

Elements of Professional Leadership in Malaysian Military

Nor Nazimi Mohd Mustaffa* & Amnah Saayah Ismail

Department of Nationhood, Leadership & Islamic Studies, Faculty of Defense Studies & Management, National Defense University of Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: nornazimi@upnm.edu.my

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Abstract: Military or a soldier must be able to lead in extreme condition and to meet unforeseen and solve any mission in any situation even if they have to risk their life. Therefore, a military member needs to have professional leadership skills to deal with this risky task and bear responsibility. However, the question is what are the elements of professional leadership for Malaysian military. Therefore, this paper analyzes the elements of Malaysian military professional leadership. The methodology of this study is qualitative with an interview approach which is 25 military officers were involved, consisting of the Malaysian army, navy and air force. The results of this study show that the elements of professional leadership in Malaysian military personnel are skills, personality and integrity, which are influenced by communication in three aspects, which is management support, the role of coach and program content. The implications of this study are on the establishment of a professional leadership model for Malaysian military personnel that needs to be taken into account in the development of military personnel who have professional leadership. Meanwhile, the recommendation from this study is to improve the aspects of management and training in the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM), the Royal Malaysian Air Force (TUDM) and the Royal Malaysian Navy (TLDM) so that military personnel are born with professional leadership character that is the backbone of individuals who are a military.

Keywords: *character, leadership, professional, Malaysia, military*

1. Introduction

Professional leadership among military personnel in Malaysia is a very important matter because it is related to the issue of security, war or national defense that determines the security and resilience of a country. Aspects of knowledge and skills in specific fields are a combination for professionalism involving a specific job or profession. Even in the country of Malaysia, king of Malaysia which is Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah wants all

members of Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) to display a high level of professionalism and discipline. He also emphasizes to Malaysian military are not to collapse the fortress of discipline and leadership character of professionalism which has been built by thousands of national fighters before (Daily News, 16 March 2019).

Commitment to the organization is one of the measures of success in human resource management. According to

Corresponding Author: Nor Nazimi Mohd Mustaffa, Department of Nationhood, Leadership & Islamic Studies, Faculty of Defense Studies & Management, National Defense University of Malaysia. Email: nornazimi@upnm.edu.my

Heru Prasetyo et al. (2022), the manifestation of high organizational commitment is when a person has a high sense of togetherness towards the organization or achieves the set organizational goals. A person's high commitment to the organization will result in good performance. For an organization, a person's emotions, attitudes, motivation and behavior are important for the organization (Imamoglu et al., 2019). Therefore, in giving a high commitment to the organization, a military member needs to have a strong leadership character which is professional leadership.

Therefore, in translating the professional leadership among Malaysian military, there are certain elements that need to exist military member character. String from that, what are the elements of professional leadership of a Malaysian military member that makes him a person with professional leadership character. Through this character, a person with a military title will give a high commitment to the organization so as to give success in the security and defense of the country. Therefore, this study outlines the elements of professional leadership for a military member. The results of this study, which is the element of professional leadership, were worked on from field research studies in the form of interviews.

2. Materials and Methods

The following is the conceptual framework of this study:

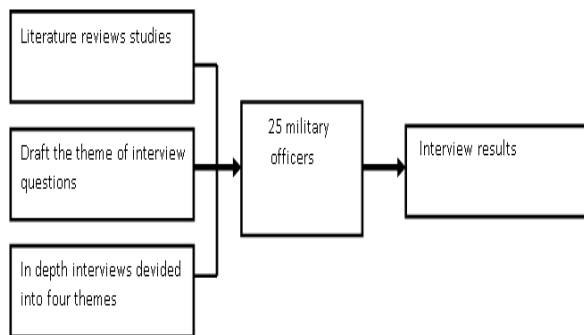


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The thematic approach is applied by organizing the questions into four themes. These themes were identified from the highlights of the literature review related to professional leadership in the military. The theme is the Professional Leadership model (Adanan & Mohd Azhar, 2008; Sharifah Hayaati, 2008; Tengku Sarina; Shaftdean, 2020 and Fadillah, 2007), Program content (Noor Azmi et al., 2015; Paul, 2009; Hatfield et al., 2011; Azman, 2012; Azri Mokhtar, 2016; Zulkepli and Khazri, 2018), the role of Trainer (Noor Azmi et al., 2015; Mohd Mazli, 2004; Mohd Rashidi and Azmil, 2015) and support management (Noor Azmi et al., 2015;

Azman et al., 2015).

2.1. Data collection methods

In depth interview were conducted by involving officers and members who are on duty and have undergone leadership courses at the training centers of the Malaysian Army, Royal Malaysian Navy and Royal Malaysian Air Force. Purposive sampling was used for this study because they have work experience and deep knowledge in the research organization and have attended leadership courses (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). This interview process is carried out serially and the locations are Army College in Negeri Sembilan, KD Pelandok in Lumut and Air Force College in Kedah. A total of 25 respondents were selected from those locations. They were selected because they were experienced military leaders, which is training staff officers, instructors and commanders at company, platoon and divisional infantry battalion levels.

Phase	Unit	Total
1	PUSPEKA, TUDM Subang	6
2	PUSASDA, Port Dickson	5
3	71 Rejimen Semboyan Diraja	5
4	KD Pelandok	9

Table 1. Numbers of respondents

2.2. Data analysis

For qualitative analysis, the information obtained through detailed interviews was recorded with a voice recorder and transcribed before the analysis began. In order to prepare the results of the report, the data will be categorized into patents as a primary basis. This data transcription procedure includes organizing the data, identifying emerging themes, categorizing and patenting. The analysis process is based on reduction and data interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Data is collected and reduced according to patterns, categories or themes and then interprets the information using a specific scheme. This process is de-contextualization process (Tesch 1990).

The interview process was carried out in four phases involving all three services in the Malaysian Armed Forces. The interview is about their perception in professional leadership among military. While the analysis process follows the procedures specified from Marshall & Rossman, 1989 and Tesch 1990. The analysis is as follows:

Phase	Unit	Results of interview	Interpretation
1	PUSPEKA, TUDM Subang	works based on expertise. A leader in certain place must based on their respective expertise. If not, which will eventually make it difficult to lead subordinates.	Skills Integrity
2	PUSASDA, Port Dickson	Professional leadership change according to personality. Professional leadership includes skills, knowledge, self-strengthening and also the syllabus that is applied in a military member. Every leader needs to be the best for subordinates and have guidance to solve every problem.	Personality
3	71 Rejimen Semboyan Diraja	A leader needs to be smart in attracting people around him. As a professional leader, he must apply his character in all the time in performing tasks. A leader a role model for other members.	Integrity Personality
4	KD Pelandok, Lumut	A leader can interact with subordinates in solving any problems. Professional leadership is someone who influences others thinking by the way his conversation. This is necessary to avoid subordinate members not step the 'Chain of Command' as set where they have to refer to the equivalent member before bringing any matter to the superior officer. Professional leadership is someone who capable solving the problems of subordinates and being able to lead new members well. Everyone is a leader and has the ability to lead.	Skill

Table 2. Phase of in depth interview result interpretation

2.3. Findings

Based on the research that has been conducted, the elements of professional leadership of Malaysian military consist of three elements which is skills, integrity and personality. The first element is skill. Skill is defined as competence or cleverness (Kamus Dewan, 2017). The results of the first phase of interviews at PUSPEKA, Royal Military Air Force Subang, respondents explained that knowledge is an important thing for members of the Royal Malaysian Air Force to hone their skills as members of the military who have professional leadership. In order to guarantee the professional leadership character of an air force member, leaders need to be placed in their place based on their

respective expertise.

In fourth phase interview, as a result of the interview with the Royal Malaysian Navy unit at KD Pelandok, Lumut also explained that the professional leadership element of military personnel is skill. Respondents stated that professional leadership is the skill of a soldier who can interact with subordinates in solving problems. For example, as a professional military trainer able to educate subordinates in line with their rank. The respondent further explained that the element of skill in professional leadership is someone who is able to influence thinking through the way of conversation shown. This makes the subordinate members not step the 'Chain of Command' as set where they have to refer to the equivalent member before bringing the matter to the superior officer. In addition, professional leadership is capable of solving the problems of subordinates and being able to lead new members well.

The second element is personality. Personality is a mask, a face shield or even a voice. This meaning refers to the external appearance of an individual (Mohd Zuri Ghani et al. 2008). According to psychologists, personality includes thoughts, perceptions, values, attitudes, character, abilities, beliefs, intelligence, motivation, habits and so on. Mischel (1999) states the concept of personality as the dynamic organization of each individual's psychophysical system that determines behaviour and thinking.

Respondents from PUSASDA, Port Dickson stated that successful leaders manage subordinates and teams well. Each of the military members is a leader for himself and the people around him according to the suitability of the situation and can also change according to the situation. According to the respondents, knowledge, self-strengthening and also the syllabus that is applied in a military member is a factor that affects the professional leadership of a military member. Every leader needs to be the best for subordinates and have guidance to solve every problem. Respondents from the 71 Rejimen Semboyan Diraja explained that a soldier who has professional leadership is a person who needs to be smart in attracting the attention of those around him to listen to his words or instructions. In addition, they also explained that professional leadership can be seen from the character of a military member. This character is influenced by the experience gained by a military member.

The last element is the element of integrity. In the Kamus Dewan dictionary (2017), integrity means honesty, perfect and whole. In general, "integrity" is about doing the right thing even when no one is looking. Integrity is the quality of being honest and upright. It is about individual and organizational characteristics which are perfectly based on noble values such as honest, truthful, trustworthy, accountable, transparent, efficient and wise. Individual integrity is the harmony between what he or she says and does. Actions are in accordance with moral and ethical principles as well as laws and regulations and do not go against public interest. They also reflect promptness,

correctness and quality (Rahimah Abdul Aziz & Nur Hafizah Yusoff 2020).

Through this study, respondents from respondents of 71 Rejimen Semboyan Diraja explained that integrity is an element of professional leadership. Respondents explained that a wise soldier is a leader who can attract the attention of the people around him to listen to his words or instructions as a leader. In addition, the respondent from PUSPEKA, Royal Military Air Force, Subang explained that the element of integrity in the professional leadership of the military is honesty and fairness in the division of duties or job status. The situation of leaders who are not in his or her place for the purpose of promotion is a situation that should not be acknowledged. This is because, if this situation is practiced, the effect in the end is to make it difficult to lead subordinates.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the elements of professional leadership of Malaysian military personnel consist of three elements which is skills, personality and integrity. Thus in developing the professional leadership character of military personnel in Malaysia, these three elements are important pillars that must be present in a person who holds the title of military personnel in Malaysia. Therefore, the elements outlined by this study are beneficial to organizations, trainers and policy makers, program development committee members and management support in the military such as the Army Combat Training Center (PULADA), the Army Communications and Electronics Institute (IKED), the Center Royal Military Air Force Aerospace Engineering Service (PUSPEKA), Army Basic Training Center (PUSASDA) and so on.

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