Community policing: training, definitions and policy implications

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Abstract *This study surveyed 198 police officers of a single police department in Texas regarding their attitudes about the practice of community-oriented policing (COP) and its characteristics. Training on COP, rather than training duration, was found to affect officers' attitudes toward accepting COP programs. Using Cordner's four definitive dimensions of community policing (i.e. philosophical, strategic, tactical, and organizational) as a model, findings indicate that officers have familiarized themselves with the tactical dimension the most, especially the police-citizen partnership and problem-solving elements, while giving lowest priority to the information element of the organizational dimension. Others including the broader police function, personal service, and positive interaction elements are also less emphasized. The study reveals several problems the officers see as setbacks in implementing community policing and concludes that all of the COP characteristics must be looked at in the context of a whole system rather than as separate individual elements.*

Introduction

Despite the increasing popularity of community-oriented policing (COP) among law enforcement agencies in the USA, one of the basic challenges law enforcement officials have confronted is that of defining the term. A well-known definition of COP was given by Trojanowicz and Buequeroux (1990, p. 5):

> Community policing is a new philosophy of policing, which emphasizes the working partnership between police officers and citizens in creative ways in order to solve community problems relating to crime, fear of crime, and neighborhood disorders.

Maybe it is the term "philosophy" that makes COP remain many things to many people. The term philosophy, among other things, is defined as the set of values of an individual or culture (Davies, 1979, p. 532) or as personal attitude (Morehead and Morehead, 1981, p. 397). Therefore, the attempts by many law enforcement officials to define the term COP and develop its programs produce a number of nonuniform programs, which vary in terms of both the name and the content of the programs.

One of the remedies to bring all law enforcement officials to familiarize themselves with COP is through training. Training and education is an

essential element if the implementation of COP activities is to be successful (Zhao *et al.*, 1995) because COP philosophy implies fundamental changes in many areas of policing. Such changes (e.g. strategic, tactical, or organizational) not only affect the way the police respond to crime, but the way they search for crime solutions. Given the complicated and dynamic nature of COP, any fundamental changes that COP may bring must be addressed and discussed thoroughly. Palmiotto *et al.* (2000) suggest that philosophy and fundamentals of COP should be incorporated into all aspects of police recruit training.

Although training on COP has been provided to law enforcement officers to date, there is little evidence shown as to how training affects the way police officers understand and define COP. The purposes of this study are:

- to examine the impact COP training has on officers' acceptance of COP implementation and some obstacles to it; and
- to find some prominently shared characteristics of COP by the officers.

Four major dimensions of COP introduced by Cordner (1998) were applied to study the latter goal. Knowing how officers define COP is significant for at least three reasons. First, it would be difficult for COP to succeed unless officers participating in COP programs understand all dimensions and elements of COP and how each one affects the others. Second, changing in fundamentals means changing in resource allocation. Finally, varied understanding of the COP philosophy among officers may call for new and innovative policies on the part of police executives.

Training on community-oriented policing
Among the many challenges US law enforcement is confronting as it adopts the COP philosophy into its practice is one focusing on the quality training of its officers. The COP philosophy requires many fundamental changes, some of which – such as empowerment, partnership, and problem solving – are necessary for its success. Proper COP training must be a mandatory activity before any of these changes occur.

Zhao *et al.* (1995) surveyed police executives nationwide regarding their attitudes toward COP training and education, as well as the impediments to COP implementation. They found that police departments viewed training and education as facilitators to COP implementation. In particular, training in community relations, the training of mid-managers to facilitate the transition from traditional policing toward COP, and the training of all the personnel to improve overall performance skills, in that order, were considered top priorities (Zhao *et al.*, 1995). With regard to obstacles to COP implementation, internal organizational barriers (e.g. mid-managers' and line officers' resistance, understanding of COP philosophy, and lack of COP training) were found to be more problematic than external barriers (e.g. insufficient support from community and local government officials) (Zhao *et al.*, 1995).

Examining the organizational changes of police departments practicing COP over time, Zhao *et al.* (1999) conducted a longitudinal panel study by surveying

the same sample they studied previously in 1993 and found a significant increase in COP activities (such as neighborhood watch; home security education; use of citizen surveys and storefront stations) among these police departments in recent years. In the training area, Zhao *et al.* (1999) found that police chiefs surveyed in both studies maintained a high level of interest in all of the training topics. Also, although not apparently clear, the training to enhance officers' overall performance skills for problem solving has become more focused and specialized (i.e. more police chiefs selected the item "middle management authority delegation" over the factor "middle management skills")[1]. Zhao *et al.* (1999) concluded that while American community policing in many agencies remained a trial and error phase, one indication is clear – there is continued movement toward the COP model.

McLaughlin and Donahue (1995) stated that COP training confronts many challenges. First, COP training differs from traditional police training, which tends to be rigid and strictly conformed to law, policies, and procedures. Second, it must filter from the top down, meaning that all politicians, city officials, and police executives involved in the process must understand and support its goals, and that these people should, at sometime, attend training. Third, although COP and traditional police training require carefully developed lesson plans, apparent differences exist. Components of COP training take into account specific community needs and the likelihood of success in meeting those needs, therefore requiring updated public input and innovative and proactive thinking on the part of police planners. In contrast, traditional police training is developed in accordance with department protocol and often emphasizes any potential liability issues. Delivery of COP training must also deviate from the behavioral/teacher-centered to adult education approaches (i.e. learner-centered) because COP requires police officers to be more versatile and more human-oriented due to the increasing numbers and magnitude of public-police encounters. Fourth, it is difficult to determine whether COP training is used by supervisors and officers, and whether it improves their performance. In other words, proper evaluation is needed to find out whether the police are implementing the program or just paying lip service.

Empirical evidence shows that practicing COP without receiving COP training could greatly compromise the desirable goals. For instance, Kratcoski and Noonan (1995, p. 183) studied attitudes of rank-and-file officers from the two police departments that did not receive COP training before implementing COP programs and found that many of the participating officers did not understand COP programs, and many of the officers' responses appeared to be "guarded, noncommittal, or negative." The results of their study showed that 63.3 percent of the officers of one department stated the Mini-Station Program was not important and that 60.6 percent of officers of the other department believed the same. Kratcoski and Noonan (1995) suggest training in COP be a part of the academy program.

There is no doubt that COP training is a key factor affecting the success or failure of COP programs. Given the elastic and dynamic nature of the COP

philosophy, training, even in its current incomplete and unsatisfactory form, is a must. The lack of COP training cannot be an excuse for program failure. More complete curricula on COP training have been developed and proposed (see McLaughlin and Donahue, 1995; Palmiotto *et al.*, 2000).

Defining community-oriented policing

Studies revealed that confusion over what COP really means has remained one of the most important organizational issues that hinders the full implementation of COP (Rosenbaum and Lurigio, 1994; Zhao *et al.*, 1995; 1999). This definition problem has lingered among many law enforcement agencies adopting and practicing COP because of its theoretical and practical differences. COP programs, which theoretically represent new and innovative police strategies and activities, can be implemented in many different ways in practice. For example, COP may range from a "toy patrol" program where an officer's goal is to make friends with the public to a "zero tolerance" program where officers enforce the law indiscreetly. Therefore, COP can mean different things to different people.

However, although COP has been defined differently and sometimes loosely, the dynamic and elastic nature of COP characteristics seems to accommodate all of these definitional differences. One central defining feature of COP addressed by many police researchers is cooperation and collaboration between police and citizens to solve crime (Barlow, 2000, p. 225; Cordner, 1998; Thurman and McGarrell, 1997, p. 2; Trojanowicz and Buequeroux, 1990, p. 5). Some believe COP reflects a facilitating role of police where citizens are encouraged to help themselves (Skogan, 1990; Souryal, 1995, p. 197). Others consider the change in police structure, management, and operations – such as decentralization of authority, citizen empowerment, quality control of police-citizen contacts, and creative problem-solving strategies – as parts of COP (Cordner, 1998; Goldstein, 1996; Rosenbaum, 1988; Zhao *et al.*, 1994).

With many definitions given for COP, one key question still remains: What elements of policing does COP really encompass? For example, Lyons (1997) argued that one of the key features that Rosenbuam's (1988) definition of COP neglected is collaboration with other agencies. Surveying 75 Texas law enforcement agencies that reported a total of 120 established COP programs, Lyons (1997) found that only 30 of the 120 programs (25 percent) involved collaboration from other agencies. Lyons's finding supports Grinc's (1994) observation: most COP programs seem to be isolated police activities, which include neither community people nor other city agencies. Since the COP philosophy signifies new and innovative ways of policing, it is imperative that officers participating in COP programs comprehend all aspects of COP and the impact one change may have to the others. It is this belief that Cordner's (1998) study, which provides one of the most comprehensive definitions of COP, was chosen as a model for the current study.

Cordner defines community policing by identifying four major dimensions of COP: philosophical, strategic, tactical, and organizational. The philosophical

dimension includes the central ideas and beliefs underlying COP and consists of three elements:

(1) citizen input, which is based on the idea that police departments should seek and carefully consider citizen input when making policies and decisions that affect the community;

(2) broad police function, which refers to a broad view of the police function instead of focusing only on crime fighting and law enforcement; and

(3) personal service, which is the idea of tailored policing based on local norms and values as well as individual needs.

The strategic dimension includes the key operational concepts that translate philosophy into action and has three elements. The first element, re-oriented operations, encourages the police to rely less on the patrol car and more on face-to-face interactions with citizens. The second element, geographic focus, recommends that the police emphasize geographic location instead of time of day for police assignment and responsibility. Patrol officers should be assigned to the same areas for extended periods of time to increase their familiarity with the community. The last element, prevention emphasis, focuses on a more proactive and preventive orientation rather than a reactive one.

The tactical dimension translates ideas, philosophies, and strategies into concrete programs and practices in order to lead to actions. This dimension consists of three important elements:

(1) positive interaction, which encourages officers to interact in a positive way with citizens as much as possible;

(2) partnerships, which emphasize that the police seek cooperation from citizens in identifying community problems and solicit citizen input and participation; and

(3) problem solving, which calls police attention to solving underlying problems and conditions.

According to Cordner (1998), the problem-solving approach should also take into account the practice by personnel throughout the ranks, community input and participation, and collaboration between police and external agencies whenever possible.

The final dimension, organizational, has three distinct elements. The first element is management, which is associated with styles of leadership, management, and supervision and gives more emphasis to organizational culture and values. These management practices include having concise statements of mission and values, focusing on strategic planning aimed for mission achievement, coaching instead of restricting the officers' roles to rules and regulations, mentoring officers on what it means to be good officers, empowering officers to enhance innovation and creativity, and distinguishing between intentional and unintentional errors made by officers. The second element is structure, which includes power delegation, flattening the layers of

hierarchy, teamwork, and civilianization. The last element is information, which emphasizes the need for information systems that aid in identifying and analyzing community-level problems. The elements of the organizational dimension are not really part of COP, but they are very crucial and can determine success or failure of COP programs.

Methodology

The data for this study were part of the larger survey study in 1999 that was sent to all 623 personnel of a police department (217 civilians and 406 sworn officers) regarding their attitudes toward the chief's job performance (31 items) and the practice of and training on community policing in the department (six items). The main reason for this research to be conducted at this particular police department is the department's commitment to fully implement COP programs, i.e. to examine how much officers in that department support and know about community policing. During that time, the members of the Police Officers' Association (POA) of that city felt that the police chief's management and administrative styles were inconsistent with the desire and eagerness of the majority of police officers to implement more proactive COP programs. Given the popularity of the COP philosophy and programs adopted and practiced by many law enforcement agencies nationwide, many officers of this particular department felt shackled and restrained because they believed the chief could have provided more support to enhance the success of COP (anonymous, personal communication, February, 1999). Therefore, the POA believed it would be worthwhile to examine how the officers think about the chief's job performance and how much they know about the meaning of COP.

The POA of that city retained a researcher to conduct the study. Permission was given to utilize the data without revealing the police department's name. Since this study emphasized community policing, the data received from civilians and the data regarding the chief's job performance were excluded from the analyses.

To include every sworn officer in the survey, the study population included all 406 sworn officers whose names and addresses were provided by the computer services center of the department. Postcards were sent out to each of the respondents on 10 May 1999, to inform them of the upcoming survey. The survey was mailed to the sample a few days later with a cover letter explaining:

- the purpose of the study;
- their right not to participate in the study; and
- the anonymity of their identity if participating in the survey and asking the respondents to return the survey in the postage paid reply envelope that had the researcher's mailing address on it.

Reminder postcards were sent on 25 May 1999, to enhance response rate. A total of 198 complete, usable surveys were returned, which represented a response rate of 48.8 percent.

Survey instrument
The survey instrument of this study was developed to measure officers' attitudes toward the police chief's job performance and the adoption of COP programs. While the question items of the first part of the survey were about the chief's job performance (which was excluded from this study's analyses), the latter part contained the question items specifically relating to the adoption of COP and COP training. In particular, the respondents were first asked whether they received training on COP, and they could answer either yes or no. Those who answered yes were then asked to provide information regarding the length of training (< five hours, 6-10 hours, 11-20 hours, or > 20 hours) and the training instructor (officer from within the department, officer from outside the department, or hired outside lecturer).

Second, the respondents were asked whether they believed their police department should adopt and practice COP and could answer yes or no to the question. The respondents who answered no were invited to provide reasons why they did not want to implement COP programs. Those who answered yes were requested to comment what they thought were key characteristics of COP. Content analyses were employed to these comments provided by the respondents. Each of the comments not supportive of community policing was analyzed in terms of problems within the police department. For comments regarding characteristics of COP, Cordner's (1998) four definitive dimensions of COP were applied, and each comment was carefully examined and placed into its appropriate category.

Results
Of all the 198 respondents[2], 180 (92.3 percent) were males and 15 (7.7 percent) were females. The two largest age groups were between 31 and 40 (39.6 percent) and 41 and 50 (35.8 percent). About 13.9 percent fell between 20 and 30, and 10.7 percent were 51 and older. With regard to race, 104 (53.9 percent) respondents reported their race as white, 82 (42.5 percent) as Hispanic, two (1 percent) as black, and five (2.6 percent) as other. Regarding the educational level, 28.1 percent of the respondents reported having a high school diploma, 30.1 percent had an associate's degree, 37.8 percent had a bachelor's degree and 4.1 percent had a master's degree. About three-fourths of respondents (70.5 percent) worked for the patrol division, 22 (11.4 percent) were detectives, 19 (9.8 percent) were special services officers, five (2.6 percent) were administrators, and 11 (5.2 percent) were other. Regarding rank, 139 (72.0 percent) were senior officers[3], 24 (12.4 percent) were lieutenants, 14 (7.3 percent) were officers, and 16 (8.3 percent) were captains or above. Finally, 101 (51.5 percent) respondents reported having worked for the department more than 15 years, 18 (9.2 percent) between 11 and 15 years, 38 (19.4 percent) between six and ten years, 26 (13.3 percent) between three and five years, and 13 (6.6 percent) between one and two years.

Table I shows that 134 (68 percent) of the respondents received training on COP and that the majority of them (76 percent) reported attending more than 20

Questions	n	$\%$
Have you ever attended training on COP?		
Yes	134	68
No	63	32
How long was the training?		
Less than five hours	10	7.5
Between six and ten hours	6	4.5
Between 11 and 20 hours	16	12.0
More than 20 hours	102	76.0
Who was the training instructor?		
Police officer from within the department	12	9.1
Police officer from outside the department	49	36.8
Hired lecturer from outside the department	51	38.3
Both officer from outside and hired researcher	21	15.8
Do you believe your department should adopt and practice COP?		
Yes	153	77.3
No	32	16.2
Don't know	13	6.6

Table I.
Participants' responses regarding COP training ($n = 198$)

hours of such training. While most training instructors came from outside the police department (38 percent were lecturers; 37 percent were officers from other departments), 9 percent of the training instructors were from within this police department. When asked whether the department should adopt and practice COP, 153 of the respondents (77 percent) agreed with the idea, 32 respondents (16.2 percent) disagreed, and the other 13 (6.6 percent) reported they did not know.

The χ^2 test was used to measure the impact of training and training duration on officers' attitudes toward the practice of COP. The result in Table II reveals the clear impact training has on officers' inclination to practice COP. About 88 percent of officers who received COP training agreed with the COP idea, while only 68 percent of those without training demonstrated the same. However, training duration did not affect officers' attitudes toward the acceptance of the COP philosophy (Table III). The majority of officers (67 percent to 90 percent) who received COP training, regardless of length of training, believed their department should practice COP.

| | Receiving COP training | | | |
| | Yes | | No | |
	n	$\%$	n	$\%$
Whether the police department should adopt and practice COP				
Yes	118	88.1	34	68.0
No	16	11.9	16	32.0
Total	134	100	50	100

Table II.
The impact of training on attitudes regarding the practice of COP ($n = 184$)

Notes: χ^2 10.20; df = 1; significance = 0.001

Rank, working division, and length of service were also included in the analyses of this study for two main reasons:

(1) previous studies have shown the impact of these variables on officers' attitudes toward COP (Lewis *et al.*, 1999; Lurigio and Skogan, 1994); and

(2) the preliminary results of this study revealed the impact of administrative commitment on adopting and practicing the COP philosophy.

The data in Table IV suggested that officer's rank and working division did not affect their attitudes toward COP at all. The majority of officers – regardless of their rank (79.4 percent to 93.8 percent) or working division (75 percent to 100 percent) – believed their department should adopt and practice COP. Length of service, however, impacted officers' attitudes (Table V). Officers who worked in the department for five years or less (97.3 percent) were more likely than those who served longer to support COP. Officers who had more than 15 years of service (76.3 percent) supported COP the least when compared to other officers with fewer years of service.

As to why their department should not practice COP, eight officers who received COP training and nine officers who did not cited lack of manpower as their primary concern (Table VI). Officers from both groups also considered lack of understanding of the COP principles and unwillingness to practice COP on the part of the administration as problematic. Fewer officers, however, saw COP programs as being ineffective.

The results from Table VII show that overall officers' responses regarding the characteristics of COP reflected the tactical dimension the most (39.1 percent), followed by the organizational (27.6 percent), the strategic (18.5 percent), and the philosophical (14.7 percent). When considered from the element aspect of COP, officers' responses indicated different emphases in different dimensions. The three elements most fully understood by the officers were partnerships (21.8 percent), management (16.1 percent), and problem solving (14.8 percent). While the partnerships and the problem solving elements are under the tactical dimension, the management element is within the organizational dimension. Officers also believed another important characteristic of COP included the citizen input element (12.3 percent) of the philosophical dimension.

| | Duration for COP training (hours) | | | | | | | |
| | Less than 5 | | 6 to 10 | | 11 to 20 | | More than 20 | |
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Whether the police department should adopt and practice COP								
Yes	8	80	4	66.7	14	87.5	92	90.2
No	2	20	2	33.3	2	12.5	10	9.8
Total	10	100	6	100	16	100	102	100

Notes: χ^2 3.68; df = 3; significance = 0.299

Table III.
The impact of training duration on attitudes regarding the practice of COP ($n = 134$)

Table IV.
The impact of rank and working division on attitudes regarding the practice of COP

Whether the police department should adopt and practice COP

| | Rank (n = 193)[a] | | | | | | | | Working division (n = 180)[b] | | | | | | | |
| | Officer | | Senior officer | | Lieutenant | | Captain or above | | Administration | | Patrol | | Detective | | Special service and others | |
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	13	92.9	100	79.4	20	83.3	15	93.8	5	100.0	101	80.2	15	75.0	27	93.1
No	1	7.1	26	20.6	4	16.7	1	6.3			25	19.8	5	25	2	6.9
Total	14	100.0	126	100.0	24	100.0	16	100.0	5	100.0	126	100.0	20	100.0	29	100.0

Notes: [a] χ^2 3.68; df = 3; significance = 0.353; [b] χ^2 4.511; df = 3; significance = 0.211

However, the three elements that were least mentioned by the officers were the information element (0.4 percent) of the organizational dimension, the broad police function (1.2 percent), and the personal service elements (1.2 percent) of the philosophical dimension. Also, while the partnerships (21.8 percent) and the problem solving (14.8 percent) elements of the tactical dimension were highly defined by the officers, the positive interaction element of the same dimension received much lower attention (2.5 percent).

Discussion
Factors affecting officers' attitudes
While Zhao *et al.*'s (1995) national study found the lack of COP training among many law enforcement agencies to be an internal barrier to the implementation of COP, Zhao *et al.*'s (1999) longitudinal panel study, which used the same sampling frame, indicated an increased and intensified level of interest in COP training among police departments surveyed. The positive change in the

	Length of service (years)							
	1 to 5		6 to 10		11 to 15		More than 15	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Whether the police department should adopt and practice COP								
Yes	36	97.3	29	82.9	16	88.9	71	76.3
No	1	2.7	6	17.1	2	11.1	22	23.7
Total	37	100.0	35	100.0	18	100.0	93	100.0

Notes: χ^2 8.747; df = 3; significance = 0.033

Table V.
The impact of length of service on attitudes regarding the practice of COP ($n = 134$)

Problems cited	Officers with COP training ($n = 14$)		Officers without COP training ($n = 21$)	
	n	%	*n*	%
Lack of understanding on the principles of COP (i.e. no decentralization, no problem solving strategies, and improper organizational structure)	2	13.33	6	20.69
Lack of cooperation from other city services	–		3	10.34
Inadequate training on COP	–		3	10.34
Lack of manpower	8	53.33	9	31.03
Ineffective programs	1	6.66	4	13.80
Administration's unwillingness to practice (i.e. being too traditional)	4	26.66	15	100.0
	4	13.80	29	100.0

Note: Some responses addressed multiple categories; therefore, the sum of responses was more than 35

Table VI.
Respondents' comments on why COP should not be practiced ($n = 35$)

Dimension	Element	n	%
Philosophical	Citizen input	30	12.3
	Broad police function	3	1.2
	Personal service	3	1.2
Strategic	Re-oriented operations	20	8.2
	Geographic focus	13	5.3
	Prevention emphasis	12	5.0
Tactical	Positive interaction	6	2.5
	Partnerships	53	21.8
	Problem solving	36	14.8
Organizational	Structure	27	11.1
	Management	39	16.1
	Information	1	0.4

Table VII.
Respondents' comments on what should be characteristics of COP (n = 128)

Note: Some responses addressed multiple categories; therefore, the sum of responses was more than 128

training area found in Zhao *et al*.'s (1999) study supports a progressive move toward COP through the creation of over 30 regional community policing institutes across the country (beginning in 1997 with over $30 million funding) which make COP training available to many law enforcement agencies (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1997). Many local and state agencies, some universities, and the Community Policing Consortium – which combines the efforts of PERF, the Police Foundation, International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Sheriffs' Association – also offer COP training courses.

Given the time line for this major development in the area of COP training, the data of this study on training reflect such an intended progressive move toward COP. Nearly three-fourths (68 percent) of the officers reported attending training on COP with 16.5 percent of these officers receiving between six and 20 hours of training and 76 percent receiving more than 20 hours. These numbers indicate the department's support for and effort to educate its officers about COP. Interestingly enough, these different training durations, plus the various types of training instructors for COP, also indicate an inconsistent, nonuniform provision of such training.

It appears that training on COP does persuade officers to accept this new philosophy of policing. Compared to those who did not receive training, officers who attended the training strongly and significantly agree to adopt and practice COP. However, training duration was found to have no impact on officers' attitudes.

Officers' length of service in the department, rather than their rank or working division, affects their attitudes toward COP. Most officers, regardless of their rank or current assignment, are supportive of adopting and practicing COP. An explanation for this may be COP training that many of these officers have received because if new officers can learn and understand the COP philosophy on the job, perhaps their favorable attitudes toward COP will not be easily altered by a change of rank or working assignment. Regarding years of

service, the study's finding supports Lewis *et al.*'s (1999) study which revealed that length of service related negatively to officers' attitudes toward five of the six sub-components of COP. Assuming a general positive correlation between years of service and rank, the mixed results of the impact of these three variables (rank, working division, and years of service) on officers' attitudes are interesting. Why do attitudes by rank and years of service, the two variables that usually have a positive correlation, not parallel each other? More in-depth studies on these issues in future research are needed.

Obstacles to practicing COP

This study reveals interesting results regarding why some officers, both those who attended training on COP and those who did not, rejected adoption and practice of the COP philosophy. Only five officers (one trained and four untrained) believe COP programs are ineffective in solving crime problems. Officers' comments on ineffective programs seem to be the only negative opinion toward COP. A closer look and examination of other comments can be interpreted as officers' hesitation to embrace COP rather than disagreement with the COP idea. Both trained and untrained officers may advocate the idea but express their concerns about the current status and readiness of their department. Both groups of officers cite lack of understanding on COP principles, lack of manpower, and their administration's unwillingness to practice COP as obstacles to instituting COP programs. In other words, these officers would like to see these internal problems solved, or at least ameliorated, before fully participating in the programs.

Administrative personnel appear to be a contributing factor that causes some officers' hesitation. Since most police policies are still shaped in a militarily top-down fashion, any reluctance to implement a program on the part of the administrators can be viewed as a sign of failure. Such reluctance, when combined with a lack of understanding of program principles, may be even more discouraging to officers at the bottom of the hierarchy. To help solve this problem, the data of this study suggest that more police administrators should attend training on COP.

Characteristics of COP

Table VII shows that officers believe the tactical dimension and its two elements (partnerships and problem solving) are the main characteristics of COP. These findings come as no surprise when many researchers (e.g. Goldstein, 1996; Thurman and McGarrell, 1997, p. 2; Trojanowicz and Buequeroux, 1990, p. 5) include these two elements as central tenets of COP definition. Empirically, most police studies have also been found to focus on the tactical dimension of COP, revealing very little or no information on the effects of philosophical, strategic, and organizational changes (Cordner, 1998). If nothing else, the focused studies on the tactical dimensions may perpetuate police officers' opinions on what should constitute COP. Cordner (1998)

encourages more future studies to be conducted on the philosophical, strategic, and organizational aspects of COP.

This study reveals that the management element of the organizational dimension is found to be the second highest characteristic of COP. Believing that a new management style, including leadership and supervision, is needed for COP to be successful, the officers rank the management element second between the partnerships and problem-solving concepts. As Ford *et al.* (1999) stated, the move to COP can be successful only when police leaders and the key members of the department effectively manage the process of change. One recent study on the management impact on officers' attitudes finds that although officers advocate the practice of COP, its potential failure lies ahead if officers do not believe the leadership, management style, and organizational climate within the department are conducive to the success of COP implementation (Cheurprakobkit, 2001).

The data show that the officers also recognize citizen input and organizational structure concepts as key characteristics of COP. Citizen input as part of police policy development is widely practiced by many law enforcement agencies throughout the country through the use of citizen surveys or neighborhood meetings. The officers may also be well aware of citizen input since it relates to the partnerships and problem-solving elements. However, the structure element (e.g. decentralization and delegation of authority), while viewed as one of the COP characteristics, is not fully recognized by officers. As Roberg (1994) argues, the military structures and bureaucratic orientation of police agencies is a key internal obstacle to implementing COP.

Table VII also suggests that officers put less emphasis on four elements of COP characteristics (information, broad police function, personal service, and positive interaction, respectively). To some officers, these four elements may not be considered central to the practice of COP because many police activities and practices may not necessarily reflect such elements. However, when considering the impact these four elements may have on the others, one can greatly appreciate their significance.

Unlike traditional policing, COP uses information innovatively to put emphasis on quality of policing. Proper use of information not only helps police identify and analyze community problems but assists them in police program assessment (Cordner, 1998). The quality of police work (how well community problems are addressed and handled) must supercede quantity measures (arrests and tickets) for performance appraisal. Also important is the use of information to make problem solving more successful. Such information can be utilized through techniques such as program evaluation, crime analysis, and geographic information system.

Broad police function and personal service are crucial elements of COP that officers need to realize. Clearly, COP has expanded the traditional role of police from being crime fighters to peacekeepers and service providers (Goldstein, 1997; Kelling and Moore, 1988). Moreover, the growth of diverse ethnic populations and recent demographic changes call for selective exercise of police discretion to meet certain community needs; Cordner (1998) calls this

personalized policing. The police roles as service providers and personalized law enforcers inevitably increase the number and magnitude of police-citizen contacts. These increased contacts between police and citizens expose police to more public scrutiny, which in turn affects how citizens rate police performance (the information element) and decide to participate in solving problems (the problem-solving element).

Considering the magnitude of police-citizen contacts today, it is easy to understand why the positive interaction element, which receives less attention from officers, should be emphasized. Studies found not only that positive interaction with police is directly related to citizens' favorable view of police performance (Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Cox and White, 1988; Zevitz and Rettammel, 1990), but that positive experience with police can also neutralize or ameliorate the negative attitudes of citizens (Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Rusinko *et al.*, 1978). Creating a positive impression can be the very first step police can use to gain trust, respect, and confidence of the public; consequently, police may be able to achieve the partnership and problem-solving goals with less effort.

Conclusions
In light of this study's results, police executives can make COP an easier, more attainable idea to implement. They must train all their officers, especially themselves and administrative personnel, to understand the principles of COP as well as all other related characteristics. Even more important is for police executives and key administrators to make concrete their support for and understanding of COP. COP training must be better systematized (at least for this particular department) so that equal, balanced, and sufficient knowledge about COP is available to all the officers. This study did not examine the different methods of COP training delivery (behavioral/teacher-centered versus learner-centered) which may result in different attitudes toward COP, and future research should take this into consideration.

The results of this study reveal that some COP characteristics are given more emphasis than others. Since COP involves many fundamental changes of policing, looking at all the characteristics as a whole in context instead of as individual components makes more sense. The reasons for this are several. First, each characteristic/element can greatly affect the others. Believing in the citizen input element may ease the goal of creating a police-citizen partnership. Second, focusing on certain elements may cause officers to lose sight of the other important, related elements. Ignoring the use of information may make crime prevention and problem solving become more difficult to achieve. Third, already limited police resources may be allocated to promote some characteristics at the expense of the others. More efforts and resources must be spent to promote some of the less emphasized elements. Future research should be conducted to examine relationships among these COP characteristics. In particular, studies focusing on the less defined characteristics (broad police function, personal service, positive interaction, and information) may be even more beneficial.

In closing, support for COP programs alone is only one ingredient for COP success. The move toward this new policing philosophy must include proper training, understanding of the philosophy and its goals, and a commitment in the department-wide effort, particularly from the top down, to implement the programs. Anything less is a harbinger of compromised success or even a failure.

Notes

1. Factor analysis used in this study generated four underlying factors. Two of these four factors were: the "enhancement of overall skill" factor, which consisted of four items (excellence in community service, quality circle, apply quality: an overview, circles in crime prevention, and middle management authority delegation); and the "improvement of middle management skills", which consisted of four items (comprehensive overview of community policing, crime-fighter vs peace-keeper, positive risk-taking, and survival strategies for managers).

2. Demographics for the sworn personnel of this police department are 376 (92.6 percent) male and 30 (7.4 percent) female. For rank, 39 (9.6 percent) are officers, 303 (74.6 percent) senior officers, 35 (8.6 percent) lieutenants, and 26 (6.4 percent) captains or above. Therefore, although the response rate of this study was only 48.8 percent, the sample seemed to represent the personnel of the department.

3. Senior officers are only those who must have at least 30 months of service in the department and pass a written proficiency examination.

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