

Evidence Based Policing and Application

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Evidence-based policing represents a significant shift in the field of law enforcement, as it prioritises the incorporation of meticulous research, data analysis, and evaluation to shape and direct law enforcement strategies. The objective of this approach is to optimise the efficacy, efficiency, and equity of policing strategies and interventions. The utilisation of body-worn cameras (BWCs) has emerged as a notable tool in this context. Police officers utilise compact and portable devices to document auditory and visual recordings of their engagements with members of the public. This paper aims to explore the fundamental concepts of evidence-based policing, the criminological theories that serve as its foundation, the objectives of body-worn cameras (BWCs), as well as their merits, drawbacks, and ethical constraints. In addition, we will assess the utilisation of body-worn camera (BWC) evidence in addressing distinct crime-related subjects, such as domestic violence, street crime, stop and search practises, and anti-social behaviour.

Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) is an approach that focuses on the systematic collection and analysis of data to guide policy, practice, and strategy (Selby-Fell & Newton, 2022). Its guiding concepts include accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, proactivity, and risk minimization (Selby-Fell & Newton, 2022). EBP calls for a more tactical, analytic, evidence-based, and problem-oriented approach to crime and disorder by utilising research, technology, and data and evidence analysis to inform decision-making (Selby-Fell & Newton, 2022). This strategy is intended to assist police forces in developing and integrating crime reduction and prevention initiatives, as well as improving public safety.

Furthermore, EBP promotes transparency, moves away from traditional policing methods, and enables a data-driven approach to both crime and public safety (Pepper, Rogers, and Martin, 2020). Police agencies can better understand the core causes of crime in their locations, develop more specialised tactical and strategic ways to decrease and prevent it, and promote public safety by understanding and utilising evidence.

EBP is a technique of thinking about and responding to policing issues by developing new crime prevention and control approaches. It entails using research and evidence-based practises to discover, analyse, and solve policing problems. It seeks to bridge

the gap between crime and justice to maximise resource efficiency and achieve the greatest potential outcomes for society (Bueermann, 2012).

The fundamental principles of Evidence-Based Practise (EBP) are as follows:

Utilising Empirical Research: This involves the systematic collection and examination of data pertaining to criminal activities and law enforcement practises, aiming to inform strategic decision-making in policing. The process involves implementing policies and programmes that are informed by research and supported by evidence, while also being tailored to address specific local needs.

The principles of accountability and transparency necessitate the practice of openly and honestly disclosing the rationale behind policing decisions and the allocation of resources. The process involves the disclosure of the data that informs decision-making and the promotion of accountability for police decision-making and practises.

A thorough understanding of the context surrounding the problem at hand, the formulation of effective strategies, the identification of pertinent data sources and metrics, the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, the generation of useful insights, and the implementation of tailored solutions are just a few of the essential elements of data-driven decision-making.

Collaborative problem-solving involves the collective identification, analysis, and resolution of complex issues in conjunction with key stakeholders. The process involves the formation of a multidisciplinary team comprising experts from various fields, each possessing unique skills and perspectives, in order to discern and propose potential resolutions.

Policy and practise evaluation involves the examination of the outcomes of interventions and programmes to ascertain their effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. The process involves the systematic evaluation of policies and practices on a recurring basis, with the aim of identifying and implementing strategies to mitigate disparities in outcomes.

EBP provides a methodical framework for reducing crime, ensuring policing efficacy and efficiency, increasing public faith in law enforcement, and bridging the gap between crime and justice. In brief, EBP allows law enforcement organisations to focus

on data-driven decision-making to discover answers to their communities' particular public safety concerns (Lum, Koper and Telep, 2010).

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) are increasingly utilised in evidence-based policing to increase transparency, reduce police malfeasance, and enhance police-community relations. BWCs are miniature cameras worn by police officers while on duty that can record audio and video of interactions with the public (Jennings, Lynch and Fridell, 2015).

Evidence-based policing has shown that the use of body-worn cameras can have a number of positive effects, such as decreased use of force, better officer accountability, and more accurate event documentation (National Institute of Justice, 2022). The foundation of evidence-based policing is the idea that judgement calls should be supported by facts and evidence rather than gut feeling and experience. BWCs can offer an objective and undistorted view of events by capturing audio and video evidence of encounters.

Crime theories underpin body-worn cameras. Body-worn cameras can reinforce desired behaviour, according to social learning theory (Lum et al., 2019). Cameras "serve to orient and remind individuals of expectations for lawful decision-making and channel their behaviour in socially prescribed directions" (Lum et al., 2019, p.98). Body-worn cameras deter police and suspects (Lum et al., 2019, p.99). (Lum et al., 2019). Finally, environmental design (CPTED), a fourth criminological theory, may help police body cams avoid crime. The evidence-based crime prevention strategy CPTED supports physical environment design (Lum et al., 2019, p.103). Police patrolling and recording may improve CPTED. Lum et al. (2019) argue that body-worn cameras can deter crime by rewarding good behaviour and punishing poor behaviour. Body-worn video cameras (BWV), sometimes known as body-worn cameras, are high-definition video cameras worn by police officers throughout their daily tasks. They often attach to an officer's uniform or protective equipment and record while performing various policing responsibilities such as patrols and responding to calls. BWV aids in the safety of both police officers and members of the public, and it can also be used in investigations (Lum et al., 2020).

The goal of incorporating BWCs technology into evidence-based policing is to prevent police misbehaviour while also increasing the efficiency of investigations and arrests.

BWCs footage can provide a detailed narrative of events and provide as critical evidence in criminal trials (Body-Worn Video, 2022). It can also aid in the identification of criminals, the provision of evidence in court, and the resolution of civil disputes. BWC footage can also be utilised to examine, criticise, and inform decision-making processes (Vakhitova et al., 2022) . Furthermore, the use of BWV can help reassure the public of police officers' professionalism and integrity.

According to research, police personnel who use BWCs perform more professionally because the camera provides accountability and clearly documents situations. According to a study conducted by Harrison, L'Hoiry, and Santorso (2021), the presence of a body-worn camera can prevent the escalation of incidents and lead to better Police-Public Relations as citizens become aware that their actions and conversations are being carefully monitored.

Finally, BWCs technology can be beneficial in a variety of ways, including crime prevention and promoting police integrity. It can considerably improve the efficiency of investigations, arrests, and prosecutions by providing an accurate description of events and identifying people guilty for a crime. According to Sir Brian Leveson, there should be an encouragement of the utilisation of body worn video, along with the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate the seamless introduction of such evidence in court proceedings, without causing any disruptions to the court's operations. According to the report, the practise of promoting the collection of digital evidence was highlighted (Leveson and Brian, 2015).

From a criminological standpoint, the use of BWCs is an illustration of crime control theory (Ariel et al., 2017). This theory proposes that society should concentrate on regulating criminal behaviour using concrete measures, such as surveillance and deterrence. BWCs can create a deterrent effect by recording interactions between officers and citizens, thereby discouraging those who may be inclined to commit a crime. In addition, by providing a physical record of interactions, BWCs can assist officers in accurately documenting the events of a situation, thereby reducing the likelihood of false accusations or convictions.

In addition to the theory of crime control, BWCs are also an example of the theory of deterrence. According to the theory of deterrence (Abramovaite et al., 2022), the threat of punishment for criminal conduct can be an effective deterrent. By providing a record

of interactions between officers and citizens, BWCs can ensure that officers are held accountable for their actions and that criminals are appropriately punished. In addition, the presence of BWCs can serve as a deterrent for those who are inclined to commit a crime, as they are aware that any evidence, they provide could be used against them.

Body-worn cameras have some potential advantages. White and Malm (2020) assert that "BWCs [Body-Worn Cameras] can provide evidence for criminal prosecutions, serve as a deterrent to criminal and inappropriate behaviour, improve officer safety, and increase public trust" (p.3).

Body worn cameras have the advantage of providing an objective record of encounters between law enforcement and civilians (ProCon.org, 2020). This can serve as proof in court and safeguard civilians from police misbehaviour. Furthermore, body-worn cameras can provide an unbiased account of events and act as a deterrent to police use of force (ProCon.org, 2020).

Weaknesses: There are some potential downsides. According to White and Malm (2020), "BWCs [Body-Worn Cameras] can be expensive to purchase and maintain, difficult to store and manage, and can generate a large amount of data that may be difficult to manage and analyse" (p.3).

One of the shortcomings of body-worn cameras is the cost of adoption and maintenance (ProCon.org, 2020). Furthermore, due to the cameras' limited field of view, the recordings can be difficult to interpret and may not provide a complete account of events (ProCon.org, 2020).

Ethical Constraints: White and Malm (2020) express concern about the ethical implications of employing body-worn cameras. According to them, "BWCs [Body-Worn Cameras] can also raise ethical concerns, such as privacy rights, data security, and the potential to unduly influence individuals' behaviour" (p.50). Furthermore, according to White and Malm (2020), "BWCs [Body-Worn Cameras] can also create a chilling effect on police-community relations" (p.50).

The usage of body-worn cameras raises ethical concerns because the recordings could be used to spy on citizens, as well as the footage could be leaked or misused

(ProCon.org, 2020). Furthermore, officers may selectively turn their cameras on and off, potentially resulting in biased recordings (ProCon.org, 2020).

Overall, the use of body-worn cameras in evidence-based policing can be a valuable tool, but before implementing such a programme, it is essential to consider the potential drawbacks. It is crucial that law enforcement agencies strike a balance between the need for transparency and accountability and the need to preserve individual privacy and public trust (Smykla et al., 2015).

Body-worn camera evidence can be an effective weapon in the battle against crime, especially in cases of domestic violence, street crime, stop and search, and anti-social behaviour. For example, Pope et al. (n.d.) discovered that body-worn camera evidence can be a beneficial tool in both reducing incidences of domestic abuse and giving information to support police officers in their investigations in the case of domestic violence. Furthermore, Henne et al. (2021) argue that body-worn camera evidence can aid in the prevention of police violence by encouraging officers to behave more professionally. As a result, body-worn camera evidence can be considered as a significant instrument for improving the safety of both victims and police officers, as well as the accuracy of criminal investigations.

The use of body-worn camera evidence regarding crimes such as domestic violence, street crime, stop and search, and antisocial behaviour has the potential to be advantageous in terms of providing evidence and establishing accountability. Body-worn cameras can capture crucial evidence in these types of offences, which can be used to aid in the prosecution of offenders and the delivery of justice to victims. Specifically, body-worn cameras can provide evidence of crimes, such as domestic violence, that would otherwise be challenging to capture (Lum et al., 2019).

However, there are also potential disadvantages to using body-worn camera evidence in criminal matters (Blitz, 2015). For instance, the footage can be readily manipulated, and the camera may not always capture the entire incident (Stanley, Senior and Analyst, 2013). In addition, body-worn cameras may be incapable of capturing audio, which can be a crucial element of a criminal investigation (Newell and Greidanus, 2017).

In general, body-worn cameras can be a useful instrument for providing evidence and accountability for crimes such as domestic violence, street crime, stop-and-frisk, and

antisocial behaviour. However, it is necessary to consider the potential disadvantages of using this type of evidence and to ensure that the footage is used in an ethical and responsible manner.

Investigations into domestic abuse, street crime, stop and search operations, and anti-social behaviour all benefit from the deployment of body-worn cameras. BWCs can add another level of responsibility for law enforcement personnel while also providing priceless evidence in investigations and court cases involving these kinds of crimes. Despite the potential advantages, it is still unclear how exactly BWCs will be used to investigate these kinds of crimes. However, the use of BWCs to evidence-based policing constitutes a significant technological advance in the fields of criminal justice and crime prevention.

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