

Chapter 9

Elements of Military Minds Towards Nurturing Young Soldiers' Patriotism

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between military mind elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training) and young soldiers' patriotism (esprit de corps and loyalty) using questionnaires gathered from 420 samples of four Malaysian Army units in Peninsular Malaysia. The outcomes of Smart PLS version 3.2.8 path model showed eight important findings: firstly, the relationship between military mind elements such as personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training significantly correlated with young soldiers' esprit de corps. Secondly, the relationship between military mind elements such as personal conduct and military training significantly correlated with young soldiers' loyalty, while other elements such as military skill and motivation are not significantly correlated. Statistically, this result confirmed that personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training are important determinants of young soldiers' esprit de corps, while personal conduct and military training are important determinants of young soldiers' loyalty in the studied organization sample. Furthermore, the implications of these correlations are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: military mind elements, young soldiers' patriotism, Malaysian Army, Smart PLS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Army (MA) is the land component of the Malaysian Armed Forces. The Army contributes to the national defense objectives through the provision of land and special operations capabilities. The MA also provides forces for peace time roles and capacities, including to enhance national domestic security response to a wide range of incidents such as disaster events stemming from natural and/or man-made hazards. It emphasizes on the need to ensure the surrounding territories which has importance for the nation is kept stable and peaceful (NDP, 2004). The key to the capabilities that the Army as a united force possesses is the soldiers. Soldiers learn to conduct operations in unfavorable and risky conditions regardless of the terrain, weather, or any other external factors.

Abrahamsson has developed the concept of military minds to which Samuel Huntington made a substantial contribution to via his writing in *The Soldier and The State*.

He concluded that the major components of military minds are five in number: nationalism, pessimistic beliefs about human nature, alarmism, political conservatism, and authoritarianism with increasing professionalism (Abrahamsson, 1972; Zulkifli Zainal Abidin, 2013). A soldier is a person who selflessly devotes their life to ensure that all citizens of their country can live with a peace of mind and without fear. A soldier gives you your freedom, and asks for nothing in return (Zulkifli Zainal Abidin, 2014). Every soldier's mindset is taught with repetition, practice and training in order to cultivate the ultimate motivation needed to achieve their operational goals. The aim for military training is not just to prepare soldiers for battles, but to also condition their minds so that it is always ready for battle. Building and developing a military mindset is going to take every bit of a soldier's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual strength.

Another important element of this study is patriotism, which is a sentiment of love and devotion to one's country. A sense of 'patriotism' is not present by itself in human life, but this feeling has to be propagated, fertilized and nurtured into a powerful sense in the soul of each and every citizen. Scholars associate patriotism with 'love for the country,' 'loyalty,' 'pride of country's achievement', 'attachment to country', 'sharing', 'identity', 'sense of belonging', 'esprit de corps', and 'nationhood', all of which symbolize the country and its people. Patriotism is also explained as the degree of love for and pride in one's nation (Ku Hasnita & Mohd Haizam, 2009). As a norm, soldiers receive intensive physical training for their missions, while also preparing themselves psychologically to leave loved ones behind to carry out their duties in the name of patriotism.

The objective of this study is to measure two main relationships, i.e. the relationship between military mind elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training) and young soldiers' esprit de corps; and the relationship between military mind elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training) with young soldier's loyalty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Countries like Russia and Ukraine prioritize patriotic education among their young generation. In Russia, three groups of organizations are responsible for this, namely state organizations, miscellaneous and non-governmental associations such as "first group – Suvorov military and Nakhimov naval schools, Cadet corps, of the second – DOSAAF as an organization semi state, semi-public, of the third – different military-patriotic, search and military sports associations and clubs, scouting and scout-like organizations, patriotic clubs under the Russian Orthodox Church" (Omelchenko et al., 2015). Their study also revealed that the age group of 15-29 is devoted to the highest number of patriotic activities in schools and universities. The current Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Mahathir Mohammad in the recruits' end-of-training speech on 31 December 2001 stated, "The country owes it to the military forces who have fulfilled their duties in full loyalty and are willing to sacrifice to ensure that the country is safe and free from any form of threats since the World War 2. Thus, as the citizens we must stay united with the soldiers in sustaining peace so that we will not become slaves to the colonizers once again". Bashil (1989) in his book, *Politics and military – the Hudaibiyah Agreement*, explained that the efforts from the leaders is to form young soldiers who can understand their duties effectively, and at the same time become loyal to the leader and remain true servants of Allah.

Zulkifli Zainal Abidin (2014) described the process of developing future soldiers as one that requires the rebalancing of the combination of training, education, and experience the Army currently uses. In battle, the habits and discipline that have been instilled in training pay off first, because men in combat will instinctively do what they have been in the habit of doing in training; and secondly, only the extra drive of discipline will enable the

soldier to overcome the fear that all men experience in battle. DA (1967) stated that a high state of training is the best welfare of the troops; training saves lives in combat. Training develops skills, courtesy, personal conduct, high motivation and techniques through practice and observation that contribute to soldiers' esprit de corps and loyalty. Well-selected soldiers who are highly motivated, trained, and belong to cohesive units under a resolute leader in combat are likely to show enterprise which, based on the circumstances and threat degree, will be viewed as courageous or loyal individual or unit loyalty respectively. Tong (2019) wrote: The truth is, it is costly to train a soldier, and rightly so as wars are increasingly sophisticated and requires highly skilled and smart soldiers. Each time we deploy them, we need to think of them as a special and highly skilled group and not as laborers at our free disposal. Training is what the Army does continuously to build confident, talented and loyal soldiers teeming with esprit de corps (DA, 2014). Tough training teaches young soldiers to overcome fears through their proficiency at a task, and through trust in the competency of others in the team (Mock & D'Amato, 1991). "We train well on how to survive and win on the battlefield of the future. We had better train well...or that battlefield will be in our own backyard" (Gillis, 1982).

Previous findings are consistent with the notion of Dahrendorf, R. (1959), who suggested that Conflict Theory requires focus on the competition for social and economic resources. Power is often used to obtain social order according to this theory, which by itself is an often-utilized theory in the military. Conflict theory would be applicable to soldiers' military minds in this study because soldiers give up their freedom order to serve the nation, follow orders, and never step out of rank. Another theory, according to Douglas (1978) and Thompson et al. (1990), and named cultural theory, is a general sociological theory aiming at explaining how people perceive and act upon the world around them. More specifically the theory claims that this is largely determined by social aspects and cultural adherence that requires stable mindset. McDaniel, Nooruddin, and Shortle (2016) strongly affiliated patriotism with social identity theory, the study on inter-group relations, group processes the development to which they belong to with the sense of pride and self-esteem, and group conflicts. The application of theories (Dahrendorf, 1959; Douglas, 1978 and Thompson et al., 1990) show that military mind elements if properly implemented will lead to an increment in soldiers' patriotism (esprit de corps and loyalty) in respective organization (Zulkifli Zainal Abidin, 2014; DA, 1967). The theories related to the literature that has been used to develop the conceptual framework for this study are shown in Figure 1.

2.1 Conceptual Framework and Research Hypothesis

The literature has been used as the foundation to develop a conceptual framework for this study as shown in Figure 1.

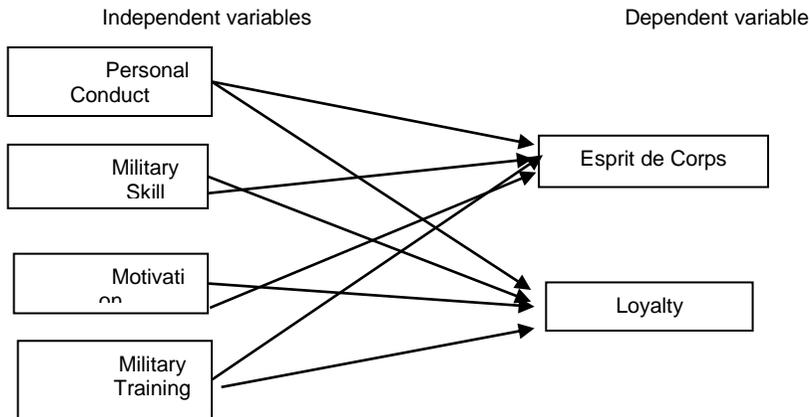


Figure 1: The relationship between military mind elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training) and young soldiers' patriotism (esprit de corps and loyalty). Based on the framework, the following can be hypothesized:

- H1: The relationship between personal conduct and young soldiers' esprit de corps.
- H2: The relationship between military skill and young soldiers' esprit de corps.
- H3: The relationship between motivation and young soldiers' esprit de corps.
- H4: The relationship between military training and young soldiers' esprit de corps.
- H5: The relationship between personal conduct and young soldiers' loyalty.
- H6: The relationship between military skill and young soldiers' loyalty.
- H7: The relationship between motivation and young soldiers' loyalty.
- H8: The relationship between military training and young soldiers' loyalty.

3. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional research design was employed because it allowed the researchers to combine military minds literature, the semi-structured interview and the actual survey as the main procedure to collect data and fulfills the research objectives. This research design is appropriate to help the researchers collect accurate, less biased and high quality data (Cresswell, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). This study gathered data from the infantry battalion based in Perlis, Kelantan, Melaka and one armoured regiment based in Pahang. This unit serves as operations, training, logistic and administration under the auspices of the Malaysian Army. At the initial stage, a pilot study was conducted via a survey questionnaire with five experienced army officers who have served for more than five years. This group is comprised of a commanding officer, an operation officer, an intelligence officer, an administrative officer and a senior non-commissioned officer who have been involved in the management of the units. Information gathered from the army officers helped the researchers to develop the content and format of the survey questionnaire for the actual research.

Feedback from the interview method was used to understand the nature and characteristics of military minds elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training) and young soldiers' patriotism (esprit de corps and loyalty) and the relationship between such variables in the context of this study. Hence, the pilot study was conducted to verify the content and format of the questionnaire for an actual study. Due to familiarity of the target respondents with the national language, i.e. Malay, a back translation technique was employed to translate the content of survey questionnaire from English into

Malay in order to enhance the validity and reliability of research findings (Cresswell, 2012; Sekaran, & Bougie, 2013). Information gathered from the soldiers of Malaysian Army helped the researchers to develop the content and format of the survey questionnaire for the actual research. The survey questionnaire has six major sections comprising of: 6 items of personal conduct, 4 items of military skill, 4 items of motivation, 3 items of military training, 3 items of esprit de corps and loyalty had 4 items that were developed based on triangulation from interviews, research from scholar and little adapted from military minds scale (Zulkifli Zainal Abidin, 2014). All items used in the questionnaires were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from “strongly never/strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly always/strongly agree” (7). Demographic variables were used as controlling variables because this study focused on military minds elements towards young soldiers’ patriotism.

The researchers had obtained an official approval and received advice from the Army Headquarter, MINDEF to conduct the study at approved units in Perlis, Kelantan, Melaka and Pahang. The targeted population for this study was the infantry and armored unit. The commanding officer allowed the researchers to conduct this study, but the list of the soldiers was not provided to the researchers. Considering this situation, a convenient sampling technique was used to distribute the survey questionnaires to soldiers who served in Perlis, Kelantan, Melaka and Pahang. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed. From the total number, 420 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding 93.3 percent response rate. The survey questionnaires were answered by participants based on their consents and a voluntarily basis. The number of sample exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by probability sampling technique, showing that it may be analyzed using inferential statistics (Chua, 2006; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The research statistical analysis was conducted using structural equation model generated by SmartPLS version 3.2.8 (Riggle et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2017). The procedure for analyzing data is: first, validity test was performed by the convergent and discriminant validity. Second, the reliability analysis was performed by Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. Third, the structural model is assessed by examining the path coefficients using standardized betas (β) and t statistics. In addition, R^2 is used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model. The value of R^2 are considered as follows; 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.67 (substantial) (Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2009).

4. RESULTS

The sample profile for this study with N=420 is as follows: most respondents are male (99.3%), ethnic group is Malay (86.7%), those with bachelor status made up 62.4% of respondents, age group below than 30 years old is 80.7%, rank of Private/Lance-corporal/Corporal (85%), duration of service less than 10 years (78.8%), and earning income less than RM2000 (73.4%).

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The outcomes of CFA were shown in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows that personal conduct, military skill, motivation, military training, esprit de corps and loyalty had the values of average variance extracted (AVE) larger than 0.5, indicating that they met the acceptable standard of convergent validity (Henseler et.al, 2009; Barclay et.al, 1995; Fornell & Larker, 1981). Besides, the table shows that all constructs which had the diagonal values of \sqrt{AVE} were greater than the squared correlation with other constructs in off diagonal, showing that all constructs met the acceptable standard of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2009).

Table 1: The Results of Convergent and Discriminant Validity Analyses

Construct	AVE	Esprit de Corps	Loyalty	Motivation	Personal Conduct	Military Skill	Military Training
Esprit de Corps	0.804	0.897					
Loyalty	0.776	0.746	0.881				
Motivation	0.656	0.725	0.685	0.810			
Personal Conduct	0.603	0.697	0.683	0.703	0.777		
Military Skill	0.733	0.720	0.638	0.795	0.695	0.856	
Military Training	0.793	0.747	0.803	0.776	0.687	0.762	0.891

Note: $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ shows in diagonal

Table 2 shows that all constructs loaded more strongly on their own constructs in the model, exceeding the specified minimum, 0.6, showing that the validity of measurement model met the criteria (Fornell & Larker, 1981; Chin, 1998; Gefen & Straub, 2005). Besides, the composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha had values greater than 0.7, indicating that the instrument used in this study maintained high internal consistency (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009; Nunally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 2: The Results of Factor Loadings and Cross Loadings for Different Constructs and Construct Reliability Analysis

Construct	Number of Item	Cross Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Esprit de Corps	3	0.853– 0.929	0.925	0.878
Loyalty	4	0.829 – 0.905	0.933	0.903
Motivation	4	0.785 – 0.830	0.884	0.827
Personal Conduct	6	0.716 – 0.840	0.901	0.868
Military Skill	4	0.839 – 0.871	0.917	0.879
Military Training	3	0.880 – 0.899	0.920	0.870

Table 3 shows the outcomes of testing SmartPLS path model using bootstrapping procedure. The value of R^2 is used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model. The value of R^2 is interpreted as follows: 0.19, weak, 0.33, moderate and 0.67, substantial (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009; Wetzels et al., 2009). In this model testing, firstly, the inclusion of personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training appearance in the analysis explained 65.3 percent (moderate) of the variance in young soldiers' esprit de corps. Secondly, the inclusion of personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training appearance in the analysis explained 68.1 percent (substantial) of the variance in young soldiers' loyalty. The results of SmartPLS path model analysis revealed eight important findings: firstly, H1: personal conduct significantly correlated with young soldiers' esprit de corps. Second, H2: military skill significantly correlated with young soldiers' esprit de corps. Third, H3: motivation significantly correlated with young soldiers' esprit de corps. Fourth, H4: military training significantly correlated with young soldiers' esprit de corps. Fifth, H5: personal conduct significantly correlated with young soldiers' loyalty. Sixth, H6: military skill is not significantly correlated with young soldiers' loyalty. Seventh, H7: motivation is not significantly correlated with young soldiers' loyalty, and finally eight, H8: military training significantly correlated with young soldiers' loyalty.

Table 3: Estimation and Prediction of Esprit de Corps and Loyalty of H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, and H8.

Relationships	β	t	P value	R ²
H1: Personal Conduct --> Soldiers' Esprit de Corps	0.235	3.794	0.000	0.653
H2: Military Skill -----> Soldiers' Esprit de Corps	0.179	2.335	0.020	
H3: Motivation ----> Soldiers' Esprit de Corps	0.173	2.390	0.017	
H4: Military Training -> Soldiers' Esprit de Corps	0.315	4.754	0.000	
H5: Personal Conduct --> Soldiers' Loyalty	0.246	5.264	0.000	0.681
H6: Military Skill -----> Soldiers' Loyalty	-0.083	1.316	0.189	
H7: Motivation ----> Soldiers' Loyalty	0.090	1.318	0.188	
H8: Military Training ----> Soldiers' Loyalty	0.628	10.111	0.000	

Note: Significant at *t > 1.96; **t > 2.576; *** t > 3.29

5. DISCUSSION

Overall, this result demonstrates that personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training are important determinants of young soldiers' esprit de corps, while personal conduct and military training are important determinant of young soldier's loyalty in the studied organization. The organization should define military minds elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training) for training programs and specify components or outcomes to be fulfilled in order to better understand young soldiers' esprit de corps and loyalty. Definitions, models, frameworks, and outcomes should be explicitly defied in written policy. Military mind's training and program for young soldiers must have a clear definition and set of outcomes or goals. Organizations must have a clear understanding of how they contribute to the whole, as well as to organizational structure, command, and authority. With regard to the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaire used in this study has satisfactorily met the validity and reliability criteria. This may lead to the production of accurate and reliable research findings. With respect to practical contributions, the findings of this study can be use as useful guidelines by commanding officers in particular to upgrade the expertise of their young soldiers in coping with future challenging operations. Most young soldiers believed that training of military minds is essential and needs to be properly tailored for the respective young and talented soldiers in order to improve their esprit de corps and loyalty for future operations.

6. CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that the ability of commanding officers or senior officer given proper guidance, as well as sending the talented young soldiers to relevant courses will improved their military minds elements (personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training), and subsequently may enhance their patriotism (esprit de corps and loyalty) in the administrative camp and in the operations environment. The result is consistent with military minds' literature published. Thus, present research and practices employed within military minds elements such as personal conduct, military skill, motivation, and military training contributes towards young soldiers' patriotism (esprit de corps and loyalty).

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