UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF BODY WORN CAMERAS ON POLICE INTERACTIONS WITH THE PUBLIC: IMPACT ON NUMBER OF ASSAULTS ON OFFICERS AND USE OF FORCE COMPLAINTS AGAINST OFFICERS

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Criminal Justice

School of Public Affairs

2017
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ABSTRACT

Incidents of reported excessive or improper use of force by Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) during interactions with the public have revealed significant rifts in relationships built on mutual trust and respect. The community/law Enforcement relationships may be redeemed by the implementation of a body-worn camera (BWC) program. BWC use has been a repeated suggestion to aid Law Enforcement (LE) professionals to increase public trust through transparency by law enforcement professionals, civic and community leaders. However, since body-worn cameras have become a new presence as a reliable law enforcement tool, there is little research on their real-life application and ability to positively change human behavior for both the public and law enforcement. The purpose of this explorative study is to examine the relationship between the wearing of body worn cameras and their ability to change behaviors of citizens and the law enforcement officers in the Las Vegas Metro Police Department (LVMPD). It is hypothesized that a body-worn camera program would impact the actions of private citizens and LEOs through declines in citizens’ complaints against officers as well as through reductions in assaults on police officers. The results showed significant reductions on assaults, but not on citizens’ complaints. Limitations and practical implications of the results will be further discussed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1
   Scope of Study ....................................................................................................... 9

II. LITERATURE REVIEW .......................................................................................... 12
   Hawthorne Effect ................................................................................................. 13
   Deterrence and Social Control Theories .............................................................. 15
   The Rialto, Arizona State University, and Mesa Studies ..................................... 19

III. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................. 23
   Sample Selection .................................................................................................. 23
   Data ...................................................................................................................... 24
   Variables and Analytical Technique .................................................................... 27

IV. RESULTS ............................................................................................................... 28

V. DISCUSSION .......................................................................................................... 31

VI. CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 38

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 41
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Pressure continues to mount nationwide with every video captured by the public recorded on a simple cell phone. These videos seem to consistently depict the questionable actions of officers involved in a use of force situation, shattering the image and reputation of law enforcement. Today's society is a well-educated and well-informed community on the multiple uses of technology and its applications of videography. Some may venture to call themselves semi-producers of home movies, at the very least most are novices in this genre. Technology so meshes into today’s society that virtually everyone, down to children in grade school with cellphones, has the power of being an instant videographer at a moment’s notice (Timan, 2016).

Today, events are often captured on a multitude of simple electronic devices. Such recordings act as the catalyst for numerous debates, including the need to implement body-worn-camera programs in law-enforcement agencies nationwide. These agencies have focused their attention and energies on the applications of current technologies utilizing video documentation with body-worn cameras to address the need for increasing public trust and transparency (Timan, 2016). Body-worn-camera programs, their relevance, and applications have dominated numerous debates within the law enforcement profession as the result of public criticism on police use of force incidents (Brucato, 2015). The events of August 09, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri involving Michael Brown, are one example of several incidents involving questionable tactics used by police during encounters with the public. The actions of Officer Darren Wilson leading up to, during, and after his contact with Michael Brown could have had
the cloud or suspicion of police prejudice cleared in the early days of the tragic event.

The questions of how Officer Wilson contacted Mr. Brown and the actions of Mr. Brown following would have could be known without the flurry of speculation that followed.

Negative events involving police use of force continued to occur across the country (Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Cincinnati, and Charleston), fanning the intensity of public outrage and the growing distrust for law enforcement professionals. Law enforcement professionals no longer enjoy being given the benefit of the doubt with their word being good enough when their actions become called into question (Timan, 2016).

With hopes to mitigate problems associated with these use of force events, law enforcement is probing the effectiveness of body-worn-cameras as a tool to lower complaints and assaults on officers (Pratt, Cullen, Blevins, Daigle, & Madensen, 2006). A body-worn camera is best described as a small but portable device made available in a variety of forms for the officer to attach the uniform (Coudert, Butin, & Métayer, 2015). All of which are non-intrusive to the daily activities of police, attaching to the officer’s vest, glasses, etc. as part of their uniform (Coudert, Butin, & Métayer, 2015). Body-worn camera devices are also available as a headset, providing audio and video footage of the officer’s daily interactions (Wood, 2016). Police professionals are only effective as a result of public trust, it is trust built through transparency with the community that builds the legitimacy needed in a policing agency (Evans, 2016). A body-worn camera program can help create and nurture this idea of rebuilding trust through improved transparency while in the process, identify and correct bad behaviors in the officer (Stanley, 2013).

The Americans Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), an organization which states it has both a non-partisan and non-profit mission of defending and preserving the rights all person in
the United States of America. Rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and its laws has stated, "A body-worn-camera program is a promising tool which is part of the solution for increasing accountability through transparency to lessen the effects of a “he said she said” scenario (ACLU, 2015). Body-worn camera programs are currently the most relevant way to improve accountability with transparency (Coudert, Butin, & Métayer, 2015). Data supporting body-cameras relevance in police operations continues to be gathered as BWC programs usage grows around the country.

Limited studies conducted on the effects of body-worn cameras on the police-public interactions so far appear to support its benefits. The presence of body-worn cameras seems to create a heightened sense of self-awareness for all those involved, thus changing behaviors and therefore making them viewed as socially acceptable by those who view the recordings (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2011). Socially acceptable is defined by not engaging in criminal activities and conducting themselves appropriately by society’s standards. People inherently want to be good and behaving appropriately and seen that way by others is an important form of a desired need for acceptance (Letourneau, 2015). People’s behavior will change if they have a belief they are being monitored, this is due to their desire/need for others to view them in a positive light (Letourneau, 2015). According to the research by Tony Farrar, 2013, increased self-awareness through the knowledge of being recorded test if behaviors would change when they aware they are being observed creating a greater likelihood of better behavior (Farrar, 2013).

Body-worn cameras create a heightened self-awareness affecting all involved in their interactions (Wood, 2015). The use of video recordings to document police
interactions isn’t a new phenomenon or concept for the law enforcement profession. Law enforcement has also relied on video recordings for use in criminal proceedings on everything from identifying bank robbers down to the shoplifter. A well-known example highlighting video use by LE professionals is the use of dash cameras in patrol cars, used as a method to document drunk driver’s behaviors and widely used in court proceedings (IACP, 1993). Law enforcement's first documented use of video recordings was in the 1960’s, starting with the Connecticut State Police and continuing its relevance into the 1980’s as awareness to drunk driving rose (Rosenblatt, Cromartie, & Firman, 2001). The 1980’s drinking and driving movement are considered the original movement which utilized video recordings as critical and essential pieces of evidence for DUI convictions (IACP, 1993). Shortly following this movement, Connecticut State Police conducted studies on how video documentation significantly impacted an agency’s ability to react to allegations of wrongdoing, resolving complaints and correcting behaviors (Rosenblatt, Cromartie, & Firman, 2001).

Recent attention on law enforcement personnel, depicting the tactics involving questionable uses-of-force, has been met with significant criticism and heated anti-police debates on why violent protests are occurring in communities as a response to this type of police action. This attention has become the incentive in police departments to research plans and policies for body-worn-camera programs as a potential tool in rebuilding public trust with accountability through transparency (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014). "Creating a culture of integrity and accountability not only improves effectiveness, but it also generates a respectful, enjoyable and life-giving setting in which to work” (Hanson & Hanson, 2007, p. 62). The law enforcement profession currently also lacks an ability
to accurately convey an officer’s perspective during encounters with the public (IT, 2015). Even if these events are captured on outside video, an accurate police view may still be unavailable (Jervis, Lebow, & Stein, 1991). Body-worn cameras may help officers to convey the difficulties they face while displaying a person’s intent of ill will and accurately assessing the “He-said, she-said” scenario (ACLU, 2015).

As discussed above, the high level of discretion and impunity enjoyed by police officers is under extreme scrutiny because of recent recorded and questionable use of force events by the law enforcement. A deteriorating perception of law enforcement, by the public, further threatens an already strained relationship with the public (Katz et al., 2014). The goal of rebuilding this relationship is achieved best by increasing accountability through transparency. Rebuilding relationships is a shared goal of communities and the law enforcement profession (Katz et al., 2014). Fair or not, this responsibility falls heavily on the shoulders of the law enforcement professionals. They are not just the keepers of peace but also the keepers of the bond of trust with the public (Wood, 2016). The current inability to convey law enforcement’s point of view further reinforces why the burden of creating better understanding rests with LEOs to develop and create ideas with reasonable expectations (Smykla, Crow, Crichlow, & Snyder, 2015). These ideas must develop into solutions, which can repair and preserve the delicate relationship of trust. Rebuilding done through a collaborative effort with the public is possible (Smykla, Crow, Crichlow, & Snyder, 2015). The ability of police departments to measure and react to negative behaviors also acted out on officers by the public is invaluable; however, if left unchecked or ignored a community will see significant and long-lasting social and economic effects (Katz et al., 2014).
Thus, police departments across the country are in the process of developing a “best policy” practice to address issues associated with body-worn-camera programs. As dialogue increases around the use of body-worn-cameras so do the realization of related challenges and need to measure effectiveness. These problems can be specific to the community's socio-economic makeup where the feeling of inequality and racism are perceived to be institutionalized by the community (Brucato, 2015). Society may have the belief or the perception police are covering up and doing as they please without any checks and balance or program offering transparency (Brucato, 2015). A body-worn-camera program demands well thought out policies governing their use (Police Body-Mounted Cameras: With Right Policies in Place, a Win for All, 2013). For example, before the implementation of body-worn-camera programs, police departments must first review and solve the issues dealing with the storage of data, retention, and privacy concerns, as raised by the ACLU, (Police Body-Mounted Cameras: With Right Policies in Place, a Win for All, 2013).

Luckily, successful collaborations between community leaders and the leadership in law enforcement have led to the development of solutions, which are both reasonable and realistic (Evans, 2016). The ACLU, in reaction to the flood of media attention around police use of force incidents, has given their opinion on body-worn-camera programs. The ACLU released its white paper on the topic in October 2013 (Stanley, 2013). This report stated the ACLU's findings on the implementation of a body-worn-camera program: “When implemented with the right policies, a body-worn-camera program would be a win for all involved” (Ramirez, p. 10, 2014). Additionally, the ACLU soon made a follow-up statement to this stance with the caveat: “Although it was
not for monitoring citizens through video cameras, they were for a well-implemented program and stated it would be beneficial to all sides” (Stanley, p. 5, 2013). The ACLU has taken a very proactive stance on the implementation of body-worn cameras listing several recommendations and concerns they believed should be addressed and resolved as law enforcement agencies, and communities explore implementing a body-worn camera program. These recommendations of "concerns" include: Who and what should be recorded, when do officers start and stop recording, what kind of situations would warrant exemptions to recording an event, how will all this video be stored, who has access, time frames and means of video made accessible to the public, and what kind of privacy issues would video be capturing (Stanley, 2013). In addition to its already mentioned ability to document behaviors of officers and citizens to improve community relations. Another benefit of a body-worn camera program is its ability to aid in identifying gaps in police training, to reduce and to faster resolve complaints, and to improve the collection of evidence for attorneys and courts (Letourneau, 2015).

The Las Vegas Metro Police Department (LVMPD), developed and implemented a variety of policies to governing the use of body cameras to include including when they should be activated, and deactivated (LVMPD, 2016). The policies of the LVMPD are consistent with the policies of other body-worn-camera programs implemented in departments across the country in places like Rialto, California, Mesa, Arizona, and Oakland, California. All of which, these agencies are attempting to provide increased accountability with transparency while addressing public concern around privacy. LVMPD has put a great emphasis on transparency while maintaining their mission to serve and safeguard their community while addressing concerns of privacy. Policies
currently in place not only limit when the officer's body-worn camera is recording activity but also can set parameters for deactivation. When there is a reasonable concern or expectation of privacy (i.e. victims of sexual assault, police operation planning, and officer’s car to car conversations or in department bathroom and locker room facilities (LVMPD, 2016).

What the public has seen to date is the result of technological advances combined with the public’s ability to effectively use social media to transmit the actions of a few officers within a matter of minutes (Mateescu, Rosenblat, & Boyd, 2014). However sensationalized and biased police actions get portrayed, they are significantly shaping the perspective of the public’s view on the measures taken by law enforcement professionals (Elliott, 2015). “Perception is reality” is a saying echoed in the law enforcement community, highlighting the need for awareness on behalf of law enforcement officers. Being second guessed on decisions made in a split second where preservation of life is the priority is an unfortunate reality in law enforcement which will continue and looked at through a microscope (Ramirez, 2014).

As with any new program’s implementation and more specifically one viewed as new with mass deployments in law enforcement, communities are patiently waiting to pass judgment looking for improved behaviors as a mark of success. Can body-worn-cameras help to improve practices, offer accountability with transparency, and rebuild the police–citizen contract of trust? Transparency is defined as access to the day to day operations by the public of Police misconduct files, record of any lawsuits and judgments which have been reached by the local government and the victims of reported police misconduct. This should also include the availability of use-of-force incidents causing
death because of police action. A successful product, in the end, is only as good as the effort put in at the front. Departments who put a reasonable amount of effort into planning tend to have a higher likelihood of success. A study in Las Vegas by researcher's revealed video, specifically CCTV, was influential in deterring criminal behaviors in citizens with a high probability of criminal activity (Sousa & Madensen, 2016). While the amount of existing empirical research on the effects of the body-worn cameras on the public and officer behaviors is limited, the preliminary results provide support for the implementation of the body-worn cameras. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 covers the relevance of the present study. As law-enforcement agencies nationwide rapidly continue implementing the body-worn camera programs and the data becomes more and more available, the body of research on this important topic will undoubtedly also continue to grow.

1.1 Scope of Study

The intended goal of the present study was to add to existing research by investigating the relevance and usefulness of body-worn-camera programs to help law enforcement agencies to re-build or build trust and transparency by making available to the public police misconduct records and the settlements if any that were a result of police actions. Complaints made against officers serve as indicators that police behaviors and actions need addressing at a fundamental level. Assaults against officers, on the other hand, are an enormous officer safety issue, resulting in not only emotional, and physical trauma to officers but monetary losses to departments through lost work time, medical bills, workers compensation and so forth. From these complaints and assaults, through analyzing body-worn camera footage, gaps in training and policy can be
identified and addressed (Research on Body-Worn Cameras and Law Enforcement, 2016).

The above goal gets established by using preliminary data from LVMPD, in Nevada, to examine the impact of body-worn cameras on the police and public interactions. Specifically, this gets accomplished by measuring citizen complaints against officers and assaults against officers by citizens. The LVMPD was identified as an appropriate police department to analyze citizen complaints and assaults against officer’s prior (P) to and after (A) the body-worn camera program implementation as they serve a large population of citizens and have had the body-worn camera program in place for enough time to make before and after comparisons.

A hypothesis was formed based on the limited evidence available using the theoretical concepts of “Hawthorne Effect,” a theory highlighting the idea and concept of changing and improving behaviors (McCambridge, Witton, & Elbourne, 2014), and Social Control and Deterrence theories (all to be reviewed in Chapter II). The hypothesis states police body-worn cameras will have a positive impact on improving an agency’s relationship with the community through identifying areas of the LEO's negative behaviors gets achieved. Also hypothesized was that citizens would improve behaviors toward police officers due to the knowledge of being recorded. Testing the above hypothesis, citizens' complaints against officers assigned as a proxy measure for "police behavior," and assaults against officers by the public applied as a proxy measure for “citizens’ behavior.” More specifically, the mean number of complaints and assaults against officers before and after a body-worn-camera program's implementation were measured and compared. It should be noted, however, that the data available in this study
had limitations and for example, no control variables that could have impacted the results were available. With this knowledge, interpretations of this study are only explorative and should only be used as a reference when exploring future research models for body-worn cameras.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on studies examining the effects of the implementation of body-worn-cameras is minimal, due to its relatively new deployment in law enforcement agencies. However, with that said, the current literature available is still a very helpful tool to hypothesize what can be expected from body-worn-cameras as it pertains to the present study. Assuming the “successfulness” of a body-worn-camera program can be partially determined by an analysis of the number of complaints against officers as well as assaults on officers. From examining the dearth of body-worn-camera literature, it is evident there is preliminary evidence of its positive effects on changing human behaviors.

Before reviewing the actual program, evaluation studies conducted on the body-worn camera programs, it is necessary to provide some background information. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Policing Services (COPS) initiated an In-Car Camera Incentive Program, granting monies to State Police and Highway Patrol agencies across the country (Westphal, 2004). With the In-Car Camera being considered a huge success, the COPS program dispersed more than 21 million dollars to agencies in 47 states to include the District of Columbia from 2000 to 2003 for the particular purchasing of in-car cameras (IACP 2005; Westphal, 2004). Because of the COPS program successes, by 2003 a dramatic increase had also occurred in local police departments installing in-car cameras, according to the Bureau of Justice and Statistics (Hickman & Reaves, 2006). From this program, the use of video recordings became a gold standard in recording police-public contact. The COPS program appears to have paved the way to becoming considered as best practice within law enforcement.
Currently, body-worn-camera programs are implemented and studied in departments throughout the country at unprecedented rates. A review of available empirical research shows a lack of discussion occurring on the results of body-worn camera technology as well as the empirical data for the technology applied in body-worn cameras (COPS, 2014). However, although research and literature are relatively limited, the existing evidence on the body-worn camera indicates the technology is fruitful. Current empirical studies on the effects of body-worn cameras on the police-public interactions before and after the program implementation appear to be limited to and centered around only three main, yet well designed and rigorous, studies to be reviewed later in this chapter (COPS, 2014). The use of information available from these studies, we can assess the impact a police body-worn-camera program may have in medium to large population cities on the police-public relationships. Understanding, however, starts with examining criminological theories and how they help to understand why behaviors may change due to the presence of officer’s wearing body cameras. In addition to the “Hawthorne Effect” concept, two additional theories, Deterrence and Social Control Theories are analyzed as they relate to the body-worn cameras' effects on the police interactions with the public.

2.1 Hawthorne Effect

A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice and Police Executive Research Forum resulted in a 92-page report stating police departments improve their actions as well as interactions with the public depicting both the officers’ and the public’s perspective (Drover & Ariel, 2015). Police chiefs around the country supporting body-camera technology share a common goal and mindset in the improvement of both officer
and citizen behaviors. This mindset becomes reinforced in the studies done to date with departments that have implemented a body-worn-camera program. Improved responses have been evident for both officers and citizens during police interactions when a body-worn-camera is present and the knowledge their actions and words are being recorded (Coudert, Butin, & Métayer, 2015).

The scant existing literature shows that recordings make officers and the public more aware of their behaviors during an interaction, resulting in a decline in the number of complaints filed against police officers (Drover & Ariel, 2015). Theoretically, this phenomenon contributes to “The Hawthorne Effect” (also known as the observer effect) (Jones, 1992). When made aware of actions being analyzed and recorded, with the high likelihood it will possibly be watched later; behaviors will change, creating a positive reaction for improved conduct (McCambridge, Witton, & Elbourne, 2014). The ‘Hawthorne Effect’ is seen as the primary reason or cause for behaviors to change, particularly when it is known to all that their actions are being observed and recorded (Jones, 1992). An important fact to point out for this theory is that the person does have the knowledge they are under observation which causes them to alter and modify their behaviors (Jones, 1992).

Recording devices, or better yet, the creation and existence of video footage, substantially decreases the likelihood a person can keep any anonymity. Or at the very least keep themselves obscured from judgment and the notion of getting away with behaving badly becomes less likely creating a high likelihood that a decrease in questionable behavior will happen (Jervis, Lebow, & Stein, 1991). Video footage has been proven to be a reliable as well as a credible piece of evidence within law
enforcement since the early 1990’s (Jervis, 1991). This history along with the use and presence of body-worn-camera’s along with video footage is a crucial tool in law enforcement, one that can have a significant impact in creating better behaviors among officers and citizens (White, 2014).

The addition of video evidence (such as body-worn-camera footage) depicting the behaviors and actions of officers and citizens’ as they unfold, can now help to reduce the confusion which surrounds a use of force event bringing more clarity (Drover & Ariel, 2015). Greenville, N.C., Police Chief Hassan Adan appears to sum it up best when he made the statement, “I think it’s inevitable, these cameras are going to change the way the police equip their officers. In the future, you’re going to get your car, your gun, your badge, your radio – and your camera. It’s going to add to police legitimacy everywhere, and it's going to create a better rapport with the public” (Drover & Ariel, 2015).

2.2 Deterrence and Social Control Theories

Two criminological theories providing at least possible support for the use of body-worn-cameras are Deterrence and Social Control Theories. In Deterrence theory, a person tends to do “the right thing” to avoid a punishment or a threat of punishment (i.e., when someone is watching). As opposed to doing good things simply because it's the right thing to do (Pratt, Cullen, Blevins, Daigle, & Madensen, 2006). Specifically, Deterrence theory uses the potential consequences to stop crime from occurring. According to Cesare Beccaria, a classical criminologist, persons who chose to commit a crime do so only after weighing the risks to the awards of the offense (Cullen, Agnew, & Wilcox, 2014). When the consequences of crime are perceived to be bigger than the awards of crime, then a person is more likely not to engage in criminal behavior (Cullen,
Agnew, & Wilcox, 2014). This theory further states that people will weigh the Pros and the Cons of how severe, swift, and certain the consequences might be. People are believed to be self-serving, and if the costs of the crime are greater than any benefits, they will avoid criminal type behaviors. However, they also do need to be rational as well as aware of the consequences (Sellers & Winfree, 2010). In other words, based on this theory, the person must have knowledge of the body camera's presence as well as the unlawfulness of their actions. Body-worn-cameras, based on this theory alone, should keep law enforcement and the public more aware of their negative behaviors. Everyone will, in theory, re-think their actions due to the scrutiny they will be under when a video depicts their image and voice. Indeed, deterrence theory lends itself to the prevention and control of a person's actions and behaviors through fear and threat that there will be consequences for the person's undesired or unlawful conduct, whether this person is the officer or the citizen caught on the body-worn camera.

Before the events of the last couple of years, a police officer’s word has always been considered “good enough” in the eyes of the courts and public arena. The mere presence of an officer may still be a sufficient deterrent for most people. Social Control Theory expanded the concept of deterrence to include the social influence and defined as a person’s relationships with values, norms, and beliefs, which are the controlling factors directing them to commit a criminal act (Newburn, 2010). Social Control theory explains a person’s actions, whether intentional or happening subconsciously, including being oblivious to the details in their surrounding (Walsh & Hemmens, 2014). Individuals with strong moral compasses, who have deep community ties as well as having a deeply
vested interest in the community, will be less likely to engage in criminal activity (McLaughlin & Newburn, 2010).

This description of the Social Control theory above defines the type of individual, as well as how the individual will look for ways to model their behaviors. Also, this approach demonstrates how a person's social influences will cause a high likelihood to engage, or not engage, in criminal activity without looking at the motivations to participate in illegal activities (McLaughlin & Newburn, 2010). Their choices are directed by social contracts and decisions to do right or wrong are determined by social order and applying any consequences to choices defined as bad (evil), or illegal (McLaughlin & Newburn, 2010).

With a 78 percent increase in assaults and homicide among law enforcement officers during the first part of 2016, law enforcement officers are dying in the line of duty at an alarming rate, as reported by the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund (2015). With the prevalence of assaults and homicides against police, it is easy to conclude that police do not have the respect and trust of the public once enjoyed a decade or two ago. If law enforcement officers lose their perceived legitimacy combined with a perceived loss of public confidence, any effectiveness they once had to help deter and prevent crime become significantly diminished as a form of social control.

With the growing interest by the public and law enforcement agencies toward body-worn-cameras, it becomes a natural and easy assumption that body-worn-cameras will be the new form of social control for all involved (Hanson & Hanson, 2007). The most relevant and recognized use of body-worn-cameras is the creation of video evidence, an unbiased viewpoint which would supply the documentation on the whole
spectrum of law enforcement officer interactions occurring daily. These include any initial contacts taking place at a crime scene, victim, witness contact, and events which unfold during traffic stops (IACP, 2014b). Law enforcement communities have acknowledged that an adoption of a body-worn-camera program can help to improve the integrity of evidence collection while also reinforcing the law enforcement officer’s job performance and accountability. The program also makes a significant positive contribution to an agency's transparency through video documentation of encounters between the law enforcement officer and its citizenry which in turn aids in investigations to resolve complaints and other officer-involved incidents (Miller et al., 2014). A program where the use of body worn cameras is implemented offers, what is widely perceived to be, an unbiased account of police-citizen encounters as opposed to the usual course of doing business, which currently operates under a good deal of hearsay, "he said, she said," type scenarios.

Through examining the literature available on body-worn-camera programs, multiple areas of concern become unveiled with many police departments across the country. Concerns encountered when attempting to implement a body-worn-camera program include, but are not limited to, increased fiscal spending, privacy considerations (significant impact on community relationships), addressing of officers’ concerns, managing expectations, as well as financial considerations on other programs needed (Katz, Choate, Nuno, & Ready, 2014). Despite the above concerns, the limited empirical research done on the effects of body-worn-cameras on the police-public interactions looks very promising and encouraging (Katz, Choate, Nuno, & Ready, 2014). Results from the largest and most well-known of these studies are reviewed below.
2.2 The Rialto, Arizona State University (ASU), and Mesa Studies

The most influential study to date on the police-body-worn cameras appears to be the Rialto Police Department study, conducted in Rialto, California, between February 2012 and February 2013 (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014). The Rialto Police Department (RPD) conducted their study with the assistance of Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland through the utilization of field trials to help assess the usefulness and effects of body-worn-cameras as it related to the number of reported use of force incidents and citizen complaints.

This study, conducted over a 12-month period, involved 54 randomly selected frontline officers, who were either wearing or not wearing body cameras while working their regular shift (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014). Looking at 988 shifts worked by these officer’s researchers analyzed data from 489 shifts where officers wore the camera and 499 in which they did not (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014). This field study involved splitting the patrol shifts into randomized groups for a year. The control group of officers had body-worn-cameras, the experimental group of officers did not have cameras (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014). During the trial period, the Rialto Police Department had 25 reported use-of-force events with only nine involving officers wearing the cameras (experimental group). When compared to the previous three years, this field study reported an 88 percent decrease in complaints against officers and a 60 percent decline in the use of force incidences (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014).

The second study, completed by Arizona State University (ASU), examined the Phoenix Police Department after it was awarded $500,000 through the SMART Policing Initiative (SPI) by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) (Katz et al., 2014). The
Phoenix Police Department (PPD) used this grant to purchase 56 body cameras for their officers for deployment in one of their precincts, the Maryvale Precinct (Katz et al., 2014). The Phoenix Police Department was specifically looking at the effects of the cameras on complaints and assaults made against their officers as well as domestic violence cases and their outcomes in court (Katz et al., 2014). With only 13.2 to 42.2 percent of an officer-involved incidents recorded, this study focused on specific types of events, which included violent offenses, status offenses, and vehicle stops. Officers were shown to have a significant increase in productivity, measured by arrests made (Katz et al., 2014). Arrests rose 17 percent in officers wearing a recording device compared to 10 percent in those who weren’t (Katz et al., 2014). Complaints against officers also dropped slightly, and officers who were not wearing their recording devices saw an increase of 10.6 percent in complaints within one of the precincts (Katz et al., 2014). Officers in other precincts not participating in the body-worn-camera pilot program saw a dramatic increase of 45.1 percent in complaints (Katz et al., 2014).

Further, the ASU study also reported that those officers who had received complaints in the body-worn camera pilot program precinct had a significantly less likelihood of a claim for inappropriate use of force sustained. The ASU study supported the idea that even when a complaint gets filed, the recording had a significant role in backing up the officers’ accounts of the interaction. This study revealed a significant fact that most claims of inappropriate actions are not pursued due to the presence of police body-worn camera video. The Phoenix Police Department’s body-worn camera pilot program data, however, did not show any significant decrease in the assaults on the officers during the study period (Katz et al., 2014).
Final of the three top program evaluation studies on the body-worn camera programs is by the Mesa, Arizona, police department. The data from this study shows how body-worn cameras can have a significant impact in influencing policing decisions and actions (Ready & Young, 2015). The impact is particularly evident in police-citizen encounters when the officer knows the video will be available to offer further scrutiny of their actions. The Mesa police department conducted their study in much the same way as the Rialto Police Department, breaking their study into two random groups: The experimental group wearing cameras and the control group not employing body-worn-cameras (Ready & Young, 2015). Researchers in this study found that the officers who had body-worn-cameras, when compared to the officers not equipped with cameras, were much more cautious and aware of their actions and far less likely to engage in risky type behaviors:

With on-officer video evidence, there is potential for greater scrutiny over criminal procedures and policy violations. Our results suggest that officers are more self-aware when the camera is on because the video may be reviewed internally by supervisors or externally by public request (Ready & Young, 2015, p. 12).

The Mesa, Arizona, report reflects yet another study where officers’ awareness of video footage documenting interactions leads to more improved customer service oriented behavior. This study also reinforces acknowledgment of self-awareness and the potential scrutiny of actions taken during use-of-force incidences.

The Rialto, Arizona State University (ASU) and Mesa studies have provided a solid foundation for the police body-worn camera research to build on. Thus far, the
research on the effectiveness of police body-worn camera through police-public interactions appears to be mainly positive. Police Chief Adan, of the Rialto Police Department, who assisted in a federally commissioned report on the use of Body Cameras is quoted as saying, "the number of sustained complaints against the officers in his department had gone down" in relation to the start of a body worn camera program (Coudert, Butin, & Métayer, 2015, p. 12). Law enforcement professionals now, more than ever, find their decisions and credibility coming under tougher scrutiny, making the research on the body-worn cameras and the policies surrounding their use relevant and timely.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain the data, sample selection, variables, and the analytical techniques used to examine the effects of a body-worn-camera program on complaints against and assaults on law enforcement officers. As stated previously, due to data and time constraints, this thesis is an exploratory case study focusing on the LVMPD. However, the LVMPD’s operational body-worn-camera program and its data collection efforts, although rudimentary, make it an excellent case study for a preliminary analysis of the effects of a body-worn camera program on police-community interactions.

3.1 Sample Selection

With the recent endorsement and support of the White House under the Obama Administration, body-worn camera programs have benefited from a dramatic increase in funding. With the full support of the White House, the Justice Department proposed spending $263 million to equip police departments in the U.S. with an estimated 50,000 body cameras (US Justice Department, 2015). Through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program, many law enforcement agencies around the country are taking advantage of over $23 million also being made available to help in the implementation of body-worn-camera pilot programs (US Justice Department, 2015).

With pilot programs, departments become limited to only dispersing body-worn-cameras to a few of its officers, districts, or shifts within the trial period (US Justice Department, 2015). The LVMPD was an agency that implemented their body-worn-camera usage at approximately 20 percent of their force beginning with a trial period in 2013. A year later, the department had issued about 75 percent of their uniformed
officers' cameras. Shortly following the LVMPD’s trial period, which ended in 2013, they implemented the department-wide use of body-worn-camera to 700 uniformed patrol officers, not including detectives and special units (i.e. S.W.A.T.).

The LVMPD’s large, diverse force with a widely-deployed body-worn-camera program makes them well suited for this study. The LVMPD is unique in the sense it is a joint city-county police force responsible for the city of Las Vegas as well as Clark County, Nevada. LVMPD has approximately 2,700 police officers of various ranks including 84 percent police officers, 10 percent police sergeants, four percent police lieutenants, and two percent police captains (LVMPD, 2016). The LVMPD has had multiple lawsuits resulting from complaints on officers as well as other officer-use-of-force incidents, which has drawn unintended attention from the U.S. Justice Department. The LVMPD had a reported 44 fatal and 37 non-fatal officers involved use of force events from 2011-2016 ("Deadly Force: Las Vegas Metro Looks at Revamping Some Policies," 2017). These were shots fired calls and did not include complaints against officers.

3.2 Data

The data for the present study from the LVMPD was comprised of citizen complaints against officers as well as assaults on officers by citizens. This data was collected internally by the LVMPD and obtained by contacting the records department using a public records request form found online. The request for data on officer complaints and assaults was specific to the years 2011-2016 and included requests for complaints, and assaults on officers for the years prior to BWC implementation as well as after.
As Figure 3.1 reflects, the three years prior to the near full implementation of the body-worn camera program in 2014, the complaints against officers varied from 201 to 225. After the implementation of the body-worn camera program, the complaints for the next three years against officers ranged from 165 to 244. These complaints were not categorized or broken down by LVMPD and recognized as complaints filed against officers for general misconduct.

![Figure 3.1. Number of Complaints on Officers Prior and After the implementation of a BWC program. *Marks implementation of BWC program in 2014](image)

Figure 3.2 also shows the same pre-and post-statistics as the Figure 3.1 but for the assaults against officers. From 2011 to 2013, between 235 and 285 annual assaults against officers took place while between 2014 and 2016, the same annual numbers ranged from 107 to 151. An important definition, which needs clarification is the term
used in this study, “assault.” Under the State of Nevada’s Criminal Statute, the generic term assault is classified into two different categories, "assault and battery." Nevada defines assault as intentionally making another person feel words or actions will physically harm them, and the court must prove there was intent to commit the crime in addition to the victim being aware the crime happened (Wheaton, 2017). For example, if an individual intentionally makes comments or gestures to another person (referred as a victim) and this person is aware of these threats and believed he/she was about to be harmed, then an assault has taken place. Per Nevada statute, a person does not need to have suffered actual physical injuries for the suspect to be guilty of assault in Nevada (Wheaton, 2017). Battery, on the other hand, is defined as the actual use of unlawful force on another person (Wheaton, 2017). Thus, when this paper refers to "assaults against officers," it is talking about "battery" as defined under the Nevada law.

![Figure 3.2. Number of Assaults on Officers Prior and After the implementation of a BWC program](image)
3.3 Variables and Analytical Technique

The Independent Variable (IV) for the present study was the body-worn camera program while the Dependent Variables (DVs) were the citizen complaints against officers and assaults on officers. There were no control variables in the study, which was one of its biggest limitations, further considered in the discussion section of this study. The IV was a binary variable (1=yes program implementation; 0=no program implementation) while the DVs were continuous variables ranging from 107 to 285 (complaints $n = 165-244$; assaults $n = 107-285$). The IV was also treated as a “treatment” variable, with treatment periods broken down to prior to body-worn camera program implementation (2011-2013) and after body-worn camera program implementation (2014-2016). It should be noted through that a small percentage of body-worn cameras had already been distributed in 2013 as a part of a pilot program. However, no monthly data was available. Thus, the prior-after body-worn camera program implementation cut off had to be made at the year mark (i.e., after 2013).

In addition to visually comparing the figures created and making observations in the data prior to and after the implementation of a body-worn-camera program, a two-tailed t-test with unequal variances at 95% confidence intervals was estimated. This estimation was to compare the mean differences for the citizen complaints against officers as well for the assaults against officers prior to (P), and after (A) the LVMPD implemented their 2014 body-worn camera program. Results from these analyses discussed below.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

As Table 4.1 indicates, no significant differences were found in the mean numbers of complaints against officers prior to \(P\) and after \(A\) the implementation of a body-worn-camera program in 2014 in the LVMPD \((\bar{x} = 215.33 \text{ vs. } \bar{x} = 206.33, t = 0.37)\).

However, the mean number of assaults on the officers significantly decreased during the three years after the program implementation when compared to the three-year period prior to the program implementation \((\bar{x} = 256.67 \text{ vs. } \bar{x} = 126.00, t = 6.62)\).

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value T &gt; t²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complaints – (P)</td>
<td>215.33</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints – (A)</td>
<td>206.33</td>
<td>22.88</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults – (P)</td>
<td>256.67</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults – (A)</td>
<td>126.00</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* T- and P-values reported are for the mean differences between the two variables displaying means for prior and after the 2014 body camera implementation.

Note: Two-tailed t-test with 95% confidence interval was performed.

As reflected in Table 4.1, the mean for citizen complaints for the three-year period prior to a body-worn-camera program dropped slightly from about 215 complaints per year to 206 per year after the body-worn camera program implementation in 2014.

Although this decrease was not significant, there appears to be a downward trend in the citizen complaints against officers as depicted in Figure 4.1. This could mean that officers' behaviors are indeed being impacted by the presence of the body-worn cameras but more time and data is needed to capture this effect. It is a possibility that the lack of
significance on complaints is a byproduct of the pilot program and not initially having all officers equipped with a body camera. Also, an introduction of several important control variables could also change the results. Controls could either still show that there is no significant effect between the body-worn cameras and citizen complaints against officers or enhance this relationship to make it more statistically relevant. However, based on the results of this exploratory study alone, the law enforcement officers in the LVMPD seem to be conducting business as usual. Meaning, officers are conducting contacts and dealing with conflicts as they had prior to any body camera program. The introduction of body-worn camera program has not appeared to alter their behavior during contact with the public. Potential reasons and implications arising from this finding are discussed in the Chapter V discussion.

Figure 4.1 below shows a side by side comparison of complaints and assaults against officers starting in 2011 through 2016.

![Figure 4.1. Number of Complaints and Assaults on Officers Prior and After the implementation of a BWC program.](image)
*Marks implementation of BWC program*
The mean number of assaults on officers during the three-year period prior to a body-worn-camera program dropped significantly from about 257 assaults per year to 126 assaults per year after the implementation of a body-worn-camera program in 2014. This decrease was highly significant (t=6.62), suggesting that body-worn-cameras were affecting the behaviors of the public during police contact. As figure 4.1 shows, there is an immediate drop in assaults on officers after the first full year of body-worn camera implementation in 2014. In 2013, assaults were reported as high as 285, going down to 151 in the first year of a body-worn camera implementation. The impact of body-worn cameras on the public behaviors was immediate. As Figure 4.1 further shows, this decreasing trend remained relatively stable throughout the three-year period examined in the present study after the body-worn camera program implementation.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

This study’s objective was to gain a better understanding of the impact a body-worn camera program on the police-citizen interactions. This study analyzed over 1000 Las Vegas police and community pre-body-worn-camera interactions from 2011-2014 and over 1000 interactions from 2014-2016 when law enforcement officers were wearing cameras. Within this exploratory study, the implementation of a body-worn-camera program had no significant effect on reducing complaints in the LVMPD. Therefore, the quick conclusion could be that the implementation of body-worn camera programs is not changing the negative behaviors of police toward the public. This may, however, not be entirely true. We had hypothesized earlier that police body-worn cameras would have a positive impact on improving an agency’s relationship with the community through identifying negative events in the LEO’s behavior.

While no significant decrease was discovered in complaints by the public against the officers post the body-worn camera program implementation in the LVMPD, a downward trend could be seen. Perhaps a lack of significance in the reduction of complaints could be contributed to the limited amount of time that body-worn cameras had been implemented in the LVMPD. The complaints and assaults appear to have a crossing point at the beginning of body-camera implementation. At this point, complaints took a slight increase. This could be attributed to the public becoming more boisterous and verbally lash out at officers considering the police violence is making headlines. As verbal confrontations increased so would the potential for complaints made against officers.
The natural attrition of police department personnel potentially reveals a new breed of law enforcement professionals, just like the adage, "out with the old and in with the new." The LVMPD body-camera policy currently in place when writing this paper states that all officers hired after July 1, 2013, are required to wear the body-camera, those hired before may voluntarily wear it ("LVMPD Body Camera Policy, 5/210.01," 2013). The bod-worn camera for those officers hired prior to this date was given the option of wearing the devices. This fact of all officers not being required or not opting in, may be in part of the “old-school” police officer mentality and not yet "buying in" to a modern way of policing. Also, although body-worn cameras were in use at the beginning of 2014, the program was still not fully implemented resulting in possible biased results regarding the public’s complaints. We hoped that further research on the effects of body-worn cameras for law enforcement will result in all officers fully buying into this modern-day policing tool. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, no control variables were included in this study, which could have changed the results. It is also, however, fully possible that perhaps the implementation of body-worn cameras does not impact police behaviors, at least not in the present study sample. Perhaps most officers have already been acting in such ethical ways that while there could be a few who are changing their behaviors because of the body-worn cameras, this number of officers may be too small to capture (Alpert & Dunham, 2005).

The main finding from the present study was, of course, the highly significant difference in the means of assaults on officers during the three-year period prior to body-worn camera program implementation and during three years after the body-worn camera program implementation in the LVMPD. Based on these results, the presence of body-
worn cameras in the LVMPD appears to be changing public’s behaviors toward police officers. Earlier hypothesized in the paper, body-worn cameras would improve behaviors toward police officers when events are recorded. Citizens’ behaviors are consistent with the theories discussed and outlined earlier in this paper. As stated in the hypothesis at the beginning of this paper, body-worn cameras

The “Hawthorne Effect,” Deterrence and Social Control theories appear to be relevant when attempting to explain the significant effects body-cameras have on police interactions with the public, at least when the public is concerned. The knowledge of a recording existing, which depicts behaviors during police interaction, does support the likelihood of more positive behaviors. This is great news for the officer safety issue. While hard to measure in a simple monetary cost-benefit analysis (i.e., the cost of the body-worn camera program versus the savings resulting from the decreased officer injuries). It could be argued that if body-worn camera programs can reduce any officers (or other individuals, including public) from being assaulted or killed, they are worthy of the cost.

Taking the results from the present study, in addition to the already existing body of literature, there appears to be not only quantitative support for the implementation of body-worn-camera programs, but they also produce intangible benefits. The conclusion section of this paper argues for the continuance of the body-worn camera programs and the continuance of research on such programs, asserting that dissolving body-worn-camera programs due to funding issues or political pressures would likely have considerable adverse effects on public perceptions and safety consequences for the officers. Even though the hypotheses for the present study were only partially supported, body-worn-cameras are likely contributing to positive police and community interaction.
5.1 Limitations

Above, the results were re-highlighted and discussed. With that said, it should be noted that the present study was confronted with many limitations. First, there are multiple general issues a researcher faces when deciding to study the impact of body-worn cameras on the police interaction with the public through secondary data. For example, it was discovered that the municipal and county law enforcement data on body-worn cameras is limited by lack of detailed record keeping. Because of the emerging technology and phased in implementation of body-worn-cameras, initial data collection can be rudimentary. Also, few departments and agencies have extensive longitudinal body-camera program collection efforts because of the relatively new technology. Initial contact by the author with the several police departments not ultimately selected for the study, revealed a lack of systematically logged data as well as their unpreparedness for the time consuming and daunting task required to collect body-camera data. Some viewed it as interfering with their ability to get the job done. Also, agencies continue to struggle with implementing a body-worn-camera program because of the staffing needed to analyze the collected data and to respond to data requests from outside agencies and internal oversight groups such as local governments, city councils, and community groups. Few departments had dedicated staff to track results from implementing body-worn-camera programs, thus limiting timely data retrieval.

Another general limitation was the lack of departments with a body-worn-camera program that had been operational for at least three consecutive years. Most agencies with an active body-worn camera program have at best two to three years of longitudinal data. As evidenced in this study, more data are needed to assess the impact of body-
worn-cameras on community policing accurately. This leads to the other limitations unique to the present study. The findings from the current study might have been biased due to the lack of any control variables. Also, the inability to analyze monthly data on the LVMPD body-worn camera program implementation may have hindered the results. LVMPD first implemented their pilot body-worn camera program in June of 2013 and was not fully implemented until in January of 2014. The inability to analyze the data monthly at the onset of the camera program limited the ability to identify the initial impact of the body-worn cameras on the public-police interactions. However, the initial implementation of the pilot body-worn camera program by the LVMPD in 2013 was minimal. Lastly, we do not know what body-worn camera policies were in place at the time of the program implementation, and what specific changes, if any, occurred and when those changes happened concerning the data reported.

5.2 Future Research and Policy Implications

Recent incidents throughout the country have acted as a catalyst propelling body-worn-camera technology, which has resulted in the increasing adoption of body-worn-camera devices by law enforcement departments. Use of force incidents has paved the way for body-worn-cameras becoming as standard a tool for the police officer as their gun, pepper spray, and Taser. The presence of body-worn-cameras had played a documented and significant role in assessing use-of-force events compared to events when there was not a body-worn camera present (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014). By examining these findings, one can conclude that the presence and application of a body-worn-camera has a beneficial effect on officers considering the use-of-force. Future research may reflect improved behaviors of officers and the public in multiple geographic
and socioeconomic areas. In surveying officers, Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014, reported from the perspective of officers toward body-worn cameras. The surveyed officers were supportive of the use of body-worn cameras, acknowledging the potential to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community.

The present study considered only a few variables and examined data from just one department. Future studies would benefit greatly in looking at multiple agencies and variables over an extended period. Because of the significant differences and the diversity of communities, variables such as population, gender, age structure, ethnicity, and economics should need examining as they relate to community policing. Further, policies can vary widely from department to department depending on a multitude of factors. For example, demographics, the size of the community and the relationship it currently has with the police department, policing tactics, and strategies to communicate with the public can all cause a police department to apply different emphasis where needed. A decrease in assaults may reflect a shift in tactical practices during contact with the public. Identifying other sources of conflict and ways to mitigate them in training could prove as a significant role in the reduction of crime or misconduct issues of officers. Identifying these additional variables will help with the training of officers to determine problematic situations for citizen contact and crime prevention techniques.

Future research may benefit by looking at exclusive to confidentiality and privacy concerns. These are areas mentioned by the ACLU and will continue to be paramount for making and adjusting policies to protect identities of citizens involved in police encounters (Ramirez, 2014). The literature states this process is needed when addressing some police encounters that require interaction with citizens, families, and the
interactions between police and community members that occur behind closed doors that do not need publicizing on news and social media (A, 2013). Further, the impact of body-worn-camera technology on police department-and law enforcement agency operations throughout the country considerably increased in 2009, and the law enforcement profession is now repairing a broken perception as well as awarding retributions for physical injuries committed by a small minority of officers (Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014). The events captured on video by a body-worn-camera pose significant concern for law enforcement by the potential of these recordings to become public record through the Freedom of Information Act requests (Katz et al., 2014). Poor policy development governing body-worn cameras on issues surrounding privacy and confidentiality is, therefore, a major concern warranting more future research. Although not addressed in this analysis, but necessary for future research, is the trust between police officers and community and the perceived transparency of law enforcement by the public. Any law enforcement tool giving officers more than one way of improving community policing cannot be ignored.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Thomas Jefferson (n.d.) said, “Whenever you do a thing, act as if the entire world were watching.” In present day police and community interactions, the ‘watching’ takes place via a cell phone video camera. The Jefferson’s quote epitomizes the relationship between body-worn-cameras and community policing. Body-worn-cameras have been one of the most highly debated, and maybe even more controversial issues to impact community policing since the “stop and frisk” initiatives in the late 1990’s and 2000’s (Letourneau, 2015). Using cameras to record police and community interactions is not a new phenomenon. Responding to federal grant incentives of the Bush administration Justice Department, many police localities initiated in-car camera programs for recording law enforcement interactions with the public as viewed from the dash of a patrol car (Elliott, 2015). The use of video recordings to document police and public contact became the gold standard for recording police interactions with the community and was considered a best practice in law enforcement training (Feeney, 2014).

Consequently, segueing from dash-mounted cameras to body worn cameras was not a heroic leap, although acceptance within the policing community was less spontaneous. Perhaps, as a result, there is a dearth of research literature on the effectiveness of body-worn camera programs. Although anecdotal data abounds, law enforcement agencies implemented these video programs without a clear focus on developing accountability tools. Thus, there is a lack of data for analyzing the effectiveness of police department body-worn camera programs (Elliott, 2015).
The LVMPD was the first major department to implement a body-worn camera program in a large Department (LVMPD, 2016). Still, in its infancy, the three-year-old program's aim is to reduce complaints and assaults against law enforcement officers. That idea of being continually observed parallels the fundamental basics of body-worn-cameras in law enforcement today. “Perception is Reality” is a well-known mantra of law enforcement professionals everywhere and one that continues to be ingrained in their psyche. Most police professionals understand and accept this fact. Addressing the public's perception certainly has never been as clear and relevant as it has been over the last few years. Officers’ experiences form how they view situations they experience on a daily occurrence (Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014). An officer’s perception of a car full of people late at night is not the same as a bystander’s who drives by and sees more than one squad car contacting a vehicle of more than one person (Jennings, Fridell, & Lynch, 2014). Research has shown the demeanor (attitude) at the onset of the officer contacting the public as well, and the delivery of verbal (tone and volume) commands by of the officer during contact significantly increase perceptions by the public of legitimacy of police (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2009). When officers can make the connection between their attitude and that of the citizen, they will more than likely have a positive response from the citizen they are contacting (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2009).

The reality that officer’s words and behaviors matter are not new concepts and police training priorities will continue to highlight this critical fact. As events were unfolding in the civil uprising in Ferguson, Missouri, law enforcements professionals everywhere were silently hoping for changes which would help with improving the
public’s perception of law enforcement, building a level of trust to stand the test of time (Letourneau, 2015). Law enforcement professionals agree, more can be done to improve the public’s perception of their actions, and an increased level of transparency could be the key to building the trust of the public (Katz et al., 2014). Department making their actions and procedures an open book to the public is a welcomed form of transparency and increases the public’s understanding of police work.

As other police departments implement body-worn-camera programs, more data and studies will become available on the impact of the body-worn cameras on the community and law enforcement relationships. For now, the results from the present study, taken together with a few existing original program evaluations such as the Rialto, ASU, and Mesa studies, will hopefully better guide law enforcement departments and their communities in recognizing the benefits of body-worn camera programs on the positive community-police relationships as well as on officer safety.
REFERENCES


