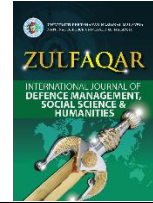**ZULFAQAR International Journal of Defence Management, Social Science & Humanities**

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Military Training OR Education for Future Officers at Tertiary Level

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ABSTRACT

Military officers' education (MOE) is intended towards transforming ordinary civilians into a distinct men and women of arms. Keeping up to the present social requirement, MOE institutions nowadays mirrors their civilian counterparts to produce academically trained military officers who can face the future challenge of the nation's security interests into a broader regional and global context. This however created a well-established tension between the academia and the warrior-soldiers on the legitimacy and the significance of higher-level education among the future military personnel. In order to further understand this phenomenon, this phenomenography study adopts in-depth semi-structured interviews, the study had interviewed seven (n=7) Policy makers, twenty-four (n=24) teachers, lecturers and military trainers, and twenty-seven (n=29) cadets at two prominent MOE institution in Europe. Findings from the study suggest that there are two divergent and often conflicting discourses over the adoption of tertiary level education in the training of military officers. Moreover, at its current state, the combination between higher education and military training may had put the system under certain strain thus resulting in an overstuffed curriculum. The findings in this study could offer an alternative way of looking at the ever-preceding debate on the importance of training and education in the delivering future officers, but also on the military practice itself.

Introduction

The overall structure of professional military education that shapes officers' beliefs and norms regarding the military's roles and functions is changing. As the world face up to different unknown defence and security threats, it is becoming more common to see the institution that provides higher education for the future defenders of the country (Juhary, 2015, p.1225) together with military training. This marriage however is not a subtle one. In his recent paper, Dr. Jim Barrett highlighted a well established, troublesome, and rather unintended clash between the military and academic culture. According to Barrett (2018) the two worlds stand at opposite ends - where the soldier feels the need to act, the scholar feels the need to reflect (p.4). Huntington (1963) posited that a military officer, in the new era of technological achievement needs to be highly educated and to be highly skilled. For this reason, Military Officers' Education (MOE) institutions are relatively different from any public universities or colleges, as its purpose is to prepare the 'managers of violence' (Janowitz, 1960). However, throughout the history of MOE, there has been an on-going debate among military education enthusiast on the legitimacy and the significance of higher-level education against the importance on professional

soldiering training. Barnett (1967) asserted that the source for such debate stems from the conception of an officer of being "a fighting-man" and/or as "a military manager" (p.17). The clash of cultures between the military and the academics is fundamental as any reforms in the curriculum deal with these two competing values (Johnson-Freese, 2012, p.137). As a result, more than often, the curriculum outlined for the cadets is too packed and over-stuffed with a certain level of understanding "across a broad array of topics in a relatively short period of time" (Echevarria, 2005, p.11).

In this article, we will first delve into the resounding debate in the provision of military education - to deliver higher education degrees or to equip the future officers with sufficient skills through rigorous military training. Following this would be the discussion obtained from interviews with those involved in the training and the education of future officers which is directed in delineating the sustaining debate on education vs training for future military officers. It is then this article objective to provide an effective answer to the research question - what impact does the clashes have in shaping MOE's education system and how is it impacting those involved in it.

Military Training *OR* Education - Observing the Literature

In their book, Kennedy and Neilson (2002) asserted that even though the military is considered as a crucial support for a nation in defending its sovereignty, the available literature suggests the contrary. History has shown that military education, either in Europe or in the United States, has been subjected to criticism and rejection from the public or from the members of the government at least. This is a usual case, as "the armed forces of a country are a product of their society's values, beliefs, and social orders" where conflicting indifference may result in an outright hostility (Sloan, 2012, p.328). As an example, Kelley and Johnson-Freese (2014) reported the suggestion to close the Air War College as it is deemed to be "an expensive joke" that lacks academic standards (p.119). Furthermore, Hawkins and Brimble (1947) indicated that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the regimental schools failed to attract interest from the public as the profession was considered as a 'profession of the fools' (p.3). On the other hand, the United States Military College of West Point had to fight for its right to existence repeatedly since its establishment in 1802, as the members had seen the college among other reasons, as a financial burden to the country (Patton, 1937; Franke, 1999; Juhary, 2008). Furthermore, Shearer (1979) commented on an experimental military and civilian education at the University of Illinois at Urbana in 1918 and mentioned that there is a high tendency for the military and the academic principles to have a hostile relationship (p.223). Yet, disregarding military education altogether is a foolish act as ignorance over it may result in disastrous decisions over a nation's national security. In a general view, military education offers a nation a chance to "enhance the safety of the nation's social, economic, and political institutions against threats arising from the other independent states" (Huntington, 1957, p.1). Franke (1999) remarked that the world has been able to avoid global thermonuclear war during the Cold War due to the development of military strategy, tactics, and technology. Such credit not only suggests the importance of military education but also indicates the importance of military education for nations to avoid unnecessary wars in future. Furthermore, in some countries, the military education provides the required social agent for human development. Haussman (1974) indicated that previously, in Brazil, an education was only a pleasure; a rich man can afford. This mentality was changed when Dom Joao VI founded the Royal Military Academy at Agulhas Negras (AMAN), in 1810. He set up a training centre for the training of military professionals, which was seen by the local young Brazilian generation, as an opportunity "to educate them and to advance socially". The career in the armed forces provided them employment and social mobility, which they could not have obtained otherwise (p.23-24). The same condition was also mentioned by Hawkins and Brimble (1947); Wojciechowski (1980); Hacker (1993); Green (2008); and Wang et al. (2012). In other words, despite the problematic history that surrounds military education; more importance should be given to the present state of military education and how its current role should shape its form in the future. At the same time, military education has also contributed to the field of education especially on the use of technology in teaching and learning sectors (Fletcher, 2009). In short, a proper military education is able to or fosters the development of a civilian into an officer that is not only knowledgeable but also competent in managing his or her responsibilities during peacetime and in times of crisis.

At first, it would be better to define the term 'training' and 'education' included in this study, before moving a bit further into this discussion. According to Jordan (2004), the Army defines 'training' as the "instruction of personnel to increase their capacity to perform specific military functions and associated individual and collective tasks", which often include "learning to do a concrete task, and the product of

such an endeavour is the acquisition of a skill". Moreover, 'education' is "the instruction with increases knowledge and skill, and/or experience, as the desired outcome for the student" through the learning of abstract concepts (p.2). Furthermore, education requires thinking and reflection, which takes time, while training has right and wrong answers, which allow immediate progress measurement (Johnson-Freese, 2012, p.138). More simply, a training program seeks to impart a mastery of the known, while an education program provides the student with the tools to deal with the unknown (Preston, 1980; Jordan, 2004; Abbe & Halpin, 2010; Ruby& Gibler, 2010; Vogel-Walcutt et al., 2013).

At one end, there are those who believe that technical training must be built upon a strong foundation of academic achievement and the development of the intellect (Murray, 1905; U'Ren, 1975) thus, resulting into the officers that are able to take on the 'responsibility' of being an officer (Micewski, 2003, p.7). As leaders, the military officers who pass through a graduate education programme are deemed to have higher thinking skills and is much more critical when facing the ambiguity and uncertainty of today's warfare and insurgency (Carafano & Kochems, 2005; Rodriguez, 2008). Such belief on the value of education in producing better officers is so high that there are now MOE institutions offering not only undergraduate education but also post-graduate studies to their officers (Huntington, 1963; Danielsson & Weibull, 2008; Kelley & Johnson-Freese, 2014). However, this also means that the cadets in those MOE institutions, are now enduring tougher academic demands which are relentless and demanding that may prove to be too much for some of the cadet's 'intellectual agility' (Morisson, 1974; Johnson-Freese, 2012). This raised a fundamental question of the legitimacy of acquiring higher degrees and its relevance towards an officer's professional function.

In his paper, Preston (1980) further argued that this supposed dichotomy is misleading as, there is no truth into believing that a standalone academic program within an MOE institution could promote the formation of better officers at the expense of "leadership training or personal athletic ability" (p.5). Furthermore, a career as an officer is seen like any other professional practitioner like those serving as doctors that require specific technical knowledge (Arnold, 1993). For this, there are those that favour training more than education (Jackson et al., 2007), as the profession is an "experience-based skill-acquisition process" where "knowledge is something that is situated and acquired through the conduct of situated skill execution" (Sookermany, 2012, p.594). But, too much emphasis given on training would unfortunately; sacrifice an innate opportunity to build cadet's mental and intellectual agility that inevitably differentiates those who possess intellectual ability (Johnson-Freese, 2012, p.137). Furthermore, Arnold (1993) problematised 'training' by saying that it is true that understanding the correct functioning of high-technology weapons systems requires extensive training. However, if this is all that is needed by a future officer, a single, intensive period of education with periodic refresher sessions would most probably satisfy the profession's needs, thus, making today's system of continuing military education, irrelevant and unnecessary. In fact, the true expertise of an officer lies not in "the generation of violence" but in the "management of violence", which requires them to "think about, plan, organize, and conduct warfare at successively higher levels of organization and degrees of complexity" (Arnold, 1993, p.2).

This never-ending battle of education vs. training for future officers could spell disaster because it detracts these MOE institutions from their goal – the production of a professional officer who can meet all demands made upon him in peace and war (Preston, 1980). Arnold (1993) argued that in actual, a career as a military officer demands a very diverse education system and it would not be cost-effective to educate or train newly accepted cadets' skills of seasoned professionals since most of them will never achieve that position. For that reason, it would be logical to develop a system that "spans officers' career, interspersed with the periods of formal education and requires field experience" (Arnold, 1993, p.4). Jordan (2004) proposed the concept of "yin and yang" between education and training because "it reflects both the tension between the two components of learning and their complementary natures" (p.1), where effective learning is an active interplay between the two components. Fletcher (2009) further argued that training can provide future officers with the "knowledge and skills needed to perform military tasks and jobs" while education may assist them to decide "when and how to apply the knowledge and skills that they acquire through training" (Fletcher, 2009, p.72).

Despite the availability of all arguments on education and training, we would argue that the conflict is far from being resolved. Johnson-Freese (2012) argued that in the US military bureaucracy have not spent much time discerning about the difference between education and training. As a result, the system delivered personnel of whom are well trained, but not "well educated" (Johnson-Freese, 2012, p.137). The competing importance of providing higher education and training to cadets at MOE institutions

creates an enormous burden on the curriculum, thus limiting the curriculum's ability ''to educate'' future officers. This is because there is a lack of literature that had looked of and evaluated 'what' is important and really matters in the education and/or the training of future officers. As a result, the curriculum – despite having numerous appointments of education committees to evaluate its standing – has become an imposed curriculum by a stakeholder who is poorly engaged.

The Methodology

As the study endeavoured to explore the present debate over military education, this presented the research with a unique challenge of collecting 'experiences' that is complicated and complex process. One reason for this is the situation where a person's evaluation of certain experiences would be different. On the other hand, the experience and the way they were remembered may transpire differently after a certain period of time. Meeting up to this challenge, the study adopts Threshold Concepts – a level or point at which something is about to begin – has a distinct way of identifying "core concepts" of a subject "without which the learner cannot progress" (Land, Cousin, & Meyer, 2005; Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer & Land, 2005). The Threshold Concepts Framework (TCF), developed by Meyer and Land (2003), provides a way of considering how students assimilate new knowledge through a process of reworking their existing conceptual frameworks (Rivers & Richardson, 2014). As the concept has been described as a "portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something" (Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer & Land, 2005; Land, 2013), the concept may prove its worth in identifying and providing some understanding of the challenges in transforming an ordinary civilian into soldier and later, a military leader. This notion of crossing through a portal represents 'something' that candidates '*need to know about or be able to do*' in order to progress and demonstrate the capabilities that are desirable or necessary (Abbott, 2013; Kiley, 2009; Loertscher, 2011; Talanquer, 2015; Trafford &Leshem, 2009). Cousin (2006) mentioned that:

> Grasping a threshold concept is transformative because it involves an ontological as well as, a conceptual shift. We are what we know. New understandings are assimilated into our biography, becoming part of who we are, how we see and how we feel (p.4).

The new understanding may affect "epistemological transitions" (advances in knowledge and knowing) and "ontological transformations" (development in the ways of being) (Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer & Land, 2005). In addition, threshold concepts could be best defined as the web within a discipline; emphasising the connections between ideas rather than looking at a single idea in isolation (Kinchin et al., 2011, p.211). Examples of threshold concepts in different domains include "Cellularity" in Biology (Ross et al., 2010), "Steady State" in Biochemistry (Loertscher et al., 2014), and "Opportunity Cost" in Economics (Meyer & Land, 2003). In addition, threshold concepts can be useful regarding identifying the 'jewels in the curriculum' (Meyer & Land, 2005), which are usually discipline-specific, which students must master. As a result of identifying these 'jewels', the curriculum is not over-stuffed with the courses deemed important to master a certain discipline or practice (Cousin, 2006). Rodger et al. (2015) explains further that threshold concepts are discipline-specific concepts that meet particular conceptual and epistemological characteristics and require a complex understanding by students. They are 'thresholds' that lead to the mastery of the discipline. In addition, the concepts differ from key or core concepts. Wimshurst (2011) explains that basic concepts are building blocks while threshold concepts, once understood, "will lead the learners to see things through a different lens" (Bryan & Karshmer, 2015, p.251). This is because when true understanding is realised, "there is a transformed view of subject landscape, the world looks different, a repositioning of self in relation to the subject and disciplinary discourse" (Meyer & Land, 2005, p.373). Furthermore, this change of view could be seen as a signal that "a threshold is crossed and one's identity has shifted" (Keefer, 2015, p.18).

Furthermore, scrutiny over the experiences may also unveil some troublesome knowledge that hinders transformation from happening. This is in particular an utmost importance because *learning* constitutes a shift from not being able to do something to being able to do it, as a result of some experience gained as a result of going through an educational setting (Booth, 1997, p.136). As, the research endeavoured to find out the concepts in becoming an officer; the method would not only help to reveal the experiences of learning of the cadets but also the former cadets of whom, at the commencement of the research, are now officers and may reflect much critically of their experiences. Gaining inputs from them provided the research with variations in the way of experiencing a phenomenon as people can interpret an event differently.

The research employed Phenomenography – a method championed by Marton (1986) and his colleagues intended to explore the different levels of understanding (Entwistle, 1997, p.127). In one of his papers, Marton (1986) described Phenomenography as "a research method for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (p.31). In other words, this method does not especially emphasize the individuals' experience, but rather on describing the collective meaning and variations in meaning related to people's experience of a phenomenon (Skär, 2010; Paakkari et al., 2010; Conwill, 2012; Stenfors-Hayes et al., 2013). According to Säljö (1997), the prime interest of Phenomenography research is in finding and defining the "variation in ways of experiencing reality" through the *categories of description* – a "way of describing a way of experiencing something" (p.175). Thus, adopting Phenomenography as an approach to this study allowed the interaction between the students, military trainers and those policy makers that have influence over "the content of learning the material, and the overall learning environment" (Entwistle, 1997, p.129). An interesting point about Phenomenography is that it places emphasis on the second order perspective, where the "first order perspective involves a researcher making statements about phenomena in the world", while the "second order perspective involves a researcher making statements about other peoples' experiences of the world, attempting to see the world through the eyes of people experiencing it" (Cope, 2004, p.7; Marton, 1986, p.177-178). In other words, the approach seeks to discover the "from-the-inside" perspective that sought to describe the world as the learner experiences it (Richardson, 1999, p.57).

One of the most important part of the research undertaking was to determine and find interested institution for the research. First, the institution to be included in the research must provide both academic and military training at the same time as the military have different channels to train their officers. The first channel would be the one of interest for the present study, where the overall emphasis of the curriculum is the combination of the 'education' and the 'training' parts of an officer. On the other hand, the second channel gives more emphasis on the 'training' part, where it trains the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). It is usually carried out by the staff colleges; one stark difference between the two institutions is the absence of 'academic' requirement during the training period. Thus, it is important for the research to gain access to the right institution as different channel would present different experiences.

The sample population included was limited to the present officials and current cadets of the said institutions. For that, the cohort was divided into the three groups (policy makers, teachers or military trainers, and cadets) according to roles and responsibilities at their respective institution. However, due to the nature of the institutions under study, the authors did not have the liberty to choose the participants as it was decided by the liaison officers from the two institutions following a set of criteria of respondents required for the research. Overall, the research managed to administer the in-depth semi-structured interviews with;

Type/Coding	Institution A (*Ia*)	Institution B (*Ib*)	Total
Policy makers Coding: *PM*	2	5	7
Teachers, Lecturers and Trainers Coding: *MT*	14	10	24
Cadets (Group Interview) Coding: *S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7*	First Year (Y1): 6 Second Year(Y2): 6 Third Year(Y3): 4	First Year (Y1): 6 Third Year(Y2): 7	29

Table 1: Participants and Coding

    i.   *Seven (n=7) Policy makers;*
    ii.   *Twenty-four (n=24) Teachers, lecturers and trainers; and*
    iii.   *Five group interview sessions with twenty-nine (n=29) cadets.*

For collecting primary data for the study, the semi-structured interviews were conducted at the two (2) military institutions in Europe. According to Healey-Etten and Sharp (2010), the in-depth interviews allow researchers to discover the respondents' "subjective experiences, meaning-making, accounting processes, and unspoken assumptions about life and the social world in general" (p.157). Furthermore, the in-depth interviews can provide crucial information on "reported behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs, and contribute to a thorough understanding of research participants' perspectives or experiences" (Dushku, 2000, p.763). The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim and being put at the centre of the analysis.

Findings

i. Higher degrees in MOE: A Troublesome Experience?

The first set of analyses examined the troublesome experience shared by those who had gone through the education system and the current cadets provided by both institutions. To begin this discussion, it would be worthwhile to first examine the purpose of introducing such an approach in MOE. A policy maker at Institution B mentioned that:

> "First of all, I have to say that there has always been in the military a certain resistance against any, to my opinion, any intellectual… But, I think, any organisation as I said, should have its own self-correcting mechanism… You [need to have people with] certain intellectual back-luggage. [As a platoon commander, I don't need] a Master degree in Social or Military Sciences. I was there with my tank – I need tank tactics and tank shooting on a shooting range and so on. But, once you grow up in an organisation, you need all the skills. And most of the time more conceptual skills and this is done only by promoting academic education. I mean, abstract thinking and so on. You need it… [and] on the personal view, I think… one of the characteristics of academic to me is [it] makes people always curious… always looking to new things… improve… and I think this is also a capacity in defence" (PM5Ib).

However, this noble desire depicted by the policy maker seemed to be contested when a military trainer questioned:

> "…should WE be doing it? We should be delivering personnel into the Armed Forces… And, if you said that to become an officer one must have a certain level of education, then ok… We recruit people with masters… bachelor or whatever. We can determine that. But it is not our job to give them that masters' education. It should be done elsewhere. We should focus on the professional skills… the leadership… what makes them officers… [This] institute is not doing that. That is why, I argued that there is no difference if you compare a student studying at a university for five years… to a student here, who studies for the same period of time. There might be a little bit difference in terms of attitude… but not that much. Only during the one-year training after [they have completed their studies from Institution B], we try to instil the professional skills… but even then… ok… here, officers are in uniforms but not yet an officer in heart and mind" (MT1Ib).

Such strong point of view transpired here resonates with the review of the literature to the existence of two school of thoughts in MOE; where the first one supports the institution to educate future cadets to have high academic qualification while, the other one questions the task as, it diverts the intention of equipping the needed military professionalism among the cadets. Such view is understandable as specific officer's activities lies in its functional responsibilities (Nichev & Petrova, 2015, p.253). Even though the debate marks a significant and positive evolution of officers' training and education through the years, the long deliberation as what should be the form of MOE education, puts this 'education' process, into a troublesome experience.

As it has been explained by the policy maker, the education is directed more at developing intellectuality and to impart cadet's desire of continuous learning. According to a policy maker at Institution A:

> "There is a difference between 'training' and 'education'. 'Training' means you already have certain knowledge, and you apply that knowledge. Whereas, 'education' here… we have to

give them knowledge because they do not know anything… they do not know shit! Sorry for the expression but they (the cadets) do not know shit when they arrive here. So we have to educate them. Training is afterwards… that is done in the units. At first, they have to gain the basic skills here. So we don't train our cadets, rather we educate them" (PM1Ib).

From this view, what strikes out is the differentiation between 'training' – a process of imparting certain skills directly related to the field of work – and 'education' – a process of acquiring knowledge that may or may not have any relevance to the intended vocation. He then further elaborated that it is important for future graduate officers to:

"…build their intelligence… It is important for these people to use their brains and gain a general knowledge of Physics, Ballistics, Construction, and Mathematics… everything. It's very important for their future career. They have to learn 'how to learn'… because it does not stop after academy life is finished. It is just the beginning. As you must gain advanced education in order to become a Major and so on. All these different steps mean that at a certain point of your career, you will be put back to learn. If you are not used to learning, you won't succeed. So, it is very important to develop their general knowledge. But, I always think… perhaps I am naïve… that the people came here to become officers and it is not because of getting a diploma… I think 90% of my cadets… they are here to become an officer. They are not here for the diploma, but they know that they have to pass… they have to succeed in order to become an officers" (PM1Ib).

Even though there are two divergent and often conflicting discourses emerging towards the system alluded through the comment; the policy maker maintained a neutral ground by mentioning that the system is a result of country's defence forces requirement. Moreover, he was still adamant to say that the present system is able to provide a 'thick' basic military education among the cadets. This is because:

"…when you are talking about our training system, there is much more weight on the academic stuffs. When you succeed in studies, you normally succeed in having a career in military. But, if you are very good in military; handling guns or equipment or whatever – that kind of practical things – you cannot say that you are also good in the academic study… it goes the other way and those who are more intelligent, they succeed better… [T]he academic studies show that you are capable of learning new things, theoretical things and so on but at the same time, you are really good at these military issues, and that is a good combination. Those, who are much more interested in practical things; going into the forest with the troops, handling guns and so on, he tends to stay there" (PM2Ia).

This view was also shared by one of the cadets who mentioned that:

S1: "…the whole idea is that your degree, regardless of what subject or what you have studied will never fully cater for a sort of perfect mould… The point is to give you guidelines… a LOT of it… I can say seventy percent of it is up to your passion and willingness even to learn more than it is required… to actually analyse even more than we have learned" (Y3Ia).

Yet again, even though there is a strong feeling on the importance of education for future officers, there were others who problematised the current system. Such was observed at Institution A where a cadet from Institution A mentioned that:

S5: "Emphasis on academic studies… it is different here. We are being trained for a profession. Is it then important to understand other Mathematical equations? The answer is yes but in what time? We are expected to learn university materials, in addition, to know what legal rights we have, the jurisdiction and we have the vocational and professional studies. For that… I think, there should not be an over-emphasis on academic studies because you have to understand the time available to do all that. They are bringing in the best professionals into the university, but they must understand that the students that come here want to become military officers. We have a long education ahead of us and they are cramming a lot of it in the first few years. I know, it is not an issue now and I think it works for now" (Y1Ia).

In other words, the former officers and present cadets would experience some difficulty in making sense the relevance of their higher degree qualifications to their future endeavours as a military officer. The opinion is hugely shared with a military trainer at Institution B who mentioned that the things that he had learned to earn his degree has no value in the making of himself as an officer. According to the trainer:

"These are the values… the formation… I don't think I need to be good in mathematics and sciences to become a military officer. Giving academic education of course, builds a certain level of intellectuality, but you don't really need it to become a good officer. The education prepares you to synthesise, analyse problems but I think we must work hard on military and values" (MT4Ib).

And interestingly, the following answers were given by one of the policy makers at Institution B when asked the same question:

"I will be very honest… no. Perhaps, one course… ballistics… because I went to the chivalry. But the other courses… they did not help me for my military job. But of course, the general knowledge… how to use brain… it helps of course. It's a 'necessary evil'. But the course as such… it did not serve me. I can give you an example. I was a Commander in 1992 and at a certain point, one of the soldiers came to me and started crying. He was 50 years old and told me that his wife had left him for his best friend. So… boom! There sits a 50-year-old man, crying… I was 30… a Captain and I thought; "For 3 years at the Academy and they gave me a course in Psychology but they never teach me how to deal with this problem". I never forget this. Nowadays all the courses try to make connection with a real military life. When they use example, they will use military examples. Now there is a link between the academic and career of an officer" (PM1Ib).

Furthermore, commenting on the academic requirement imposed by their respective institution, one of the cadets at Institution A mentioned that:

S5: "The weeks for academics are usually short and tough. Most of the people try and learn things as much as they can and spit them out during the test and forget about it all together after that. But, if you ask the same person about some theories, they would not be able to recall it because it is no longer in their minds. I would say that is the way for some people in our course… they get good marks by read and read… and write and write… but in the end they might not have learned anything in a deeper sense" (Y2Ia).

In this accounts of "not have learned anything in a deeper sense" fits with a logic defined by Perkins (2006, p.37) as an inert knowledge - a form of knowledge that sits in the mind's attic. dusted off only when specially called for by a quiz or a direct prompt - thus creating cadets that mimic without understanding the real reason for having such education available to future officers in the first place. Another cadet also shared the same problem by elaborating that:

S3: "I had some troubles in seeing all the points of academic study. As I said, I was not good… I was not the sharpest pencil in the case. But still, there are very high Physics… ok… I don't know but they are very high Physics… I really had troubles to see how this helped me to become a better officer… or a better military leader. I don't really know but of course, there are some academic studies that are very important like this leadership studies. That taught us much different kinds of leadership, management… So I can say that academic studies are useless. But, I can say I can't say. But sometimes I have trouble to see that point of those" (Y3Ia).

Interestingly, this view on "how the academic requirement would help them to become a better officer" was also shared by other cadets where one of them described teasingly that:

S3: "Damn… killing people is not this hard!" (All laughing) (Y2Ia).

Such expression vindicated the idea that to a certain extent, there are cadets and officers who feel that their education at their respective institutions did not comply with their experiences of a real

working environment. Having failed to connect the dots between the practicalities of what they have learned could have a huge influence on the cadets once they are commissioned to become officers.

On a different note, cadets' grades and academic achievements are used as a predictor of future officers' ability to perform at their units. According to one of the military trainers at Institution A:

> "Our system or our military culture is very much focused on official grades, numbers and percentages and all that stuff because, in the end, they have to form a formal line… that who has the highest grades… the point average… he gets to choose his posting first so on and so forth. So our system is very much focused on the physical grades… I mean who gets a five and who got a three-and-a-half and who got a two… So, that is the problem" (MT9Ia).

In other words, the practice of allocating cadets having the highest academic achievements to the most 'popular' unit is not a viable descriptor for officers' proficiency in their profession. This was also shared by his colleague from Institution B who mentioned that:

> "…that alone does not build an officer. So it doesn't mean that if you have a good result [here], you will be ranked up in the ranking… doesn't mean you will become a good officer because you will only have a basic military education… You got an academic education so you have a diploma or a master… but it doesn't necessarily say or qualify you as a good leader… as a good officer. I think, that is going to be difficult to change. I think, this is something that some people have. I think certain leadership capabilities are inherited, and some just don't have it… They might improve some of it but they will never become like those 'naturally born leaders'" (MT5Ib).

As a result:

> "… nearly 90% of the people are lost due to academics. We have to keep a standard because we are delivering our products to the Army. There are some people who do not understand why they need a master's degree to become an officer… and some may not understand why they have to become an officer to get their master's degree. But I think the main problem is in the fact that we 'squeeze' everything in. They have 300 credits plus sports plus the military things plus the military training during holidays… So what we see is that people are just… 'drowning'. It's too much… they do not have any spare time. They are studying, running around or doing some military training… so some cracked. I think that is also good because that is a real life of an officer… not same as someone who is doing his job behind a desk. As when you are in an operation, you are never at ease. It is always rushing, driven by circumstances and the surrounding and the combination of all these shows how demanding things are compared to a civilian university" (PM3Ib).

ii.   Higher Degrees: Vice in MOE?

Based on the above-mentioned excerpts, there are two interesting points that could be highlighted. The first one, there is a stereotype towards the requirement of having future officers with higher education qualification. The stereotype is not about the interrelatedness of subjects learned at Bachelor and Masters Level with officer's professionalism, but rather on its value to develop higher order thinking and cultivating the desire for lifelong learning.

Secondly, the present system is suffering from the act of trying to 'squeeze' everything deemed important to the education and the training of future officers. As it has been argued by this present research, to date there are no viable research studies that really concentrate on finding the 'jewels' in the current MOE system. As a result, the-age-old battle whether to 'educate' or to 'train' military officers continues to this very day. As it has been observed earlier in the literature, such competition placed a huge pressure on the system and of course the cadets themselves. As a result, the military are losing good people that may have the quality to become a god officer just because they could not cope with the academic requirements. A Navy captain explained that during the education period at Institution B, the cadets are not really being exposed to the 'real world' experiences of being an officer. He explained that the present system;

"...cannot expose [the cadets] to the experience of being in an extended period being away from homes... in faraway theatres... in difficult situations. Everything is planned... programmed. They know a-year-and-a-half in advance... "Next year I will go in that ship... then I will do this and this... and then after that I will come back here and I will study this course so and so" ... But in the Navy, life is very unpredictable. One day you can be on ship A, two weeks later you'll be in ship B... and [then you] can be on assignment for three months in Africa. So... the unpredictability... the long absence from home especially, when you have girlfriend... social life..., wives... that's a problem. The confined spaces... living with 170 people in a space just as big as a soccer field. On a frigate for example... you can have 170 people... living, working together on a surface as big as a soccer field" (MT1Ib).

The situation clearly suggests a huge role an institution plays for the cadets and how their actions and activities are very much decided for them. Knowing exactly what would happen to them for the next 'a-year-and-a-half in advance' took out an element of uncertainty and unpredictability of the profession, which seems to be an important element of the vocation. The Navy captain further clarified this situation that it is unavoidable on the student part because:

"As a student... on this part... they ARE students. There is always somebody on top of them... taking responsibility on whatever they do... correcting them... helping them... coaching them. But as soon as they leave in the 6th year, they are on a bridge... in charge. The Captain has to be able to trust them... they have to make decisions. However, some of them do not manage or manage poorly. So we cannot put them in a situation where they can experience that. It only comes after 6 years, which in my opinion is too late" (MT1Ib).

By the way of explaining, this goes back to the organisational nature of the institution as a hierarchal institution where the cadets always have superiors on top on them that control and govern their everyday lives. As a result, according to a conversation, the cadets seem to lose out on developing their abilities to practise decision-making skills and professionalism. Hence, this problem is due to the MOE system being used at institutions that are described as to be too:

"...academic. We want them to have masters... Intellectually they are ok... they pass... they are able to absorb a lot of information, analyse it, process it... but that does not make an officer. That is a student in uniform. That is why, I think, there is not a big difference between students here, who wear uniforms to a student in civilian universities. We made them do a little bit of sports. A normal, healthy and young teenager does that as well. We asked them to get up at 6.15 in the morning, to be punctual, to be on time... ok... but the drawback is that everything is so organised. So, an expectation of organising yourself is more prominent in a civilian university than here. Whereas, the people also expect officers to have a lot of self-discipline. Here we teach them discipline, but it's not enough. Something you need as an officer. Because the system had put them in a situation when they have to get up when they have to do this, when they have to do that. Whereas, as a civilian student... you have to organise yourself thus it makes you to gain a higher level of self-discipline" (MT1Ib).

In a way, the discussion solicited an old-age affair in MOE education – the clash between developing officer's intellectuality versus the need for professional and skilled training. Being asked to clarify whether he is suggesting that the education system at the institution somehow creates an officer who only knows how to follow orders, the Navy captain responded that;

"There is a risk... there is a risk. Too much academic... no leadership. Not enough exposure to a working environment. If you ask any student here why they join the military, they will answer; "Because you said it is an adventure... full of actions... I will see the world". And what do we do? We put them in a small place like this, in a confined space for 6 years with no action, having no chance of seeing the world... It is quite opposite to what we offer them... it is different from why they joined. So the expectation for many guys entering here, spending 6 years... is different from what they have expected" (MT1Ib).

As a matter of fact, military is one of those unique professions which are fortunately not an everyday occurrence. This rather peculiar aspect of the MOE means that real practice for such situations is not often encountered as that requires real combat conditions which governments are often at pains to avoid. So a cadet in today's environment might spend his entire military career in a state of prolonged

simulation where he can only practice and perform his profession while he is at training camp. Hence, this statement is true as one of the cadets interviewed for the study commented that;

> S1: "I think you have changed a bit mentally but it takes more years if you want to change your personality. The mind-set has changed a little bit and in that situation, you have to be like that… but when you come out of that six weeks' situation, it starts to fade away. It only comes back when you come back to camp. For me, it is just for a few days I have to come back to camp, but when I came back, I came back to my academic sessions. But you will change from each camp and the more years, you have here at the Academy, the more it will change your personality" (Y3Ib).

The condition of having a 'changed mind-set' while being at camps and to have it 'fade away' during academic sessions somehow suggests that a transformation as an officer may not happen during their time spent at the institution but much later. An example of this was provided again by the Navy captain who said that;

> "I did not realise what it is to be an officer until I left the extra training and I was sent straight away to the Gulf War. Yeah… it was potentially life threatening situation… and then you see the sailors look to the officers for guidance, directions. That is when you have to pull everything together and basically become an officer. I didn't notice it during the education… not this form of education" (MT1Ib).

Even though the excerpts have suggested a problem with an education and training system at the institutions, the descriptions of this situation describe the contrary. What emerges from the experiences is that there is a point in the cadets' experience, 'moment of integration' – where previous unrelated and hidden knowledge is 'revealed' and understood. 'Pulling everything together' suggests the officers' action of recalling what they learned during their time at the institution –regardless if it is academic or solely based on their military training – to complete a particular mission or completing a task.

Discussion

On a whole, dialogues with the respondents included in this study conjure up one rather interesting insight that the introduction of such education in the training of officers is becoming a nuisance to some aspiring cadets. S3Y3 and S5Y1, both from Institution A mentioned that the emphasis given on the academic requirement were sometimes so overt it undermined the needed military training of the profession. S5Y1 exemplify this through the study of Mathematics, where getting a pass for the subject is a must, but question the utilisation of the formulas and equations in his role as an officer. The opinion is hugely shared with a military trainer (MT4Ib) who mentioned that the things that he had learned to earn his degree has no value in the making of himself as an officer. Interestingly, he even mentioned that giving academic education would be of a value in building certain level of intellectuality, but it is not a definite requirement one must have to become an officer. He did agree that the education will equip the cadets to build their ability to synthesise, and analyse problems, but more work should be given in developing the military values.

Furthermore, S5Y2 described his past academic semesters as "short and tough", where most of his classmates will try to memorise things as much as they can and spit them out during the test without being able to understand they had learned "in a deeper sense". It is interesting to include here that during the interview, one of the cadets described the situation teasingly as:

> S3: "Damn… killing people is not this hard!" (Y2Ia).

Such account fits what Perkins (2006, p.37) describe as *inert knowledge* - a form of knowledge that sits in the mind's attic, dusted off only when specially called for by a quiz or a direct prompt – thus creating cadets that mimic without understanding the real reason for having such education available to future officers in the first place. Such opinion vindicated the idea that to a certain extent, there are cadets and officers who feel that their education at their respective institutions did not comply with their experiences of a real working environment.

Having failed to connect the dots between the practicalities of what they have learned could have a huge influence on the cadets once they are commissioned to become officers. As a result, PM3Ib informed that nearly 90% among those who had failed were due to low academic achievement. When asked to elaborate on this, PM3Ib explained that the source of the problem could come from the fact that the system 'squeezes' everything in that had made the cadets to crack under pressure. He then provided one interesting point that being put under this 'prolonged simulated pressure' imitate the real life of an officer that "always rushing" and "driven by circumstances and the surrounding". As it has been argued by this present research, to date there are no viable research studies that really concentrate on finding the 'jewels' in the current MOE system. As a result, the-age-old battle whether to 'educate' or to 'train' military officers continues to this very day. As it has been observed earlier in the literature, such competition placed a huge pressure on the system and of course the cadets themselves. As a result, the military are losing good people that may have the quality to become a god officer just because they could not cope with the academic requirements. Despite the arguments being made, PM2Ia maintained that the current system utilised by the institution is ample in providing a 'thick' basic military education among its cadets. Convinced, PM2Ia mentioned that based on his experienced, those who are doing well academically are also doing well in performing their military skills like handling guns or equipment, or going into the forest with the troops. According to PM2Ia, the academic studies trained the cadets to have the ability of learning new things thus making them more apt in coping with any task given to them. On a different note, both institution has been using cadets' grades and academic achievements as a predictor of future officers' ability to perform at their units. According to MT9Ia and MT5Ib, this pose a different kind of a problem to MOE institutions as cadets with the highest academic achievements will be given the opportunity to get themselves into the most 'popular' unit in the military. Both agree that having high grades is not a viable descriptor that qualifies a cadet as a good officer.

Conclusion

The findings in this study could offer an alternative way of looking at the ever-preceding debate on the importance of training and education in the delivering future officers, but also on the military practice itself. Discussions with policy makers, military instructors and trainers, and also the cadets included in this study have shown the intricacy and the complexity of officers' education. The long and sometimes turbulent history of such education implies a strong will among its communities of practice to educate and train future officers that are ready to take and face security challenges in the twenty-first century. This proves to be a challenge for curriculum developer as the task of drawing up an ideal system that properly recognises and includes higher-level education with military training is not without its restriction.

As the literature and the findings included in this study may have suggested, the combination between higher education and military training may put the system under certain strain thus resulting in an overstuffed curriculum. Even though this claim may be pre-mature, the conclusion made is not baseless. As the intention of such institution is to educate and train future military officers, the system not only allows an intellectual development, but also a professional growth in a more gradual manner. This, among others, would be crucial, as it will assist its participants to cross the thresholds, thus becoming better military professionals. Furthermore, engaging the cadets in practice by experiencing it first-hand creates a link between the theories being taught in the classroom and how they are practised in the real world. To this note, we would like to end this with a quotation from Barret (2018) that;

> Training is fundamental for the military community, but the academic community has little respect for "mere training." There have been many fruitless arguments about the distinction. It is important for civilian academics to understand that the military training at their military university is not just an incidental supplement, but provides the bedrock of the institutional ethos. It is not simply parade ground drills, or learning to re-assemble a machine gun in the dark. It is rather the deep embedding of core reflexes and instincts that will kick in when the pressure increases, and when reason is overwhelmed by stress and fear. Those reflexes and instincts are the deep and abiding center of a soldier's identity, including that of the "Engineers" and "Managers." Training is not a *trivial* thing. But it is not the *only* thing. Training vs education arguments are fruitless because it is not one or the other. Both are essential for the development of the complete soldier, and the emphasis shifts as the career progresses and rank increases. (p.11)

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