



ORGANIZATIONAL RESISTANCE AND RECEPTIVITY*

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Abstract

Organizational change has become a regular part of organizational functioning. Despite the popularity of planned change efforts, the failure rates of implementation are as high as 70 percent. Operationally, this failure rate is of great concern due to the substantial loss of time, morale, financial resources, and damage to an organization's ultimate survival. While these efforts are affected by many different factors, resistance to change is thought to play a very critical role. The central purpose of this study is to examine the reaction of police officers in terms of resistance and receptivity after the implementation of a popular planned organizational change model known as Compstat, which has been implemented by numerous police organizations in the United States over the last decade. Data were collected in this case study through in-depth interviews and observation of the Compstat meetings, and analyzed using grounded theory. The study revealed that resistance was the dominant reaction in the early phases of this model. The reasons for resistance included uncertainty about new processes and procedures, fear of departing from habit and routine, loss of power and status, increased workloads and demands, tough tone of the Compstat meetings, and the way the change was introduced by the police chief. The degree of resistance to the Compstat model decreased overtime and accepted by the officers in the NPD in the following years. The main reasons for the acceptance was the change in the tone and form of the meetings, retirement and/or replacement of active resisters, new officers with different values, perceived success of the model and learning the expectations of the upper echelon over these years. In terms of suggestions, first, the concepts of resistance to change and resistance to the consequences of change need to be differentiated. In this line of thought, different policies and practices should be put into practice based on different considerations of each group. Secondly, involvement to the change process increase the level of understanding and information regarding what was expected and why and thus increases receptivity of the change models. Finally, a leadership style that coaches officers in the adoption of the new procedures and practices increases the level of change acceptance and other positive outcomes.

Keywords: Organizational Change, Police Culture, Compstat, Uncertainty, Resistance and Receptivity.

Introduction

Pervasive change is one of the predictable features of contemporary life, and organizations are no exception. Society's rapidly changing conditions and needs, demographics, market demands, government regulations, pressures created by globalization, increasing competition and resource constraints, and technological developments coalesce to make change a critical issue for all types of organizations (Fairchild, 1989). Pressure for organizations to change has increased worldwide as layoffs, mergers, and closings are becoming an increasing survival strategy (Lewis, 2011). In the case of public organizations, taxpayers and funding sources are progressively demanding higher levels of performance at lower costs, and these pressures also require organizational changes of various kinds (Tromp and Ruben, 2004). All of these factors as well as institutional and cultural pressures have led to more change attempts among both public and private organizations.

In this environment, all types of organizations have increased their efforts to identify new technologies, innovations and new management models in order to address the many emerging challenges and opportunities they face (Zorn, Page and Cheney, 2000). Cameron and Quinn (1999) found that 69% of the U.S. firms and 75% of European firms have engaged in at least one planned change effort over the last decade. A vast and highly profitable consulting industry has emerged in an attempt to respond to the demands of organizations regarding issues such as change management, performance measurement, transformation, organizational development, and reengineering (Gallivan, 2001). The actors of this industry have suggested a number of planned organizational change models such as 'Total Quality Management (TQM)', 'The Balance Scorecard', 'Strategic Planning', and 'Organizational Development', all of which claim to increase the organization's performance, profitability, accountability, effectiveness, legitimacy, quality, and customer satisfaction (Eisenberg and Goodall, 1993). Therefore, organizational change has become a regular part of business language and organizational functioning.

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As largely stated in the literature, organizational change is not an easy task. Consistent with Kurt Lewin (1947), an early pioneer of organizational psychology, who stated, "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it," any type of planned change effort brings cultural considerations to the surface. Culturally accepted practices, interactions, goals, and routines that have not been salient, or have been taken for granted prior to an organizational change attempt, can be a source of resistance or receptivity, or spectacles for perceiving, understanding, and interpreting change efforts which result in different reactions, effects, processes, and outcomes (Dawson, 1994). In the same line of thought, Ruben (2009: 1) suggested that "organizations, like individuals, have habits, traditions, and histories, and all of these are powerful forces that reinforce past and present practice, and typically impede efforts to stimulate progress and innovation". As such, planned change efforts rarely go precisely as planned and may lead to a total failure or unintended consequences for both organizations and individuals (Harris and Ogbonna, 2002). "The failure rates have been reported to be as high as 50 to 70 %, of which only 10 % are attributed to technical problems" (Lewis and Seibold, 1998: 98). Operationally, this failure rate is of great concern due to the substantial loss of time, morale, financial resources, and damage to an organization's ultimate survival (Lewis, 2011). As stated by Miller, Johnson and Grau (1994), there may be many factors affecting the success or failure of change efforts, namely individual inertia, poor communication, existing technical capacities, organizational members' attitudes towards change, motivation for altering behaviors, experience of earlier change initiatives, and individual demographics, but few are as critical as the resistance to change (Ruben, 2009).

While acknowledging the importance of other factors, this article will specifically address the reaction of organization members in the form of resistance or receptivity to a planned organizational change model called Compstat.

Compstat emerged in 1994 in the New York Police Department (NYPD) as a new, complex, multifaceted system (Bratton and Knobler, 1998). It was initially developed as a means to collect timely and accurate data about daily crime patterns to initiate tactics and strategies, increase the flow of information and communication among police station commanders and departments, and ultimately increase performance and accountability (O'Connell and Straub, 2007). Over time, "the initiative has been transformed into a more comprehensive form in its structure and promises, claiming to instigate the changes needed in police organizations and boasting the ability to reduce crime by making police organizations more responsive to management's direction and performance indicators" (Vito, Walsh and Kunselman, 2005: 189). This model combines a range of management principles in its structure to respond to problems. For instance, "the use of different policing styles (i.e., real time crime analysis, targeted crime interdiction, broken windows enforcement, directed patrol), adaptive culture, structural reorganization (i.e., empowerment, managerial accountability, teamwork, geographic decentralization), and a set of innovative strategies and motivational tools are counted in as a part of Compstat" (Silverman and O'Connell, 1999: 130). Regular Compstat meetings are the most visible and important component of this change model. Basically, Compstat is considered a police version of the strategic planning or/and change management system. After its success in the NYPD, this model has been adapted by numerous police organizations in the United States and some other countries over the last two decades.

Compstat is a large scale change model and the degree of resistance and receptivity of organizational members certainly influence its ultimate success or failure. Keeping in mind this main assumption, this study focuses on the reaction to this change model by organizational members in a well-known police department in the USA called Newark Police Department (NPD). This topic is particularly important when considering the significant focus of literature on the strong resistance of police organizations toward change efforts. In addition, the Compstat model has great potential to be implemented by numerous other police organizations inside and outside of the United States. For this reason, understanding the reaction of organizational members and the source of these reactions can be quite helpful for organizations that intend to adopt these kinds of change models. Based on this ground, the main research questions are:

- 1) How was Compstat received and reacted to by organizational members in the NPD?
- 2) How did reactions change over time, if they changed?

1. Organizational Change and Reaction to Change

Many studies have been conducted to understand the various factors that influence change implementation. In one such study, Cochran, Bromley and Swando (2002) identified the following external and internal factors that lead to negative reactions toward implementing organizational changes: financial difficulties, lack of leadership commitment, lack of employee support, organizational culture, employee



resistance, or a negative attitude toward change. Ruben (2009) also developed an extensive list of factors that may negatively influence the reactions of organizational members: not seeing a need for change; regarding the change as a threat to their comfort level, self-interests, self-concepts, or self-identities; fear of changing routines and approaches that may require new knowledge and skills, fear of a change in status; lack of confidence and trust in leaders; and finally viewing the change as a threat to the organization's future.

Covin and Kilmann (1990) identified factors that influence the change process both positively and negatively. On the one hand, management support and commitment, readiness for change, encouraging employee participation, good communication, and acknowledgement of a strong need for change were all perceived by respondents as positive issues that support change. On the other hand, lack of management support, forced change programs by top managers, unrealistic expectations, and lack of employee participation, poor communication, and an unclear purpose were believed to impact change programs negatively. In addition to these factors, Lewis (2011) argued that the organizational structure, resources, and political power can influence change efforts.

Among all these factors, 'resistance to change' is likely to be the most recognized and researched factor in the organizational change literature, and this takes its roots from the common belief that people resist change (Dent and Goldberg, 1999). In the majority of works, resistance is defined as a "restraining force moving in the direction of maintaining the status quo" or "forces that lead employees away from supporting changes proposed by managers" (Piderit, 2000: 784). Further, Argyris and Schon (1978: 34) argued that "resistance to change is a defense mechanism produced by frustration and anxiety".

In criticizing the loss of meaning and managerial bias in the use of this concept, Dent and Goldberg (1999) made an important distinction between resistance to change and resistance to the consequences of change by stating that people may resist loss of status, pay, and comfort in change programs that do not appear feasible. And therefore, these factors are different from resistance to change; rather, they represent resistance to the consequences of change. In the same line of thought, Piderit (2000: 785) criticized the managerial conceptualization in which resistance is used to blame "the less powerful for the failure of change efforts, and dismiss the potentially valid and legitimate concerns and expectations of organizational members".

Another important consideration in the use of the term was raised by Hultman (1995), who argued that although the nature and degree of resistance can be considerably different, the concept is mistakenly used to cover a range of various reactions. Considering this point, Hultman distinguished resistance as an active-resistance or passive-resistance concept. While active-resistance includes finding fault, ridiculing, and manipulating, the latter includes approving verbally but not following through or withholding information.

Regardless of the different definitions, factors, and perspectives for the concept, it would be fair to say that resistance, at different degrees, is a part of the change process. Although there are increasing number of works that draw attention to the positive role that resistance can play, for example, forcing management to rethink or reevaluate change in terms of plausible concerns raised by organizational members and an opportunity to engage and educate members (Dent and Goldberg, 1999), resistance to change is typically viewed as a negative issue that makes programs very difficult or even impossible to implement (Bovey and Hede, 2001). Even well-prepared plans may suffer the risk of eventual failure due to the resistance to change or resistance to consequences of change. Considering the centrality of this issue, there is an abundance of literature regarding factors that influence resistance as well as means and methods to overcome, minimize, or manage change.

In identifying the main causes of resistance, most researchers pointed out the need for stability, a sense of reduced control, uncertainty, instability, insecurity, conflict, fear of losing power, status, and benefits (Eilam and Shamir, 2005). Similarly, Dent and Goldberg (2000) noted that other potential causes that lead to resistance include fear of change, fear of unpleasantness, lack of trust, uncertainty, poor training, surprise, and personality conflicts. Further, Harris and Ogbonna (2002) listed a number of other different resistance factors common to members of organization. These include organizational culture and subcultures, persuasion and coercion mechanisms, an individual's position and role in the organization, commitment to organization, history of change initiatives, and the roles of change agents. In yet another study, Harvey (1995) considered the lack of involvement, benefits, knowledge, and management support to contribute to resistance, whereas factors suggested for the success of implementation included involvement, equal information, participation, and use of certain incentives among organizational members. According to Lewis (2007), taking all of these factors into account, uncertainty was the central reason resulting in a sense



of reduced control, fear, anxiety, and stress as well as one of the most commonly recognized reasons for resistance to change.

Other than these factors, how change is implemented might possibly play a critical role in the reaction of organizational members toward change (Piderit, 2000). Obviously, not all staff in all organizations are resistant to organizational change. In other words, the way in which agents treat organizational members and implement programs may have a direct influence on resistance to change. For example, when organizational members believe that they are treated fairly, they develop the desired attitudes and behaviors necessary for a successful change. On the other hand, if workplace decisions and managerial actions are perceived as being unjust or dictated, members are more likely to experience feelings of anger and resist change. Accordingly, Folger and Skarlicki (1999) claimed that through resistance to change, organizational members exercise their power to redress injustice within the existing power relationships.

The link between communication and resistance is also subject to scholarly interest. Stanley, Meyer and Topolnytsky (2005) indicated that distrust in the motives driving change as a result of poor communication is a quite significant source of resistance. In another study, Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) found that misunderstanding as a result of communication problems or inadequate information is one important factor resulting in resistance to change. They indicated that when levels of personnel information sharing and communications are increased, cooperation also increases, and negative employee attitudes as well as resistance to change decrease. Although the literature most often focused on resistance concerning particular factors, Orlikowski (1992) argued that the reactions of organizational members might differ substantially based on their interpretation of change. Further, organizational members make sense of and interpret change based on their ascribed meanings, emotional responses, and perceptions of personal gains or losses as well as their workplace experiences (Eilam and Shamir, 2005).

Consequently, it is accurate to state that all of the aforementioned factors influence the degree of resistance and receptivity towards planned change efforts. Accordingly, understanding of these factors and ways in which to manage the planned organizational change process will increase the likelihood of a successful implementation of a change effort (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999).

2. Police Organizations and Change

Scholars have consistently pointed out the difficulty of changing police practices and resistance to change (Manning 1977; Barker, 1999; Wood, 2004). The most common and popular explanation is the existence of a police culture (Davies & Thomas, 2003). As suggested by Schein (1984), an organization with a long, intense, and varied history generally has a strong and easily distinguishable culture, and such a culture is correspondingly challenging to reshape. Given its lengthy and dramatic history, the organizational police culture strongly shapes an individual officer's characteristics, and such strong cultural practices and values often undermine change efforts as they lead to ambiguity and anxiety among police officers. Specifically, the control and command structure, discretionary power, and cultural values such as, masculinity, conformance to authority, solidarity, discipline, mistake avoidance, security, order, caution, and systematic rule application can bring about the resistance in police organizations. For example, researchers have suggested that changing police culture requires changes at both upper level and street level practices, but the discretionary power of front line officers can obstruct or undermine planned change efforts initiated at the top (Jermier and Berkes, 1979; Chan, 1996). Front line police officers can therefore determine the meaning of these change efforts on the ground and create different mechanisms and shortcuts to cope with these change efforts in the scope of this discretionary power. As suggested by Lipsky (1980) and Maanen (1978), rather than placing espoused values, laws, and regulations directly into practice, front line officers adopt official rules to their work conditions. They can make a distinction between 'theory' and 'practice' and see change efforts as unrelated to local needs and conditions. This understanding generates new practices and routines and increases the gap between the perspectives of managers and front line officers on the actual adaptation of change initiatives.

In a review of the literature regarding Compstat and resistance, police organizational culture is put into the center of the analysis. In the case of the NYPD, police chief William Bratton recognized the importance that culture play in the process of reorganization and asked consultants to perform a cultural diagnostic survey that would determine to what extent the NYPD's cultural values and priorities matched his own and would be appropriate in the change effort (Bratton and Knobler, 1998). The first survey item was designed to determine the difference between the priorities of managers and those of front line officers on the ground. Managers valued "holding down overtime; staying out of trouble; clearing backlog of radio



runs; reporting police corruption; and treating bosses with deference” rather than “reducing crime, disorder, and fear,” Bratton’s major goal (Buntin, 1999: 6). In contrast, officers on the ground valued “reducing crime, disorder, and fear; making gun arrests; providing police services to people who requested them; gaining public confidence in police integrity; arresting drug dealers; correcting quality-of-life conditions; and staying out of trouble” (Buntin, 1999: 6). As a reflection of these cultural values, during the implementation process, Compstat encountered powerful resistance from managers who advocated the professional bureaucratic policing management model that emphasized strict dependence on written rules and regulations, centralization of the decision making process, and authority by top level management. In contrast, Compstat stressed rapid action, flexibility for managing resources, and a decentralized decision making process. In the implementation process at the NYPD, some advocates of the professional management model were forced to retire, whereas others were transferred to less influential positions by the new administration in order to implement this innovation (Henry, 2003). This study will focus on implementation of Compstat in another organizational setting (NPD) and reaction of organizational members there.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Setting

In this study, a large police department, Newark Police Department (NPD), in the east coast of the USA was selected for an in-depth analysis of the reaction of police officers to a planned change model called Compstat. This police department was selected due to its relevance for this research. First and foremost, the NPD has employed the Compstat since 1997, and the department was receptive to conducting interviews. In addition, its large size, crime ridden environment, openness to change in the past and revision of Compstat, initiation of a number of innovative programs, reorganization of the department, and reduction in crime rates after the implementation of Compstat made this police department a good and interesting sample of study.

3.2. Data Collection

Data regarding reaction of police officers in the NPD was collected through in-depth interviews of police officers in different ranks and positions and observation of the Compstat meetings. The researcher conducted 26 interviews with members of the NPD. The basic sampling strategy was to reach a sample of individuals from diverse groups and varied functions within the organization. The interviews were arranged by a contact person who was assigned by the police chief to assist with the study. There were a representative number of officers from a wide range of ranks and units. This enabled cross-checking of information in an effort to establish different views held concerning the introduction and implementation of Compstat (Olie, 1994).

Observation was another data collection method used for this study. The main setting for observations was the Compstat meetings. The researcher attended nine meetings in 6 months and made observation approximately 18 hours. These meetings, as the most visible component of Compstat, presented a unique context in which to examine certain practices and conversations conducted in the scope of Compstat. They also allowed to researcher to understand the reasons of the different reactions in the NPD.

3.3. Data Analysis and Limitations

The data obtained from the interviews and observation was used for the analysis and interpretation of the reaction of police officers to the Compstat in this specific organization. The research took an inductive approach to examining the present phenomenon, insofar as the “categories emerge out of the examination of the data ... without firm preconceptions dictating relevance in concepts and hypotheses beforehand” (Walker, 1985: 58). The overall data analysis process can be considered in terms of two interrelated concepts: analysis and interpretation. Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 210-211) defined analysis: “the process of labeling and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them into patterns, themes, concepts, and propositions. Interpretation is the process of making construal”. In this process, both analysis and interpretation come together to clarify the meaning and make knowledge claims about the given research topic.

Specifically, the constant comparative method was used for analysis and interpretation. In fact, this method appears to be particularly useful in coding a large amount of texts, forming categories, establishing the conceptual boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, and summarizing (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The analysis process, within the scope of the constant comparative method, can be summarized as follows. First of all, in order to prepare the data for analysis, all interview statements and observation notes were logged into the computer. The Atlas-ti software that is designed for content analysis of large amounts of transcripts and notes was used for the analysis and interpretation of data, and it



facilitated a coherent means of coding, categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting. This software provided the flexibility and non-hierarchical coding of data compatible with the constant comparative method.

The analysis process involved three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding can be considered as a form of content analysis where the data are read, coded, and categorized into themes on the basis of 'look-alike' characteristics rather than predetermined categories (Orlikowski, 1993). The purpose is to "group similar events, happenings, and objects under a common heading or classification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 103). Within this iterative process, a total of about 141 codes were generated. This process ended by classifying 141 codes under the 14 broader categories. The next step, axial coding, is "the process of relating categories to their subcategories and linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 142). During axial coding, these categories were reviewed and re-sorted in order to relate them to subcategories, linkages, and relationships that have greater explanatory power to answer research questions. The final step is selective coding, in which core categories are selected and systematically integrated to narrate what is happening, form general explanations, generate a larger theoretical stance, and make knowledge claims about the organization studied (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

In terms of limitations, the most important limitation of this study is the analysis of one organization at a certain period of time. This is about the generalizability of this study's findings for other police departments. It must be stated that this single case study has limitations in terms of statistical generalization. However, the tentative analytical generalization is still valid, appropriate and helpful for organizations that are willing to understand Compstat and the reaction of police officers to this model and similar change models (Yin, 2003).

4. Findings

The literature regarding the NYPD suggests that there was strong resistance to Compstat in its early phases. Similar to the NYPD, based on the analysis of data in the NPD, it is fair to say that the reactions of officers were mostly in the form of resistance rather than receptivity in the early phases of Compstat. This initiative was accepted over the years. For this reason, the focus will be first on resistance, then receptivity. The main reasons for the resistance was the way Compstat was introduced in the NPD, the tone of the Compstat meetings and change in the practices, work habits, and status of the middle level managers. These reasons will be explained in several headings including introduction of Compstat, change in management (i.e. accountability, responsibility, work load), and the Compstat meetings. In addition, the specific role of leadership and how this change model was accepted over the years will also be explained in the following sections

4.1. Introduction of Compstat

Defining characteristics of the Compstat's introduction phase in the NPD were the lack of information, involvement, and training. These points led to knowledge gap between leaders and other officers, the uncertainty, and the anxiety among officers. Change, especially major change, leads inevitably to a degree of uncertainty in organizations, especially when certain communication strategies are not followed to minimize it. In the NPD, most of the officers were not aware of what was expected of them in this change process, the extent and nature of the change, and how to prepare for Compstat and Compstat meetings. The change implementers did not have a strategic communication effort to inform and train officers on these matters. As reported by a number of officers, "There was fear because of something different. We were in the dark. We did not know what to do." Another officer summarizes the general feeling of officers in those early phases: "It was more a sense of unknown, what is going to happen, a sense of fear, how this is going to affect me."

Most officers believe that certain communication strategies and training would have resulted in a smoother transition with fewer problems understanding and adapting to Compstat. As illustrated in the following excerpt, most of the officers expressed anger at facing intimidation and punishment for something that they had not been taught beforehand:

I just learned how to be prepared by doing it within these 12 years. If police chief collected all the commanders and executive officers when it took place and somebody would explain how to be prepared and run it, I think the beginning would have been much better. I don't know if he tried to shame us, but it seem like you were there [at the meetings] to be punished.

As shown briefly, due to the lack of information sharing, involvement and training in the early phases, the common feeling among officers was uncertainty, which, in turn, lead to resistance of the officers to this model.

4.2. Change in Management: A New World of Policing

Another factor that affected the reaction of officers in the NPD were change in management that includes a new policing approach, new organizational practices, and a new management approach.



Compstat promotes a number of principles (i.e. timely and accurate information, determination of the most effective tactics, rapid deployment of resources, relentless follow up and assessment) and components such as mission clarification, accountability, organizational flexibility, and innovative problems solving tactics. With all those principles and components, Compstat brought a new world for the management of police organizations, requires new ways of organizing the job, and increases the responsibilities of managers. This inevitably influences the daily practices, work habits, and personal status of officers, and thus workload in the NPD. For instance, officers, especially those in managerial positions, have to collect data on a regular basis and attend meetings where they have to answer a lot of questions on regular basis on issues such as crime rates, crime trends, their response to crime, and performance indicators. They were not used to doing this before Compstat.

These new requirements as a part of the Compstat did not seem to be well accepted in the NPD at first, especially by the most affected groups, such as precinct commanders and senior staff who had different practices, habits, and beliefs regarding how policing should be done. As suggested by one officer:

As far as the culture of the police department, they are not used to the accountability that Compstat demanded. There was a lot of resistance, open resistance to Compstat and the accountability the police director is demanding at that time.

This point was clarified by another officer as follows: *"My opinions were that some people were not in favor of it as they were being held accountable. There were some people that did not like being questioned"*. Another officer said, *"There was a lot of resistance because people had never been forced or asked to explain why."* As shown, these new responsibilities were not well accepted by some middle level and senior level staff in the NPD.

Officers' resistance and unwillingness to take more responsibility was linked specifically to the strong culture and increased workload in the Compstat era. The following statement of one officer pointed out the link between culture and resistance: *"The police used to do things in a certain way and they resist any kind of change not just for the dramatic change for how they are doing business. They just did not want responsibility"*.

In terms of workload, in the Compstat era, officers needed to know the crime statistics and trends in their responsible district and required them to explain what had happened and how they planned to respond in regular meetings. This situation forced officers to be prepared for the meetings and work in closer cooperation with lower ranks. The way Compstat increased the work-load can be illustrated by the following statement of one officer:

When I went to these meetings, I was responsible for answering the questions. When I come to the office on Monday, the first thing I do was what crime happened over the weekend. I start looking at the patterns of crime just because I had to talk about those crimes on Thursday. Before the day of Compstat, most Wednesday nights I would stay at the office until 7-8 o'clock and come Thursday morning at 7 in the morning when Compstat was starting at 9 o'clock.

Another officer explains how these requirements were related to the stress and resistance of officers as follows:

I was in the detective squad in 1998. I would see my sergeant go to Compstat. When he gets out of meetings, which is Thursday, he felt a lot better. When Wednesday came again, he had to prepare for meeting again, so he was very nervous. The difference I did notice, he would come back and say what did you do with that investigation?

As shown in these statements, Compstat meant extra work, stress, and a difference in personal status and work habits for some officers. These are some of the main reasons for the resistance of some officers in the initial phase of Compstat.

4.3. Compstat Meetings: Resistance and Receptivity

Compstat meetings, especially the meetings in the NYPD, became the subject of newspaper articles and scholarly interest as a new and unique phenomenon in police organizations with their design, tone, and focus of interests. In particular, the tough, humiliating, and intimidating nature of meetings provided a good story for both journalists and academicians. Change implementers in the NYPD regarded it as a necessity to prepare commanders for crisis situations and to overcome resistance (Bratton and Knobler, 1998). It seems like the NPD police chief appreciated the tough style of meetings in the NYPD and adopted it in the NPD. All participants in this study, even those who supported the tone of meetings, agreed with the tough style of meetings.

Study participants' main argument is that interrogations in the Compstat meetings especially in the early phases were humiliating, hostile, and intimidating; they harmed morale and led to resistance in the department. When officers did not respond in the way expected by the chief, they were intimidated, humiliated, or even transferred as a punishment in front of coworkers. As noted by one officer:



In the beginning, it was tense. It was rough. And if you did not know the answer of the question, you were degraded, you were yelled at, and you were called incompetent, amongst other words. There could be times when they tell you get off the stage. Compstat was so intense, so hostile that people naturally resisted it.

Officers in general suggested that the resistance was not for personal reasons, but related to humiliation in front of peers and negativity. In other words, they suggested that their resistance to change is often based on valid concerns. One of the officers explained this point: *"There was resistance because we did not know what was going on. We were humiliated in front of our peers. It was not a problem for our own sake."* Similarly, officers stated that they could not benefit from these meetings because they were always criticized rather than supported or provided with positive feedback to help them avoid the errors they were criticized for. This point may be illustrated by the following excerpts:

They were just scaring you did not do this and that. They did not provide any positive feedback, but all negative. Instead of saying, why did you not do this or that, you should say, you should do that and this. I don't have any problem with that.

This atmosphere seems to contradict the theorized purpose of meetings in the literature, reducing crime through information sharing and analysis. One of the officers indicates how this tone actually had a negative effect on reaching the theorized purpose of the meetings:

I had all the answers to their questions and they come up with a question that you never thought of. It almost seemed no matter what kind of effort they put into, they found something you missed. You are being put on the spot in front of all command staff. So, it was very negative at the beginning.

When talking about their personal experience in meetings, an officer said that he was asked for the serial number of a found radio. As suggested by one officer, *"It was a kind of 'gotcha' mentality"*, which led to resistance among officers who were in a position to answer the questions. As shown clearly, officers believe that when they are recognized, it is usually for something they have done wrong in the Compstat meetings, rather than for something they have done well. This perception inevitably resulted in negative feelings among officers, harmed their morale and performance, and eventually increased resistance as illustrated by the following excerpts from one officer's interview:

One of the salient factors contributing to resistance to change in the NPD was that officers believe that they were criticized and yelled at in meetings for issues that are beyond their capacity and resources to resolve.

For example, in the following statement, an officer stated that he did not have the resources needed to meet the expectations of the director:

Listen, I was in charge of the missing person unit. I can tell you how hard it is to find a missing person. There are so many missing people in this city. I had only two detectives, I needed ten detectives. It was not enough. Every time in Compstat, he would yell at me, embarrass me, what are you doing to find this one, what you are doing to find that one. I was just like, I cannot win. I knew how hard the detectives were working. He did not want to hear it.

In summary, the tone of the meetings certainly increased the resistance in the NPD. In particular, the humiliation and intimidation in the meetings, negativity and 'gotcha' mentality, and embarrassment of officers for things beyond their control led to strong resistance in the NPD.

4.3.2. Compstat Meetings and Supporters

There were also a few officers who supported the tone of the meeting set by the police chief. The main argument of these officers is that this approach was needed to overcome the resistance shown in different ways and to make it part of the culture of the organization. In other words, they stated that the tough style is needed as some officers in the meetings did not meet the requirements of Compstat and the police chief. As noted by one officer:

They kind of needed to do it that way. You know it is still needed in some respect. The same information is requested every week and they don't have the answers. It is very frustrating.

Another officer justified the disciplinary measures taken by the director as follows: *"If you are not prepared, it is time to move on. If you are not doing your homework, someone has to replace you. That is the way I see it."* In parallel, the next excerpt from the interview of another officer explained that the resistance was not due to Compstat, but to people who were not willing to adopt it:

Sometimes, people just resist. They don't want to be held accountable. And they say this system is too hard. No, it is not the system, sometimes the people. So, you have to make a decision; system or people.

Another officer emphasized the problems in the NPD and suggested the need to be tough to make this change initiative work:

The problems were really a mess. To do it sort of slow, easygoing is not going to work. It was painful, I was not happy with it, I was yelled at just like everybody. I just can't see that it would work had it been casual.

The police chief also seemed to believe that this approach was needed to change the organization. He suggested that this manner was needed to create a professional environment and accountability.

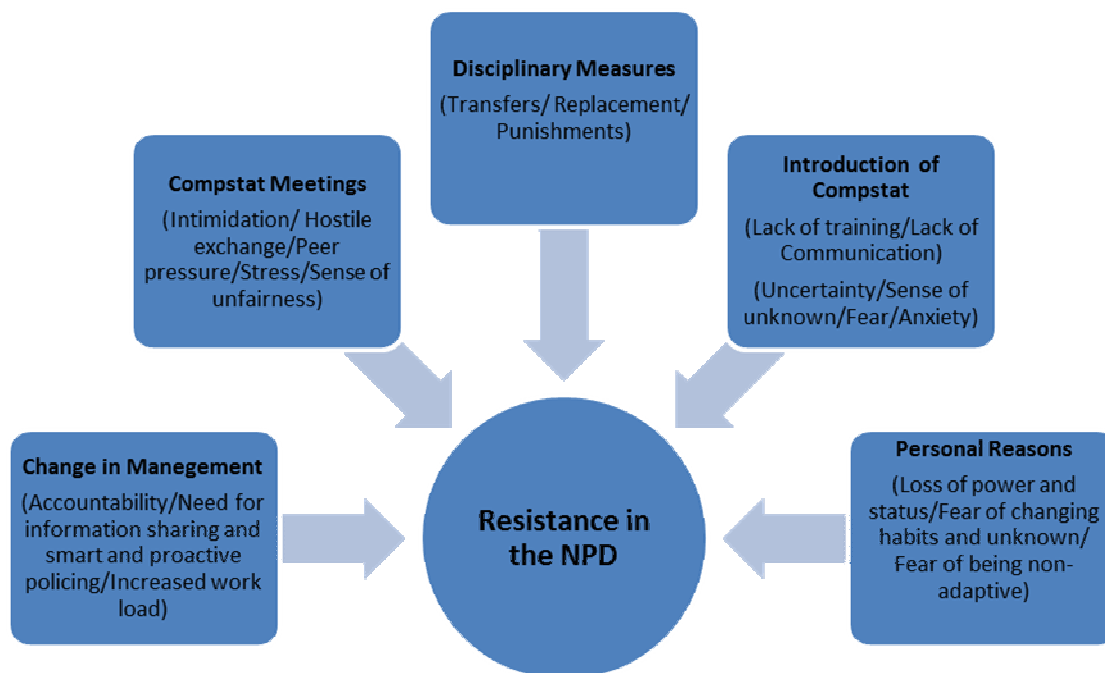


How do you ask people to act professionally without first creating an environment where they can do it? While the earlier practices were intimidating to commanders who had never been held accountable, a whole new generation of officers was now in place that was used to accountability (Smothers, 2002).

In the same article, he added, "People who are doing their jobs have nothing to fear." In that sense, the police chief seems to believe that the problem was related to the lack of a sense of accountability among officers and that kind of approach was needed for such a major revolutionary change and to run the agency. If a democratic, easygoing approach had been taken, officers would have sabotaged the change. In that sense, when officers did not meet the requirements of Compstat that the police chief demanded at that time, the consequences were negative. These consequences included transfers to undesirable positions and assignments, disciplinary measures, and intimidation and humiliation in front of their peers in the Compstat meetings. In other words, the method selected to reinforce certain components of Compstat was not rewarding, or supporting officers, but punishing them. As explained by one officer, "A lot of transfers are coming out of it and disciplinary measures are taken" to implement Compstat. In particular, the police chief's choice to maintain Compstat and reinforce it in the NPD seems to increase resistance rather than minimize it.

To sum up, it has been suggested that officers in the NPD resist Compstat for many salient reasons. These reasons included uncertainty about new processes and procedures, fear of departing from habit and routine, loss of perceived and real power and status, increased workloads and demands, tone of the meetings, and the way the change was introduced by the police director. Mechanisms such as communication, training, culture, and leadership style, which could be used to increase receptivity of Compstat, seem to work in the opposite way. Officers showed resistance by retirement, unpreparedness, manipulation of the numbers, asking for transfers and gossip or try to sabotage the initiative behind the scenes. The following figure illustrated the main reasons for the resistance in the NPD.

Figure-1 Resistance in the NPD



4. Acceptance over the Years

The final point to make about the resistance was how it was managed or overcome in the NPD. It is obvious from the interviews and observation of current practices that the degree of resistance decreased overtime in the NPD. Today, Compstat seems to be very well accepted among officers. The question is how is this change initiative which once resisted heavily accepted now?

The first method used by the police chief at that time to overcome the resistance of active resisters was either to compel them to retire or to transfer them to undesirable positions. The police chief was willing to use this mechanism to open space for new officers: "He never did with those people. With those people who resist it, he never did. He moved them to another place. He let new people come in that shared the same vision." This situation created a sense of acceptance among officers who were willing to stay in the organization and advance in career. As stated by one officer:



They had to change. Here, people lost their commands, they are transferred, and things like that. People need to know that if he cannot do his job, there is another guy behind him who is willing to take your seat.

As shown, the police chief used transfers and retirement as a threat for active resisters. In this process, the younger officers who did not display as much resistance as older officers came up through the system and had more responsibility in the organization, which inevitably increased the level of acceptance.

The second reason is officers' perception that Compstat would be permanent situation in the NPD. That made Compstat work differently than other change initiatives. This point can be illustrated with the following statement of one officer:

Like any other things, it was criticized by some, sometimes openly sometimes behind closed doors. Again, the persistence was different. People had the expectation that they would walk away then come back in six months. When they were persistent and continue the involvement, it became inevitable. Everybody knew that this is an environment you are going to be living; there would be a Compstat meeting every week. So, that persistence sort of sent a signal, but it took a while. It took, I would say the first year. After that, it really made people think that this is for real and these guys are not going to go away. They have been successful now. So that is going to double up. If we hope to go back, that is not going to happen.

As such, officers either decided to leave the organization or accept Compstat as a part of the organization, which eventually created a sense of obligation among officers.

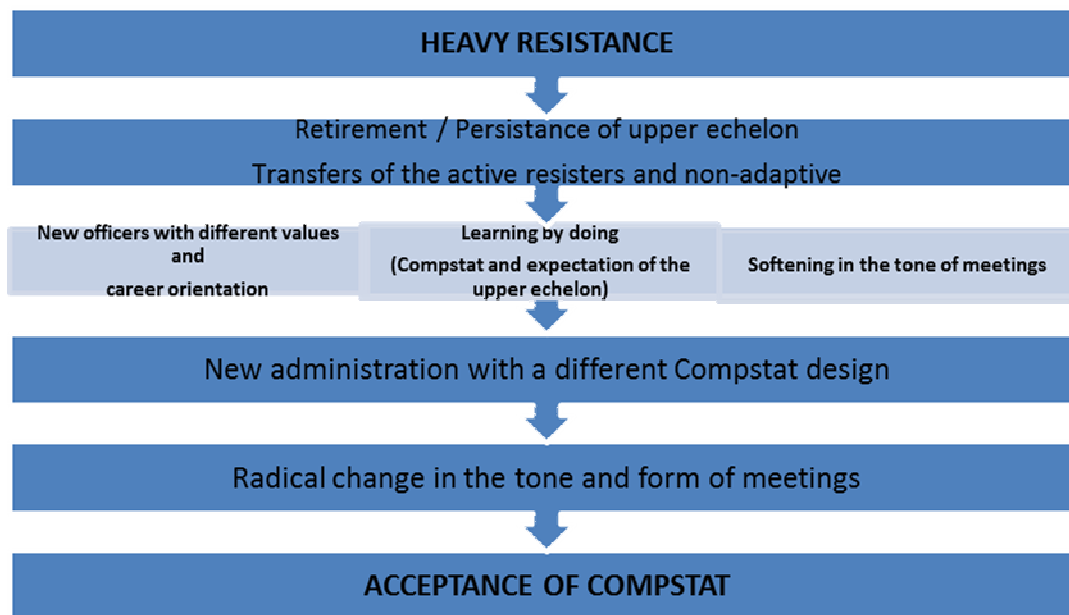
Next, commanders learnt what was expected in the sense of '*learning by doing*' and got used to certain mechanisms of Compstat. This situation decreased the need for a tough style. This was especially evident in the meetings, which was the main reason asserted by the officers for the resistance. Explaining this situation, the police chief suggested that there is a new generation of officers who are career minded, and used to accountability and information sharing. While the meetings were still tough, the extent of the toughness decreased in the long run and received a positive response from officers.

However, the real change of the meetings in terms of the tone occurred in the last administration. The current police director has a different attitude in Compstat meetings than the two former police directors. The following statement of one officer shows how his personal reaction to Compstat changed over the years and the role of current director in this process:

If you interviewed me early 90s, I would have a different perspective on Compstat. But, now, I am part of the process so long, And, I believe George Brown is great. It was not designed to humiliate people; it was designed to help people foster new strategies, get ideas about people.

As shown, there are a group of officers who suggest that intimidation, humiliation, and negativity in the meetings were the reason for the resistance and that the change in the tone contributed to the acceptance of Compstat. Thus, all these factors as well as perceived success of the Compstat seem to contribute the acceptance of Compstat in the NPD over the years. After officers go through the shock of the early phases, learned what was expected from them, and experienced some modifications in the tone of the meetings, the level of acceptance certainly increased in the NPD. In particular, the current administration and the attitudes of the current police chief seem to contribute the acceptance of Compstat. In addition, the decline in the crime rates, the perceived contribution and success of the Compstat in this decline increased the positive perception of the initiative. In that sense, although there are some ups and downs, the case in the NPD seems a linear process in which the level of acceptance has increased over the years. The Figure 2 shows the process of accepting Compstat over these years.

Figure 2 Acceptance of Compstat



As shown, there are a group of officers who suggest that intimidation, humiliation, and negativity in the meetings were the reason for the resistance and that the change in the tone contributed to the acceptance of Compstat. Thus, all these factors as well as perceived success of the Compstat seem to contribute the acceptance of Compstat in the NPD over the years. After officers go through the shock of the early phases, learned what was expected from them, and experienced some modifications in the tone of the meetings, the level of acceptance certainly increased in the NPD. In particular, the current administration and the attitudes of the current police chief seem to contribute the acceptance of Compstat. In addition, the decline in the crime rates, the perceived contribution and success of the Compstat in this decline increased the positive perception of the initiative. In that sense, although there are some ups and downs, the case in the NPD seems a linear process in which the level of acceptance has increased over the years. The Figure 2 shows the process of accepting Compstat over these years.

5. Discussion

5.1. Reaction of Officers

The case of the NPD is a valuable example of the reaction of officers as it reflects managerial and lower level perspective, and resistance and receptivity. Specifically, the way Compstat was introduced, change in the management practices, the climate and tone of the Compstat meetings, personal attitudes and cultural values certainly influenced the reaction of officers in the NPD.

It was evident that the prominent reaction was resistance at first. There were certainly different groups that changed in their reaction and the level of their reaction. Firstly, there were certainly a number of officers who resisted Compstat as it required a change of culturally accepted habits, routines, roles, status, and practices. In particular, the commanders who had autonomy, who benefitted from inefficiency, and who managed their units and precincts without responsibility and accountability resisted this initiative. They were partly aware of what would change and its possible implications in their work in terms of autonomy, efficiency, responsibility, and accountability. Officers in these groups and a number of traditional officers resisted the Compstat due to uncertainty of new processes and outcomes, and fear of possible consequences of the initiative on their status. These fears related to losing control and power, distrust to the new administration, increased workloads and demands; departing from habit and routine; and becoming non-adaptive in this new environment. The case of the NYPD, which was very close geographically and heavily covered in the newspapers, was likely to influence their expectations.

However, there were certainly officers who were in favor of a model like Compstat and were ready to change their habits and practices. Officers in this group resisted more the way the initiative was introduced, the lack of communication, and poor training that fed the feeling of uncertainty, sense of unknown, and fear in the introduction phase. The level of resistance increased with the intimidation and humiliation in the early forms of the meetings. Specifically, officers felt that they were questioned, intimidated, or humiliated about something on which they did not have enough information or background.



There were also a few officers who seemed to accept the way the initiative was introduced and the later phases of the initiative. Officers in these groups mainly mentioned serious problems in the organization, the paramilitary structure, chain of command, strong leadership, and unquestioned power of leaders in the police organizations. The main assumption of officers in this group was that a tough and autocratic manner was needed to make the initiative work, to overcome serious problems and resistance in an organization like the NPD, and to prevent resisters from sabotaging this initiative. The tough manner in the meetings and the lack of officer involvement in the process was said to be consistent with the culture of police organizations in general. These officers have also suggested that this kind of process enabled the upper echelon to be aware of and replace incompetent and inefficient officers with other, career oriented officers who can compete in this new environment. The police chief was in tune with this perspective, which suggests a tough and autocratic manner to make the initiative work.

In fact, the meetings were the most central and visible practice of Compstat, which came with a consequence more in the form of resistance. Not only in the early phases, but also in the following phases, it was the meetings that influenced the acceptance and resistance of NPD officers. This was not unexpected, as officers come together regularly for these meetings. Officers made sense and constructed the meaning of Compstat based mainly on these meetings. When humiliation and intimidation, in contrast to accountability and information sharing, became the prominent feeling among officers, resistance became an inescapable consequence of the initiative. In addition, there was a time period in which officers felt the meetings, specifically the questioning style were not fair. It has been generally thought that officers were criticized or rewarded in the meetings not for their performance but for their personal relationships with the upper echelon. These managerial actions and perceptions of injustice increased the feeling of anger and resistance to this initiative.

5.2. Transition from Resistance to Receptivity

Another important aspect of this study is to provide a perspective on the transition from resistance to receptivity over the years. Although there are some ups and downs, the case in the NPD seems a linear process in which the level of acceptance has increased over the years. It was evident in the interviews that most of the officers accepted the initiative and believed in its benefits in their personal and organizational improvement. A number of factors influenced the acceptance of the initiative over these years.

The most prominent reason was the persistence of the upper echelon. More clearly, the expectations of the abolishment or failure of Compstat initiative in the early phases triggered resistance at first. However, the perception of the success of the initiative, persistence in the implementation of the initiative, and the weekly gatherings led officers to think that this initiative would be part of this organization for a long time, and served as an impetus for officers to be part of this new environment for success in their career. In addition, the regular gatherings in the form of Compstat meetings increased the upper echelon's level of control and follow up mechanisms. Officers had to accept the initiative and put into practice the expectations of the upper echelon to avoid criticism in the meetings and to get promotions in the long run.

This point reminds the assumptions of Chan (1996) regarding the change efforts in police organizations. Chan (1996) argued that due to the strong culture, habitual nature of work, and preferences for clarity, if the existing processes and practices are not challenged relentlessly, police officers will tend to follow existing ways of accomplishing organizational tasks. Chan found that successful change efforts in police organizations require the external pressure and longtime efforts of stakeholders. As illustrated in this case, external pressures for accountability, crime analysis and the relentless efforts and struggles of the police chiefs affected the mindsets of police officers and created a sense of obligation. In this environment, new routines and values were accepted and internalized over these years and became the culture of the NPD.

Another reason was that people learned what was expected in the sense of 'learning by doing'. This decreased the tension displayed especially in the meetings between the middle managers and upper level. Officers became aware of what was expected of them. In short, several factors contributed to the transition of resistance to receptivity and positive perception of the initiative: the change of the tough manner in the meetings; increased knowledge about Compstat and expectations of the upper echelon; becoming used to the practices; change of crime analysis; and finally the leadership style of the current police director and its reflection in the meetings.

On a different level, this transition was comparable to the four stages of reaction to change; hock, defensive retreat, acknowledgment, and adaptation and change (Jick & Peiperl, 2003). Compstat, which envisioned a major change in officers' practices created a perception of shock at first and led officers to



refrain from engaging in new practices and to oppose the initiative. However, the persistence of the upper echelon, a fear of being non-adaptive, learning by doing, and the follow up mechanisms in the system moved officers into the acknowledgement stage, which was characterized by a mourning of the past as well as an increased capacity for adopting Compstat. Finally, officers developed a comfort with change and its practices.

The points discussed in this heading give an idea about the overall process. However, it is important to be aware of the subtleties of the acceptance-resistance dynamic. For instance, there were some officers who supported the Compstat initiative from the day it was announced by the police chief. There were some officers who criticized and resisted some aspects of the model, but supported certain aspects. Some of these critiques were based on valid concerns of officers or can be evaluated as a part of sense making process. As suggested by Gioia and Thomas (1996), organizational members need to engage in sense making in order to achieve a cognitive reorientation, and possibly accept or reject change. Even the last version of Compstat was criticized by many officers. However, these critiques were more related with the personnel wrong doings in Compstat or some aspects of Compstat that could be improved. Nobody seemed to criticize the model as a whole or ignore its contribution to the NPD. On another level, it is likely that some officers who seemed to support the Compstat on the surface level, had not thorough integrated the framework in their thinking. In that sense, officers reactions can be seen as occurring along a continuum, marked by strong and immediate support on one end and strong and enduring resistance on the other. Most of the officers can be situated along this continuum rather than being situated on one end.

It is also important to understand that officers' reaction varied over time. Many indicated that they felt apathy or anxiety about the change initiative at first, but often came to accept and support the changes over time. This point indicates the fact that resistance is a normal step in the process of adapting to change. Change agents need to expect and allow for a reasonable time period for organizational members to understand and digest a change, and whenever possible use communication strategies to shorten the time period.

5.3. Implications for Practitioners

In terms of reaction, this case is a great example that shows the source of resistance, the type of resisters, and the transition from resistance to receptivity. There are many points that are likely to help practitioners during a change process. First, as suggested in the literature (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Piderit, 2000), the concepts of resistance to change and resistance to the consequences of change need to be differentiated. In this line of thought, different policies and practices should be put into practice based on different considerations of each group. In particular, the expectations of the groups who do not resist the change itself but resist the way the change was introduced, unfairness, intimidation, or any other reasonable issue, should be considered seriously. There were reasonable expectations of officers in terms of having more information and training to adopt this new environment. An effective communication strategy that informs officers about the reasons for change and their responsibilities in this process and training would absolutely mitigate the level of resistance among those officers who do not resist the change itself. This is not likely to be different in another organization. Specifically, timely and adequate information about changes taking place in the organization and legitimizing change by providing justification for why the change is taking place through different communication strategies will certainly increase not only the likelihood of change acceptance, but also the speed and extent of that acceptance.

However, this is not to say that there would not be any resisters if the above mentioned issues are taken into account. As illustrated in the case of the NPD, officers who benefit from the wrong-doing and inefficiency in the organization, who avoid the new responsibilities and new practices, perceive a threat to their work habits, and fear losing personal power and status are likely to resist a change initiative regardless of the way a change initiative is introduced and implemented. The critical issue is to differentiate these groups and take into account reasonable and possibly valuable expectations and demands of officers. Officers also criticized heavily lack of communication and training in the early phases of Compstat. Training as to how to function within a new environment and creative reward structures for career oriented officers seems to foster motivation and adherence to the new initiatives and practices.

Compstat meetings are held with the participation of a number of ranked officers in the NPD. Involvement of different officers in the change process, specifically in the Compstat meetings in the case of the Compstat, at least would increase the level of understanding and information regarding what was expected and why. Organizational members at all levels of an organization affected by change should be involved in certain practices at certain degrees, based on their position, rank, and changing responsibilities



associated with the change initiative. Involvement will generate support for change and success of the change modalities. This was particularly important for the case of Compstat, and it is likely to be important for most change initiatives that need to be reflected on the ground. The lack of involvement and awareness of how change initiatives influence or should influence the daily practices may lead to the lack of change in the particular behavior and daily practices. Given this point, each organization needs to consider involving its members in certain mechanisms to make them aware of new initiatives and their role in this initiative. As such, the goals and strategies formulated in Compstat meetings would be better reflected on the ground rather than diluted or diverted as they make their way down to the street level.

Leadership style certainly influences the interpretation of organizational change, which, in turn, influences outcomes of change (i.e., organizational performance, resistance, receptivity and job satisfaction). The leader's role as a sense maker is critical in the early periods of any initiative. A leadership style that takes into account all these points and coaches officers in the adoption of the new procedures and practices increases the level of change acceptance and other positive outcomes.

Conclusion

Compstat is one of these change initiatives that has been adopted by numerous organizations in the last decade to address the emerging challenges and opportunities. The success of Compstat and specific initiatives like Compstat certainly requires an understanding of the nature of the change process, factors that facilitate or impede change efforts, and the sources of resistance and receptivity. For this reason, this study analyzed the resistance and receptivity of officers after the implementation of this model. The study provides a perspective for understanding how officers perceive change, the sources of resistance and receptivity, and the reason for failure and success of change efforts.

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