

Leadership Effectiveness and Emotional Intelligence at Highly Disciplined Environment in Malaysia - A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract: The integration of technology into nearly every aspect of military activity today has dramatically altered the design of military profession. It has raised the complexity of military operations, the number of responsibilities placed on people, and the need for knowledge and capacity among military personnel. The scale and versatility of current combat operations, the efficiency and selection of modern weapons, as well as modern doctrine's distribution and dynamic force structure requirements, all add to this complexity. Thus, the Malaysian Army leadership requires another ability of engagement to ensure the success of their vision, mission and organisational objective. The capacity of leaders to engage with their subordinates has become crucial in determining the effectiveness of a military organisation, whether during operations in a war zone or in managing soldiers during peacetime. The impact of Emotional Intelligence as a set of cognitive and social abilities that help leaders and their subordinates interact interpersonally. The aim of this concept paper is to elaborate on how emotional intelligence can improve the leadership effectiveness in Malaysian Army.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Effective Leadership, Military Organisation*

INTRODUCTION

For several years, academics, professionals, and policy-makers have been investigating different aspects of leadership efficiency and concluded that today's leaders need to be equipped with a variety of bits of intelligence along with a collection of positive values to achieve effectiveness in leadership output [1]. The primary goals of military leadership programmes are to gain a level of performance competency that allows leaders to perform well while under intense emotional stress. Meanwhile, a recent study finds that emotional intelligence plays a major role in enhancing the effectiveness of leadership, including military organizations. A formula or technique is necessary to develop their soft skills in handling their emotions, to consider the feelings of others, and to make wise decisions in any situation, whether in war or in conflict. As a result, skills development, emotional intelligence assessments have become widely popular as a way of identifying potential effective training in developing their military skills. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in military leadership, especially in the context of the Malaysian Army.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Leadership is an organizational dynamic; it is about the mechanism of power. How leadership inspires others and puts different groups together with a common goal. This raises three concerns: what the influence is about, how the influence occurs, and what

the perspective of those who are part of such influence is. Leadership effectiveness would result in encouraging and inspiring the team of individuals to do what they can do [2]. Effective leadership should not include coercive and deceptive strategies that compel individuals to behave following the desires of the one that controls them. Furthermore, successful leaders are those who plan and oversee an organization's activities, as well as those who are capable of setting ambitious objectives and agendas and steering the organization's operations toward those goals through suitable strategies [3]. Effective leadership not only meets common goals but also helps people engage with their tremendous potential.

"Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence"

Field Marshal Montgomery

Thus, according to the Malaysian Army doctrine defined leadership as a means of inspiring individuals to complete a mission and strengthen the organization by providing sense, direction, and motivation. The Army developed its leaders by fortifying cohesive societies, fostering resiliency, instilling trust, and sustaining positive command climates, all while eliminating dishonesty or mistakes. Army leaders must cultivate and articulate a shared vision, as well as have specific mission objectives for the organization to be effective. Furthermore, leaders must be able to make critical decisions in a dynamic world fraught with complexity and fantasy [4]. As a result, the Army Commander or leadership code of conduct was

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developed and perfected overtime to ensure the effectiveness of Army leadership efficiency. The Malaysian Army shows high leadership values by stressing seven qualities and skills to become successful commanders: Integrity and Example, Professional Knowledge, Adaptability, Courage and Resolve, Credibility, Judgement and Decisiveness, and Intellect and Vision

Marilyn Vojta writes in her article about the qualities of an effective leader that a successful leader must strike a balance between traits, talents, attitudes, sources of influence, and situational factors [2]. Furthermore, effective leadership starts with the desire to trust in yourself. It embodies maturity, conviction, and experience, which transforms into a goal and a course of action. Strong leaders have the confidence to take on the task of instilling inspiration, self-esteem, and teamwork because of their clarity of vision [5].

Meanwhile, many scholars elaborate on characteristics of effective leadership with different criteria. To comprehend successful leadership qualities, one must first recognize the leaders' behaviour and attributes. It is essential to consider inherent traits such as energy level, physical strength, and stress resistance [3]. High endurance and stress tolerance help in coping with fast-paced and often exhausting events. Leadership requires unyielding demands that necessitate physical vitality as well as a high degree of mental resilience. Second, it necessitates the ability to problem solve and attract people who can creatively solve challenges along the way. Leaders must be able to articulate their thoughts effectively and stick to the result of any case. Besides that, a leader must be able to turn his mission into a more inclusive role by acquiring the confidence and dedication of everyone required to achieve his goal. Once conceived, the vision reflects a course of action that must be supported by coherent and dependable actions on the part of the leader.

Leadership Integrity is the most desired trait. Integrity means completeness and that one's actions conform to one's words. Military leaders demand loyalty, gratitude, and devotion by demonstrating their beliefs through their everyday behaviour (lead by example). These virtues form the foundation of tension between leaders and followers. Effective leaders have been seen to be remarkably consistent, doing just as they say they will do as the situation demands it. Integrity and honesty are regarded as important characteristics of effective leadership. Leaders must act with justice and integrity in carrying out their duties.

It is also said that "knowledge is power." These are the qualities that must be applied during one's career. Furthermore, leaders must generate knowledge and implement strategies and techniques to improve these capabilities during their careers. According to the research conducted, leader effectiveness and

knowledge have a positive impact on organizational performance [6]. Therefore, leaders should also invest in educational institutions and training centres to develop their talents and abilities, which is especially important if they need to raise morale and do well on the job. They will raise awareness about new and revolutionary techniques and strategies in this manner. As a result, it is widely acknowledged that possessing and cultivating skills and abilities is a strategic component of effective leadership [3].

Adaptability is another attribute that good leaders must-have. The ability to easily learn new tactics and behaviour in response to changing environments is referred to as adaptability competency. In the lack of precise orders, people in positions of authority are often asked to deal with unusual circumstances. An adaptable leader must be able to solve challenges quickly, trust their judgement when making tough choices, and understand that what succeeded in the past is not always the best option. Aside from that, successful leaders must be able to respond to changing circumstances, especially during times of instability such as war or conflict. Most researchers argue that good leadership necessitates adaptability competency [2, 7-8].

As part of that, good leaders have an impact on people, so their dedication to the organization's mission and goals is essential. This desire is often characterized as a willingness to accept authority. In other words, this individual enjoys being in charge and does not shy away from taking on responsibilities. They will use their place of power to instil trust and influence others. Employees can be motivated by leaders' waiver activities in corporations and can assign meaning to these behaviours to form their goals. In general, successful leadership practices have a direct positive influence on their adherents, and therefore on social structures [6].

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence is an area of cognitive and social skills that facilitates interpersonal behaviour. It is defined as an individual's capacity to feel, understand, and effectively apply the power and judgement of emotions as a source of human energy, information, relationship, and influence [9]. According to [10], emotional intelligence needs the capacity to carry out accurate thinking about emotions and the ability to use emotional intelligence to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Meanwhile, scholar argued that when a person shows a high level of emotional intelligence, they tend to do better than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence [1]. The literature also indicates that many of the benefits associated with emotional intelligence may have an impact on effective outcomes such as

improved decision-making, and positive relationship building besides being able to improve our strength, motivation, empathy, comprehension, anger management, teamwork, and ability to interpret and navigate a broad variety of social situations and disputes [11]. Furthermore, emotional intelligence will bring us to more satisfactory and efficient performance by offering a basis for applying intelligence standards to emotional responses and understanding how these methods can be logically consistent or inconsistent with personal convictions about desire.

“What I’ve come to realize is that emotional intelligence was the only way I knew how to lead, and is, in my option, the only way to inspire real change.”
Kevin Allen

Our emotions influence our ability to understand and communicate with others. It is important to learn construction techniques for controlling our feelings and assisting others in managing theirs to lay a solid basis for the maintenance of healthy relationships. The spirit of comradeship, also known as the *Esprit de Corps*, was developed in military organizations and demanded a high level of understanding among military personnel. As we all know, the military is a multi-cultural organization that depends on close interpersonal ties among its members to carry out its operations. The ability to effectively build strong relationships in a variety of situations is an important feature of cross-cultural maturity that can be improved by emotional intelligence practice.

According to literature, leaders with emotional intelligence expertise will foster stronger coordination among participants by encouraging healthy practices such as understanding their followers' feelings, providing inspiration and guidance, and making good decisions [8]. Leaders with emotional intelligence competency are more effective at controlling their indignation and becoming key factors in strengthening

the bond between leaders and their followers. A cohesive team will benefit the organization, and their sense of belonging will boost the organization's effectiveness [12].

Meanwhile, good leadership skills are a basic virtue in the military that should be instilled at every level of a military leader to determine mission success even though during the military training stage. The Malaysian Army defines leadership as the method of motivating others by having meaning, guidance, and inspiration to accomplish the task and improve the organization. A leader should be able to encourage and persuade men and women to assist their commander in pursuing his goals in the face of hardship and risk. Military leaders must show considerable maturity to manage these situations, especially in war zones, where leaders must consider and comprehend their subordinates' emotions to make sound decisions [11].

Goleman's model emphasizes emotional intelligence as a set of competencies and skills that influence leadership success with five core components of emotional intelligence [13]. However, in 2001, he reduced the number of components to four, namely Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, and Relationship Management, with 20 out of 25 emotional competencies [14]. He provides a collection of emotional competencies for each construct of emotional intelligence and argues that emotional competencies are not inherent gifts, but rather acquired skills that must be established to achieve exceptional results. He contends that people are born with a general emotional intelligence that influences their ability to develop emotional competencies. As a result, the benefits of emotional intelligence will improve successful leadership in military organizations, especially the Malaysian Army. According to **Table 1**, there are four major emotional competencies that military leaders should applied.

Four Components of EI	Ability
Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emotional awareness ● Accurate self-awareness ● Self-confidence
Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-control ● Trustworthiness ● Conscientiousness ● Adaptability ● Achievement orientation ● Initiative
Social Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insight ● Service orientation ● Organizational awareness
Relationship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Influence ● Communication ● Leadership

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Change catalyst● Conflict management● Building bonds● Collaboration and cooperation● Team capabilities
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(Source: Adapted from Goleman et al.,[15])

UNDERPINNING THEORY

BEHAVIOUR THEORY

There is diverse and comprehensive literature on leadership philosophy. The current research aims to offer more than just an overview of leadership; it also offers insight into leadership ideologies and investigates the complexities inside. The analysis of the most acceptable and consistent theories is the result of what has been studied in the available literature, resulting in the most suitable and widely applicable theories in the current situation. The researcher selects specific leadership theory intending to delve into how various models and theoretical approaches leverage the social influential method.

The Behaviour Theory of leadership is a significant step apart from Trait Theory and it was developed scientifically by behavioural research. Leadership ability, according to the theory, maybe acquired rather than inherited. This theory is based on the idea that a leader's actions should be influenced in such a way that particular response to particular substances can be achieved. Besides that, this theory classified leaders into two categories based on the duties they had to do and the people they had to work with to complete them. According to the leadership literature, all magnitudes are assigned to different names, but their meaning is the same. In comparison to the Great Man theory, this theory contends that great leaders are cultivated rather than born. Behavioural leadership theory is based on leaders' attitudes rather than their intellectual abilities [13]. Furthermore, it is assumed that individuals will learn to be better leaders through insights and interactions.

However, another school of thought holds that leaders' actions are the product of a fair assessment of democratic and autocratic leadership models [16]. The

behavioural theory stresses the importance of leadership styles that emphasize respect for others and teamwork. It promotes participatory decision-making and team-building by discussing individual desires and aligning individual and organizational objectives. It assists leaders in evaluating and understanding how their managerial style impacts their interaction with their team and encourages loyalty and dedication to the organizational mission. This philosophy assists leaders in finding the best balance between diverse types of leadership and deciding how to act as a leader based on concerns about staff and efficiency.

The leader increases their subordinates' knowledge and confidence through concern, while the initiating mechanism is an embodiment of the magnitude, through which leaders and subordinates recognize, direct, and improve their participatory status for the betterment of progress and achievement of organizational objectives [17].

The aforementioned proclivity assists leaders in aligning their leadership practices with behaviour magnitudes and emotional intelligence capable of increasing leaders' decision-making through the emotional intelligence component.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

This concept paper aims to elaborate on how emotional intelligence can improve the effectiveness of Malaysian Army leadership. The Malaysian Army leadership needed to improve their soft ability competency by mastering emotional intelligence to increase their level of leadership effectiveness. **Figure 1** illustrates how emotional intelligence could facilitate the Malaysian Army's leadership effectiveness, as demonstrated by behavioural theory as their theoretical lens.

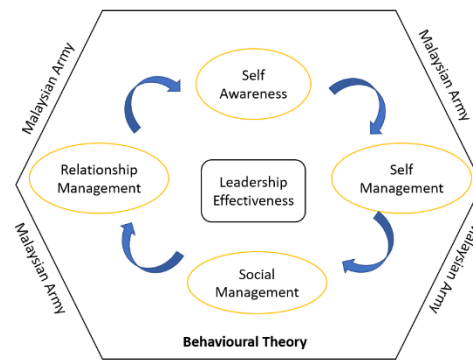


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

As previously discussed, behavioural leadership theory focuses on leadership personalities and believes that leaders are seeking to improve their leadership effectiveness in terms of power competency through their behaviours and interactions with their followers [13]. Furthermore, according to this philosophy, great leaders are groomed rather than born. As a result, this model explains how emotional intelligence will improve leadership effectiveness among Malaysian Army leaders.

As military leaders, they must be competent enough to consider not only the situation or environment but also their feelings. As a consequence, self-awareness refers to one's capacity to understand and comprehend one's moods, feelings, and drives. Since our thoughts come before our emotions, leaders with high levels of self-awareness can soon create a link between their thoughts and their feelings. Leaders with high self-awareness are conscious of their own emotions and how emotions affect them, especially before making decisions. If they have a low level of self-awareness, they can be unaware of how their present mood is influencing their actions or decision-making. At the same time, this high degree of self-awareness will foster leadership confidence.

Another important dimension of emotional intelligence is self-management. This dimension offered leaders to manage or regulate volatile behaviours and emotions, as well as the tendency to stop and consider while responding or making a decision. Self-management is not about removing emotion from your judgement, but rather about realizing how your psychological condition is directly influencing your decision-making at the time. It is a critical situation for military leaders to make any decision, particularly in war zones or conflict areas where military leaders must make specific decisions under high pressure and uncertainty. Leaders with strong self-management skills are more able to respond effectively in stressful environments. Meanwhile, leaders with weak self-management skills can overreact or be incapable of managing their

emotions, especially in war or conflict zones. Through this competency, military leaders will improve their adaptability, trustworthiness among their followers, and ability to build initiative to keep their key goals on track [18].

Furthermore, the ability of leaders to understand the mental make-up of people and how their actions and behaviour affect others is referred to as social awareness. The feelings of others are genuinely reflected in social perception. Leaders with a high level of social awareness will consistently "read the room." Leaders who lack social skills are afraid of misinterpreting other people's emotions or thinking about how others feel. This knowledge allowed military leaders to control not only their forces on the battlefield but also their forces during peacetime [19]. This skill enabled leaders to intervene while their followers were in situations that jeopardized the organization's goals, such as depression, demotivation, or other behaviour that harmed the organization.

Relationship management capabilities are the final competency provided by emotional intelligence to improve military leadership effectiveness [5]. Relationship management is the power to influence the emotional clarity of others through the ability to negotiate interactions and build networks. Relationship management is often described as the capacity to steer other people's emotions into a more positive and productive state. Good relationship management can respond to others in a manner that fosters rapport and collaboration. Leaders must have strong leadership abilities to persuade their subordinates and elaborate on the purpose of their organization. This capability allows them to improve their leadership effectiveness as well as cultivate comradeship among soldiers and maintain strong teamwork.

CONCLUSION

Effective leadership growth is critical for efficiency and achievement not only in private organizations but also in military organizations. The approaches discussed here can be used to improve leadership competency in a variety of organizations, including commercial and non-profit organizations, as well as the Malaysian Army. Emotional intelligence has been shown to play an important role in enhancing Malaysian Army leadership effectiveness not only during peacetime but also during a conflict or crisis. The findings of this concept paper could be helpful to the Malaysian Army's leadership effectiveness program in achieving the organization's goals.

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