do not believe the BWC shows the whole story, particularly at the scene. It shows some, but the camera does not catch everything," and P7 added, "A negative aspect of the camera is sometimes the view of the BWC is going straight ahead. It is not going to give you every facet of the scene due to the limitation and capabilities of the camera itself."

However, according to P8,

It is just evolution, the next innovation. There are mixed positive and negative aspects like good things and bad things about the cameras. Other positive aspects of the camera would be that it is beneficial in evidence collection and having it with you when you do a field interview with a suspect. You do not have to work off purely recollection of what happened. You can hear the actual conversation and have a solid picture of the crime scene all on video.

On the other hand, P8 said,

One of the negatives that I see is the "Monday night quarterbacking" officers are subjected to when other people start reviewing incidents after the fact, where the

police officer has to make split-second decisions. Another thing that is more of a social problem is that even video evidence is only useful to people when using reason. With the most police incidents that we see in the headlines on the cable and nightly news, I would say certain segments of the population have decided what happened when they see those headlines. Nothing contained in the video would change that presumption. I would say both sides of the spectrum, pro-police or anti-police several people have already made up their mind, and no degree of video evidence will change that.

Most of the participants had a BWC mandatory activation policy. There were only three whose police departments did not have a BWC activation mandate. For those who were working under an activation mandate, it would be of interest to know if participants had actively participated in developing their BWC policy. Hyatt et al. (2017) found that where police administrations allowed their officers to participate in the policy development process, officer compliance with the BWC program increased. Three participants had input into their BWC mandatory activation policy. They had this to say: P1 shared, “Yes, we had input with the mandated policy. We all were not issued the body-worn camera initially, and it was not mandatory when we first started with the camera. They took the supervisor's opinion and made the policy” to which P2 added,

We assembled a group, a panel. The way it worked, we solicited information from the different ranks throughout the police department. We included detectives, patrol officers, and supervisors. We also took some pointers and took information from other police departments, so we didn't have to reinvent the wheel entirely.

P11 chimed in,

Oh, yes, I did. I worked for a long time before body cameras came around as a reserve officer. Worked for Cullman PD from 1979 up till 1986, then at Decatur PD, and then at Montgomery Airport Police. They didn't have body cams. And it was several years after coming back to Cullman in 95 before we ever got the body cameras. So, there were many years without the body cams.

Theoretical Framework

Reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) contends that the perception of threat to one's freedom will prompt a form of "reactance" in an attempt to restore it. In this case, police officers have lost the ability to control certain aspects of their work environment, in particular officer discretion in handling interactions with community citizens. Whereas, before the implementation of BWC policy mandates, officers were trusted to judge how best to do their jobs, now they were compelled to use the BWC to surveille themselves. Brehm and Brehm (1981) suggest that this perceived loss of control, including the loss of trust to make good decisions that they previously enjoyed, could lead to substantial harmful psychological outcomes for the police officer. The police officer may be discouraged and could be involved in some undesirable forms of "reactance" to offset this loss of discretion and trust, such as refusing to comply with policy mandates by not activating the BWC. According to Marasi et al. (2018), organizational deviance comprises deviant acts directed toward the administration, which in this case would be the police administration. For example, police officers may intentionally make errors in their work environment, such as not keeping the BWC charged so it can be used per the

BWC mandated activation policy or intentionally failing to turn on the BWC when interacting with the public.

Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations in this qualitative study conducted in rural Northern Alabama with small law enforcement agencies. The participants who work at the two original law enforcement agencies selected for this study were slow to respond, requiring snowball sampling to recruit additional law enforcement agencies sufficient to achieve saturation. The lack of diversity in the participant sample was a limitation; the local community from which the sample was recruited, is itself homogeneous, making it likely that the sample would likewise lack diversity. Another limitation was the exclusive reliance on virtual interviews due to COVID-19. Conducting interviews on Zoom and FaceTime limited the opportunity to fully observe body language that would have been available with in-person interviews. A critical limitation of this study was the failure to ask “follow-up” questions to generate more in-depth information about why police officers did – or did not -- view BWC mandated activation policies favorably. By not asking follow-up questions, much of the nuance needed to flesh out officers’ BWC experience was lost.

Recommendations

To address the specific limitations of this study, future research should enlist a more racially/ethnically diverse sample across multiple regional and national police agencies. In particular, participants should be prompted with follow-up questions to elaborate on their responses, providing clarification as to any resentment toward

mandated BWC activation policies and, if so, why they refused to comply. If officers' concerns are not acknowledged and resolved, police officer resentment may persist (Huff et al., (2020). Given the well-documented benefits of the BWC, future qualitative studies should probe officers for suggestions on how to increase compliance among those who reacted to the perceived loss of discretion/ autonomy by resisting compliance (Heberg et al., 2016). Some participants had reservations about the BWC program's rollout, claiming the BWC would be a tool for supervisors to use against officers for minor protocol infractions. Officer distrust toward supervisors expressed by participants should be the focus of future focus groups with a view to exploring ways to restore and strengthen the trust needed to ensure rank-and-file officer compliance with BWC mandates.

Implications

The BWC increases accountability, transparency, and public trust when mandatory BWC activation policies are in place. The increased transparency and accountability encourage adherence to socially desirable behavior that conforms to social norms by both the public and law enforcement (Elliott, 2015). Because increasing officer compliance with BWC activation mandates is in everyone's best interest, adding the officers' narrative to what is already known takes an important step toward increasing officer compliance (Braga et al., 2017). Participants in this study expressed several concerns (e.g., more input into BWC policy development) that if acknowledged and addressed would not only restore trust in their supervisors but would increase job

satisfaction and reduce reactance to officers' perceived loss of autonomy (Hyatt et al., 2017).

Participants wanted reassurance that the BWC would not function as “big brother,” surveilling them in an attempt to catch them committing minor policy infractions. They expressed a need for greater leniency by police administrators during the transition to mandated BWC activation, claiming that it took time getting used to the new procedures, especially remembering to turn it on and how to operate it during officer/citizen interactions. The participants whose police administration was lenient during the transition, ensuring that every police officer understood the BWC program concept, appeared to have weathered the transition better than those whose administrators denied officers sufficient time to get comfortable with the new technology. Participants also expressed the need for police policymakers to provide scenario-type training with the BWC operation, policies, and laws associated with its use.

The quality of the BWC equipment, per se, appeared to be a factor with several participants, having experienced trouble with the BWC. It is vital to purchase quality equipment to achieve the goals and objectives of a BWC program; it must be durable and have good audio and video to provide a clear representation of citizen/officer interactions for evidentiary purposes at trial. Addressing the concerns reflected in findings from this study would increase officer compliance with BWC policy mandates, guaranteeing that BWC benefits would accrue to law officers themselves and the communities they serve.

Conclusions

Police officers have worked in law enforcement for decades without the BWC; however, it is a different time, and society and laws have changed (Hyatt et al., 2017). The political climate has made law enforcement more challenging with cellphone video and the Internet making all police officers' actions available for widespread public consumption (Newell & Greidanus, 2017). The deaths of unarmed African American males Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Freddie Gray killed by police officers was the flashpoint, leading to demands for greater police accountability by civil rights groups, political figures, and ordinary citizens. Rapid deployment of the body worn camera was the answer (Gaub et al., 2020). The BWC video provides an impartial view of all that it captures -- but only if it is activated. According to Ready and Young (2015), police officers may resent the BWC mandate, viewing it as a form of surveillance used by police administrators to catch officers doing something wrong. Adding to officer resentment was the use of discretion entrusted to rank-and-files officers to conduct themselves appropriately at all times, a trust that officers had heretofore enjoyed.

Participants in this study understood the benefits to all of the BWC; however, lingering resentment for having lost personal control over how to do their jobs will likely reduce officer compliance with BWC activation mandates. While the benefits of the BWC have been widely documented, these benefits accrue if, and only if, the BWC is activated. Addressing officer concerns has the greatest potential to increase compliance with BWC activation mandates.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

- Q1. What are your thoughts on the BWC are you in favor of the use in your law enforcement agency?
- Q2. Please explain the positive aspects of the BWC from your point of view?
- Q3. Please explain the negative aspects of the BWC from your point of view?
- Q4. Does your law enforcement agency have a mandatory activation policy? Did the police officer within the law enforcement agency know what the mandatory policy covered?
- Q5. Did you work in law enforcement before the BWC was adopted into your law enforcement agency? What are your thoughts when you discovered that the BWC would be a device that you were going to be required to use in your daily activity?
- Q6. What was the transition like from no mandate to work with BWCs to the mandated use of BWCs for you?
- Q7. How did it make you feel? Can you explain the concerns you had during this transition?
- Q8. Do you believe that everyone in your law enforcement agency follows your mandatory activation policy? What would be the reason that someone would not follow the mandatory policy?
- Q9. What are rank-and-file police officers' suggestions for improving compliance with BWC policy mandates? What suggestions would you have for the law enforcement administration of your agency to change the mandated policy? Any other thoughts on this topic.

- Q10. What suggestions would you have for your law enforcement agency to adopt the BWC into their daily activities?
- Q11. What would ease the transition from no BWC to a BWC program with mandated activation policy through your personal experience?
- Q12. Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to share?

Appendix B: Contact Letter to Police Chiefs
Request to Conduct Research Study

From: XXX@waldenu.edu

Date: January 20, 2020

Subject: Requesting to conduct a research study with your department

Dear:

I am a graduate student of psychology at Walden University. My dissertation topic is exploring the rank-and-file police officers' suggestions for improving compliance with BWC policy mandates. The purpose of the research study is to use qualitative methods to investigate how to improve police officer's compliance with BWC policy mandates. The police officer is an essential stakeholder within the community and a vital part of adopting the BWC as an asset to the law enforcement environment to provide accountability, transparency, and training benefits. The BWC will enhance evidence collection and improve police legitimacy. I will attempt to identify suggests that may improve the acceptance of the BWC and reduce the resistance of mandated activation policies. I will utilize a qualitative exploratory approach by face-to-face interviews.

The importance of this present study is that it will provide insight from seasoned police officers that have first-hand knowledge of the transition from no BWC to adopting the BWC with mandated activation policies. The results can focus on a gap in the literature concerns about how to improve police officer's compliance with BWC

mandated policy. The data gained from the results of this research may have direct effects for policymakers with adopting BWC into law enforcement agencies.

I am respectfully requesting your written permission to engage with your police officers to collect data for this essential study. I will collect data from volunteers willing to participate from a flyer that I would like to place on a bulletin board at your police department. I will not provide any monetary compensation to be participants as the results are solely for educational objectives.

For any issues or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact me at XXX or by email, XXX@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

Edward Potter

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear Law Enforcement Officer,

You are invited to be a part of a research study on law enforcement officers' views about the body-worn cameras about the rank-and-file police officers' suggestions for improving compliance with BWC mandates. This study is open to any sworn law enforcement officer in the State of Alabama that has an APOST certification. There are no current studies within this scope of research. This focus is based on the police officers (patrol, sergeants, lieutenants, captains) and first-hand experience and knowledge of the use of the body-worn cameras in regard to improving compliance with the body-worn cameras mandatory policies. I am a doctoral student at Walden University (an online university) headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This research is part of the requirements to obtain my doctoral degree in Psychology with a specialization in Education.

Law enforcement officers will be asked to me in person due; this is a qualitative research project. I will meet you at your convenience at a location of your choice. This interview will be recorded and transcript and returned to you for your approval. This interview should only take about 45 minutes.

Thank you for your time and your service as a police officer to the citizens of the State of Alabama. I hope you will consider being a part of the study. I want participants from all ranks to investigate everyone's point of view if possible. If you are willing to participate or would like more information about the study, please contact me at XXX@waldenu.edu or via phone XXX.

Respectfully,

Edward L. Potter, DPSY Candidate