

Impact of Training on Self-Description and Co-Worker Description of Police Managerial Behavior

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A five-phased training activity was conducted with 23 midwestern metropolitan police managers. Participants reported gaining skill in individual and group problem solving and in communications. Self-descriptions of managerial behavior by participants grew more favorable over time, indicating they reported more behavior reflecting the goals of training. Co-workers, who were describing the managers in training on the same items as the managers described themselves, indicated that the managers were performing at a relatively high level throughout the training activities. No significant change appeared in co-worker descriptions.

Police departments in recent years have become involved in programs intended to improve their relationships with the community (Bell, Cleveland, Hanson, & O'Connell, 1969; Eisenberg, 1971; Lipsitt & Steinbruner, 1969; Pomeroy, 1971; Sikes, M.P., 1971); to train officers in family crisis intervention methods (Bard, 1970; Driscoll, Meyer, & Schanie, 1973); and to upgrade human relations skills (Porpotage, 1972; Singer, 1972). Such training programs, conducted mainly with patrolmen and first-line supervisors, can be expected to lead to changes in service delivery and improvement in police-community relationships.

The fast-changing, volatile environments in which metropolitan police departments operate today, however, require flexibility and adaptability in functions, procedures, and roles. While the training programs referred to above de-

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velop useful understanding, awareness, and skills for the participants, they do not deal with the organizational and managerial issues which are involved in organizational flexibility and adaptability.

Various approaches to organizational development and management training which are being utilized by industrial (Blake, Shepard, & Mouton, 1964; Blake & Mouton, 1968; Fyffe, 1971; Wilson, Morton, & Mullen, 1972), educational (Alschuler, 1972; Sikes, W. W., 1971), municipal (Allan & Allan, 1971), governmental (Walton, 1968; Crockett, 1970), and health care (Moos, 1973) organizations have been reported; however, no comparable literature exists as yet regarding police departments.

This report concerns the study of a training program intended to assist police managers to modify their behavior. The basic question asked in this study is: Do training activities affect the managerial behavior of the officers participating in the training? Information was obtained from the participants and from other officers with whom they worked in the department.

METHOD

Twenty-three members of upper management (majors and above) in the police department of the central city of a midwestern metropolis participated in the training program, the impact of which was evaluated.

Training Goals

The goals for the training program took into consideration the recommendations which had been made by management and supervisory police officers during a series of problem-identification meetings which had taken place during the previous year. The goals which were established included skill development in: (1) utilizing problem-solving procedures; (2) defining tasks and specifying what the task requires for oneself and for others; (3) communicating one's own preferences, needs, directions, and information relevant to organizational work; (4) obtaining and using information about feelings, both one's own and those of others, as data for problem solving; (5) problem solving, including ability to perform many of the activities or functions required; (6) working with conflict of various kinds -- between members of a group, between groups, and between individual and organizational needs; (7) relating one's unit to the larger organization through communicating about the activities and needs of one's unit in the organization, and communicating about the activities and needs of the organization to one's unit; and (8) relating the police department to its environment through communicating the goals and activities and needs of the police department to the community, and communicating the responses, needs, and changes in the environment back to the department.

Training Activities

The training design included five phases; a brief description of each is provided here.

Phase I. Individual Assessment and Career Planning. The purpose of this phase was to encourage each of the participants to reexamine his skills and orientations which were relevant to managerial activities and to give consideration to areas in which he might like to speed his development. Each member of the training group completed a number of diagnostic instruments which are directly relevant to managing. Each of these officers then met with a qualified psychologist to consider himself at this stage in his career development. The general observations of the psychologists regarding appropriate training activities were transmitted to the training staff.

The time required to complete the instruments was about 2½ hours. The discussion each officer had with a psychologist was about 2½ hours in length. The activities were spread out over a two-month period.

Phase II. Initial Intensive Training. A full week of all-day training activities was provided. The major activities for the officers included the sharing of perceptions of present managerial practices and organizational conditions, discussion of alternatives, presentation of research and theory, and involvement in simulated (role-playing) management problem situations. Among the topics considered were differing concepts of the manager's role; group decision-making processes and problems; different communication patterns; management theories; tools for facilitating problem solving; and giving and receiving help. There was some concentration of attention to problems of the manager in his immediate work setting, that is, in relating to his subordinates. (For more description, see Table I.)

Phase III. Testing the Training Back on the Job. The purpose of this phase was to provide officers with an opportunity to examine their training experiences in terms of their actual work setting. During this phase, there was one meeting of the group to discuss applications of the training.

Phase IV. Further Intensive Training. To provide for a concentration of effort yet not keep these senior officers away from their ongoing responsibilities for a full week, this phase was split into two parts. Half the group worked for two days; the other half met for two days, and they all met together for a third day. On the third day, the chief of the department joined them. This pattern was repeated a few weeks after the first week of this phase.

The approach was much the same as in Phase II. Many topics were dealt with around role-playing problems. Among the topics considered in this phase were: factors affecting participation in group discussion and problem solving; the impact of status on problem solving; analysis of forces supporting and blocking change in the department; relations among units of the department; need for feedback on decisions and policy implementation; cooperation and competition

Table I. Training Topics and Activities of Phase II

| Topic | Activity |
|--|--|
| Learning approach | Presentation regarding experimentation, experiential approach. |
| Clarifying trainee expectations | Officers worked individually and in trios. Goals for training identified in small groups were posted. |
| Present concepts of the manager's role | Individual collages regarding perceptions were discussed. |
| Group decision making | Consensus development around predictions of sergeant and captain preferences for leader behavior. |
| Leadership styles | Review of leader behavior exhibited by officers in the training activities using categories of differential group participation; also R. Wallen categories: tough battler, friendly helper, objective thinker. |
| Communication | One-way, two-way communication exercise to emphasize effects of each. |
| Problem solving | Situation-target-proposal approach to problem solving explained and tried by individuals. |
| Impact of role and situation on perception and inference | Film: <i>Eye of the Beholder</i> . |
| Group decision making: pressure toward conformity | Agree-disagree statements; participant observation of officers working on group decision making. |
| Group decision making: use of resources | NASA problem; coal company problem. Officers participate or observe; then discuss factors affecting problem solving. |
| Problem solving | Use of situation-target-proposal by small groups. |
| Management theory | Presentation of Maslow, McGregor, Argyris. |
| Group decision making: leader as facilitator | New car (truck) problem. Officers participate or observe a partly-structured group decision-making problem. |
| Group decision making: work under stress conditions | Mine field exercise. Officers became group "trying to get through a mine field." Activities analyzed for organization established, decisions, reactions. |
| Managerial skills development | Complete <i>Goals for Personal Development</i> , an instrument to help officers review their skills in group situations and establish areas in which to work. |
| Obtaining, transmitting relevant personal information | Modified Johari window presented; considers ways of helping managers learn how they are perceived. |
| Problem solving | Use of situation-target-proposal by total group. |
| Evaluation | Evaluation interview role play; officers act as superiors or subordinates in a discussion of performance. |

Table I (Continued)

| Topic | Activity |
|--|---|
| Giving and receiving help | Presentation of problems, approaches; work in trios of helper, helpee, observer, based on individual's own thinking from <i>Goals for Personal Development</i> . Establishment of management development committees to provide officers with a potentially helpful sounding board and colleague consultants. |
| Roles needed for effective group problem solving | Presentation regarding functional roles (Benne-Sheats formulation) for group problem solving. |
| Group problem solving: differences in goals | Role-play problem involving community relations unit and area patrol unit. |
| Individual in relationship to organization | Presentation, discussion of <i>Principles of Organizations Operations</i> . |

among department units; delegation problems; long-range planning; interunit conflict management; relating to agencies and groups outside the department; and allocation of police cars. (For a listing of activities, see Table II.)

Phase V. Application of Training. The purpose of this phase was to promote utilization of the training and to provide information to participants regarding the perceptions of their managerial behavior held by co-workers. The training staff distributed questionnaires to co-workers of the participants soliciting information about various aspects of their actions as managers. The items included were similar to those used by Likert and his colleagues (1967). Responses were summarized and discussed with the managers. This work was separate from similar data collections made to evaluate the training by an outside evaluator, which is reported below.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the program was obtained in three ways: (1) from reactions of participants at the end of Phase IV; (2) from self-descriptions of managerial behavior by participants at four points in time, from before Phase II to four months after Phase IV; and (3) from descriptions of participants' managerial behavior by co-workers at three points in time. The data collection schedule is presented in Table III.

The participants were the 23 officers of command rank and comprised all the officers in that group except the chief and one officer who was on sick leave.

Table II. Training Topics and Activities of Phase IV

| Topic | Activity |
|---|---|
| Approach to learning | Presentation of concepts. |
| Participation in groups | Discussion of factors supporting and inhibiting participation. |
| Impact of status on group problem solving | Role play with different status officers arriving late. |
| Communicating unpleasant information | Discussion of factors supporting and blocking. |
| Barriers to change in the department | Force field analysis; discussion of factors supporting and blocking police department change. |
| Relations among units | Use of form, <i>Analysis of Contacts with Selected Other Units</i> , as a base for facilitating work among department units. |
| Cooperation—competition between units | Planners—operators exercise. |
| Conflict between units | Role play, problems between units (tac & patrol). Officers participate in or observe problem-solving meeting. Work in “meeting” is analyzed. Conceptual presentation regarding conflict. |
| Problem solving | Use of situation-target-proposal (S-T-P) and discussion of actions to be taken now. |
| Vertical communication regarding policy decisions | Officers identify top-level decisions of importance and concern to lower level managers. Prioritize those decisions, selecting the five most important. Describe how those decisions were understood, interpreted, and reacted to by personnel at various levels. Formulate questions regarding the decisions. Top management discusses decisions. Implications for communication and decision making at various levels of management. |
| Delegation activity | Delegation worksheet; discussion of delegation; analysis of discussion. |
| Long-range planning | Expectations of managers regarding environmental changes significant for the department were listed. Implications for individual manager’s area of responsibility were identified. Actions to be undertaken regarding one likely problem for each manager were considered. |
| Conflict management | Role play of manager working on conflict between two subordinate units. |
| Cooperation—competition | Five squares exercise; alternative ways of working on a shared task were observed and reactions discussed. |

Table II (Continued)

| Topic | Activity |
|---|---|
| Ways we as managers work in groups | Completion of <i>Ways of Working in Groups</i> form; feedback to managers. |
| Relating to groups outside the department | <p>Officers divided into two groups, one to represent police department officers, the other to represent community leaders.</p> <p>Each group met separately to formulate requirements for possible Police–Citizen Incident Review Board.</p> <p>Each group listed things which interfere with working with the other group.</p> <p>Lists were shared and clarified.</p> <p>Groups met separately for possible reformulation of requirements.</p> <p>Representatives of each group met together to discuss possible Police–Citizen Incident Review Board.</p> <p>Exercise analyzed.</p> |
| Allocation of police cars | <p>Presentation of S-T-P analysis of how cars were correctly distributed.</p> <p>Discussion of criteria for allocation.</p> |

RESULTS

Self-Reported Learnings and Applications

At four different times after the initial training sessions (Phase II), the participants were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions. Two of those questions were: “At this point in time, what (if anything) do you think is the most important thing(s) you’re learning from the management training program?” and “Have you been able to use any of such learnings on the job? If so, in what way?” Results are reported in Table IV.

The most frequently mentioned area of learning was concerned with problem solving. Several of the men noted the increased value that they now put on problem-solving techniques, group problem solving, and getting the active involvement of others in the problem-solving situation.

Another notable area of participant learning was that concerned with communication skill. Some reported a greater adeptness at such basic skills as listening, while others placed high value on their reawakened awareness of the complexities of the communication process as a whole.

One other area of learning mentioned by several of the participants was a direct consequence of bringing these officers together under such conditions of

Table III. Data Collection Schedule for Evaluation of Upper Management Training

| Date | Participant reactions ^a | Participant self-descriptions ^b | Co-worker descriptions ^c |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| January 17 | | ½ of group | |
| January 21 | | ½ of group | |
| January 31 | | ½ of group | |
| February 4 | | ½ of group | |
| February 14 | | | X |
| March 20 | | X | |
| April 3 | | | X |
| May 3 | X | | |
| May 8 | | X | |
| September 11 | | X | X |

^aRespondent group is 17 majors and lieutenant colonels.

^bRespondent group is approximately 23 majors and lieutenant colonels.

^cRespondent group is composed of 4 to 6 co-workers of each of the 23 participants in the training program. Some co-workers are also participants.

learning. The interaction and sharing between the participants led many of them to report an increased appreciation of each other's responsibilities, problems, and overall points of view.

On the three follow-up questionnaires the participants were asked to identify any specific on-the-job situations in which they had used their new learnings. Table V reveals that a number of officers did so.

Again the most frequently reported areas concerned problem solving, decision making, and communication skills. There was a frequent report of attempts to work harder at the basic skills of interpersonal relations and of cooperative management as evidenced by trying to get a broader and more meaningful degree of subordinate involvement in decision making. In addition, many officers re-

Table IV. Areas of Learning Reported by Program Participants

| Area of learning | Number reporting learning at each measurement ^a | | | |
|---|--|--------|-------|--------|
| | First | Second | Third | Fourth |
| Group problem solving | 9 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Individual problem solving and decision making | 10 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Communication skills | 4 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| Interpersonal relations with peers and co-workers | 3 | 7 | 3 | 7 |
| Self-awareness | 2 | — | — | 1 |
| General refresher on human behavior | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

^aSome respondents noted more than one specific area of learning.

Table V. On-the-Job Applications of Program Learning Reported by Program Participants

| Application | Number reporting the application at each measurement | | |
|---|--|--------|-------|
| | First | Second | Third |
| Decision making, e.g., using groups | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Better coordination with peers and between units | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Problem analysis and solving | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Motivating others | 1 | — | 1 |
| Communication skills, e.g., listening | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Broader view of department | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Mediating conflict | 1 | — | — |
| Better organized | 1 | 2 | — |
| General work relations | 1 | — | 1 |

ported they were now more able to see “the other guy’s” point of view on work-related issues.

Participant Self-Report of Managerial Behavior

Another primary gauge of the effects of the management training program on the participants was a 26-item, self-descriptive questionnaire. The various goals of the program, listed in an earlier section of this report, were used as a basis for selection of the questions for this survey. For simplicity of reading, these questions were grouped into four categories on the questionnaire: communication, individual problem solving, personal relations and awareness, and work group skills. Thus, each participant was asked to respond to items such as: “In the area of communication do you find that you are understood by others?” with seven possible response options ranging from “rarely” to “almost always.”

The questionnaires were administered a total of five times: immediately prior to (first) and following (second) the initial intensive training (Phase II), prior to (third) the second period of intensive work together (Phase IV), at the end of that phase (fourth), and approximately four months later (fifth). See Table III for the data collection schedule, under *participant self-descriptions*.

The data from all five collections were included in one factor analysis, and five factors were identified as: communication; e.g., being understood by others, concise, present ideas well; interdependence; e.g., seek out others’ assistance, willing to help; openness; e.g., aware of feelings, critically evaluate; problem solving; e.g., recognition of problems, approaching problems with confidence; and leadership; e.g., able to draw others out, able to motivate others.

Average scores for the items each factor comprised were computed for each of the data collections. That is, the scores for all items in a given factor were combined across respondents, and an average per-item score was computed. These are reported in Table VI.

At the time the first self-descriptive measure was given, the average category scores ranged in value across categories from 4.5 to 5.5 on the 7-point scales, where a higher number was usually seen as more desirable. Those variables concerned with one's interdependence with others received the highest self-ratings, while those related to leadership were seen as least highly evident. Overall, at that point in time, the officers had a relatively favorable impression of their own managerial behavior and yet they consistently perceived that there was room to improve.

Analysis of variance revealed that four of the five categories showed significant increases over time (openness did not show significant change), and, for all five categories, the trends of the changes in self-perception scores over time were in the favorable direction. The overall self-descriptions of the participants appear to have steadily increased during the time of the management development program so that, by the time of the final administration of the instrument, all five of the scale groupings were, to the nearest digit, 6 on the 7-point scales.

Information about characteristics of officers who changed in one direction as contrasted with those who changed in the other direction would be instructive. Unfortunately, these data are not available.

Co-Worker Reports of Manager Behavior

The 26-item questionnaire described above was also given to a sample of the participants' co-workers. These individuals were identified by the officers in the program as being those subordinates, peers, and superiors who were most

Table VI. Self-Report Factor Scores for the Participants

| Factor | Average scale score at each measurement ^a | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| | First | Second | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Average |
| Communication ^b | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.5 |
| Interdependence ^b | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 6.1 | 5.8 |
| Openness | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5.4 |
| Problem solving ^c | 4.8 | 5.0 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.3 |
| Leadership ^c | 4.5 | 4.9 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.2 |

^aSample size ranged from 17 to 23.

^bProbability of such changes over time being due to chance is less than .05.
 F ratio ≥ 2.48 .

^cProbability of such changes over time being due to chance is less than .01.
 $F \geq 3.56$.

Table VII. Factor Scores for the Participants' Co-workers^a

| Factor | Average scale scores at each measurement ^b | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------|-------|---------|
| | First | Second | Third | Average |
| Communication | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 |
| Interdependence | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.9 | 5.8 |
| Openness | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.6 |
| Problem solving | 5.7 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.8 |
| Leadership | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5.6 |

^aNo *F* ratio was as large as 2.40.

^bThe samples ranged in size from 84 to 98.

familiar with the participants' work-related behavior. Thus, on three separate occasions, the co-workers described the officers in question along the same dimensions which the officers had used to describe themselves. (See Table III for schedule of data collections.)

Table VII presents the co-worker averages for each of the same five factors as were determined by the factor analysis of the participants' responses.

The average co-worker scores for the five factors on the initial measurement ranged from 5.5 to 5.8 on the 7-point scales. With each successive administration, there appeared to be a slight increase in the factor scores. Overall, the co-workers' evaluations of the participants appeared to be slightly more favorable than the latter's own self-evaluations.

Analysis of variance revealed that none of the differences across measurements of co-workers' views were statistically significant. Thus, there is no evidence in co-worker data of change in participant behavior from early in the training program until about four months after Phase IV.

DISCUSSION

The data, both open-ended and structured, indicate that participants described their behavior differently after training than they did at the beginning. The lack of change in co-worker data seems contradictory. However, this kind of finding is not uncommon. Bolman (1970), in a study of executive training, found no differences between experimental and control groups in data obtained from business associates.

On the other hand, a study involving police officers by Driscoll et al., (1973) suggests that others who observe the behavior of trained and untrained officers can provide evidence of differences. Their study concerned family crisis intervention. Telephone interviews (with adults in households to which police

were called) provided evidence that the behavior of trained officers differed from that of untrained officers.

Perhaps co-workers who are in constant contact with police managers are not aware of modest changes which the changing managers are conscious of making. Given the relatively high ratings given by co-workers, very large increments of change may have been required to produce different (even more favorable) ratings.

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