

# **THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION**

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The Man, Machine, and Method (3M) concept emphasizes the importance of human resource development through continuous training and education. According to the current Chief of Army, General Tan Sri Dato' Muhammad Hafizuddeain bin Jantan in his Chief of Army directive, "The army first focus will emphasize the humanity element or "man". The army will provide specific accumulation, consistent and focused on developing as well as strengthening the human capital element of the army. Human resource empowerment is a critical enforcement to the army's desire to have a high-performance manpower." This statement showed the importance of professional military education, especially in the army.

Professional Military Education (PME) describes organized training, development, and educational initiatives to improve military personnel's operational, strategic thinking, and leadership abilities. It includes a range of establishments, programs, and curricula designed to equip enlistees and military officers for leadership positions and duties within their respective armed forces. PME emphasizes the development of ethical behavior, critical thinking, and adaptability in dynamic operational situations in addition to technical competency. To succeed in the army profession, military professionals receive intellectual, moral, and social training through PME. These programs frequently combine classroom education with hands-on training, leadership development exercises, and chances for lifelong learning throughout a military career.

To make Malaysia the best in terms of defense and security in the future, the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) has outlined three key goals for the professional military education

program. These goals are outlined in Malaysia's first Defence White Paper (DWP 2020) and are Concentric Deterrence, Comprehensive Defence, and Credible Partnerships. The methods have been emphasized as being maintained by the Malaysia Armed Forces (MAF) for them to become PME eventually.

It is vital to know "Strengthening the Excellent Soldiers" aims, which have been highlighted by MAF Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Perintah Ulung (Grand Orders/Superior Command), are to equip the soldiers with academic development in military and professional fields, combination of training, education, and development programs, and to enhance the human resource development for future force through Human Resource Department or branch of all services which are based on the jointness, interoperability, technology-based, ability to operate simultaneously in two theatres and mission orientated. The three primary points made by CDF in support of "Strengthening the Excellent Soldiers" also complemented the government's goal of building the MAF's Future Force by 2020, which is to create a force that can respond to both conventional and unconventional threats in occasions of peace and conflict and be highly prepared to carry out operations in an unpredictable security environment. The government's long-term commitment to strengthening the MAF's readiness with the required tools and resources, as well as a knowledgeable and competent workforce focused on the smart soldier abilities and other capabilities in accomplishing the concept of Future Force is a crucial component of this force development. For Malaysia to become a secure, sovereign, and prosperous nation, nation-building demands the Whole of Government (WoG) and Whole of Society (WoS) approaches with an expanding understanding that PME is one of the bases to be exposed to all other stakeholders in nation-building defense and security.

Military theorist writes that although there was no revolution in military affairs in mind when the PME system was created, it was understood that military training alone would not be enough. This understanding has guided its upkeep, ongoing assessment, and improvement. PME functions at the intersection of operational art and intellectual growth (Kenney, 1996). Its goal is to produce commanders and soldiers with unmatched cognitive and practical skills. As mentioned in the Malaysian Army Command, Leadership & Management Doctrine, one of the command responsibilities includes Professional Knowledge development as per the statement, "Commander must be a master of the military profession and be professionally proficient. To this end, the Malaysian Army provides formal education and training through military institutions. In addition, professional knowledge is gained by service experience and personal study" (Malaysian Army, 2007).

In Malaysia, the development of institutions for military education helps to play a vital role in the implementation of PME since it places a strong emphasis on continuous training and education to ensure that personnel have the knowledge and skills required to carry out their jobs well. Malaysia has the National Defence Education Centre as military education, including the National Resilience College (NRC), Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College (MAFDC), and Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College (MAFSC). Other than that, PME is also incorporated into military personnel's career advancement. Throughout their careers, officers and enlisted personnel must participate in a variety of courses and programs to broaden their professional knowledge and abilities.

Basically, the importance of professional military education (PME) is to build a good leadership ability for the person in charge. It is important because it provides military personnel with the fundamental understanding and abilities required to carry out leadership

roles in an efficient manner. It also develops the strategic decision-making capabilities necessary to navigate through challenging operational conditions. PME develops a thorough understanding of leadership concepts, empowering military leaders to lead and encourage their subordinates while enhancing the supervisory, communication, and problem-solving abilities required for successful leadership in a variety of military environments. For example, during a military training exercise, a subordinate officer is tasked with commanding a platoon on a simulated mission to take an enemy stronghold. As conditions on the battlefield change, the officer must collaborate with their team, make quick decisions, and adjust. As a consequence, the officer is faced with various considerations, including route selection, engagement tactics, and resource distribution. With the help of instructors and real-world experience, the officer has the ability to make prompt, wise decisions that support mission goals and become a trustworthy leader.

Next, the importance of PME is to develop a strategic thinker person. Strategic thinking is really crucial for military officers when conducting their duties because, for officers, strategic thinking is a part of their duties as planners, organizers, and warfighters, along with tactical and operational thinking. But since it is so much more difficult than other types of thinking that officers have to do, strategic thought is different. Additionally, the officer's manner of thinking demands the need to be self-aware, or metacognitive, effectively distancing herself from the kind of thinking necessary for the tactical and operational levels of warfare at which they often operate. The ability to think strategically as well as tactically is essential for military success. PME offers officers the information and abilities that are required to create cohesive tactics, think critically about challenging operating conditions, and adjust to emerging threats. PME learners obtain a thorough grasp of the fundamentals of war and the skill of strategy via the study of military history, theory, and current case studies.

As an illustration, a military officer who is a strategic thinker would conduct a thorough analysis of the situation if a conflict were to arise in an area known for its rough terrain and severe weather like winters. They would take into account things like the enemy's capabilities, logistical difficulties, and possible weather effects on operations. Based on this study, the officer could suggest unusual strategies to obtain a tactical advantage over the enemy, including using equipment designed or specialized units for cold weather. They may also support the construction of supply lines or logistics hubs in key areas to guarantee the continuous provision of vital supplies to front-line soldiers. Thus, an officer with strategic thinking skills can maximize military operations' efficacy in difficult situations by coming up with creative solutions to obstacles.

Furthermore, the improvement of interpersonal skills and communication is important for military officers in their duties. Effective military leadership is mostly dependent on communication and interpersonal skills (Aneen Klinger, 1998). PME places a strong emphasis on developing interpersonal skills like empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution because these are critical for establishing trust between members of a unit, encouraging cohesive teamwork, and successfully managing diverse teams in demanding situations. For the military to effectively coordinate complicated operations, share vital information, and give commands, effective communication is essential. Training modules on communication tactics are frequently included in PME programs to ensure that military personnel can effectively transmit messages, modify their communication styles to suit various audiences and situations, and reduce the possibility of misunderstandings during high-stakes operations. Military commanders can improve their efficacy in leading troops, promoting teamwork, and accomplishing mission success by refining their interpersonal and communication skills through PME.

For instance, officers with good interpersonal skills can properly articulate their own thoughts during a group discussion or team activity that is part of PME training. They can also actively listen to varied opinions and create an environment that values mutual respect and open communication. They can also resolve problems diplomatically, establish connections with teachers and peers, and navigate interpersonal dynamics with skill, all of which improve the learning process and encourage teamwork. Military personnel can offer insightful information, ask for feedback, and explain difficult ideas understandably and effectively, all of which enhance the PME atmosphere. As well as having great interpersonal skills helps people build valuable networks and contacts inside the military community.

Moreover, the importance of PME is to establish professionalism and ethical behavior among military officers. PME places a strong emphasis on professionalism and ethical behavior since these values form the fundamentals of military officer's conduct. Following the ethical guidelines in PME, guarantees honesty, reliability, and responsibility in decision-making procedures, mirroring the fundamental principles of the armed forces. Military officers who follow ethical standards show that they respect human dignity, obey the law, and are dedicated to the greater good. Professionalism in PME also fosters a culture of competence, quality, and ongoing progress, which helps to create leaders who put their subordinates' well-being and the execution of their missions first. The incorporation of professional ethics and conduct within PME provides military officers with the moral and ethical guidance required to operate in complicated circumstances with honor, integrity, and service-oriented dedication.

The statement above can be proven by the situation such as where the military officers in the lesson session might be exposed to an imaginary scenario in which a commanding

officer is under pressure to put the safety of civilian bystanders last to prioritize mission accomplishment. Military officers would be expected to act with professionalism and ethical behavior in this situation by critically evaluating the moral consequences of their decisions in light of international laws about armed conflict, military codes of conduct, and the intrinsic value of human life. Participants would be urged to uphold the values of honesty, responsibility, and respect for human dignity even in difficult and high-stakes situations through guided discussions and ethical debates led by PME instructors. Military officers can comprehend their ethical responsibilities and develop the moral courage necessary to make moral decisions in the field by getting involved in ethical deliberation and reflection in the PME situation. This helps them uphold the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in their military duties.

After that, understanding international relations is also one of the PME's importance. PME is crucial to comprehending international relations since it equips military personnel with the skills necessary to successfully navigate complex global dynamics and participate in multinational operations. Military professionals can acquire valuable insights into geopolitical trends, diplomatic tactics, and cultural subtleties that impact military operations and decision-making processes worldwide by studying international relations through the lens of PME. Military leaders who possess an understanding of international relations are better equipped to evaluate the larger picture of conflicts, foresee possible dangers, and formulate strategic responses that are in line with larger geopolitical goals. Additionally, PME encourages cooperation and interoperability with allies, boosting international security cooperation and improving the efficacy of multinational operations. On top of that, via creating awareness of international relations, PME introduces military officers with a feeling of global citizenship and accountability, bolstering moral behavior and professionalism in

their dealings with both civilian populations and foreign partners. As a result, the ability of military professionals to manage existing security concerns in a globalized society is enhanced by the integration of international relations within PME.

For instance, military leaders were assigned to the responsibility of organizing a multinational peacekeeping operation in a conflict-affected area. So, military officers must negotiate complicated international dynamics while taking into account regional politics, diplomatic connections, and the interests of several parties. To ensure conformity with international law, military leaders would need to work closely with diplomats, representatives from international organizations, and local authorities to discuss the conditions of the peacekeeping mission and obtain deployment mandates for troops. In order to promote long-lasting peace and stability, they would also need to evaluate the sociocultural backdrop of the area, comprehend the complaints of parties involved in the conflict, and reduce possible sources of tension. Hence, military officers who understand international relations well may negotiate global difficulties, connect disparate parties, and help settle crises in accordance with larger strategic aims and international cooperation ideals.

Apart from that, the importance of PME is to create adaptability and innovation in PME. Adaptability and innovation are critical components of PME since they prepare military officers to thrive in dynamic and unpredictable circumstances. Individuals who possess adaptability are better able to respond to changing conditions, shift their approach, and overcome unforeseen obstacles, all of which contribute to operational readiness and mission success. In the meantime, developing an innovative culture inside PME promotes original thinking in problem-solving, the investigation of breakthrough technologies, and the creation of fresh approaches to deal with complicated security issues and growing threats.

Military organizations may improve their adaptability, resilience, and capacity to meet changing needs by placing a strong emphasis on innovations and adaptability in PME. This will eventually increase their efficacy in preserving national security and advancing international stability Scott A. Silverstone (2019).

For example, a military unit trained in traditional combat tactics is confronted with a sudden shift in enemy strategy, such as the use of unusual vehicles for surveillance and attack. In this situation, PME that prioritizes adaptability gives soldiers the equipment they need to swiftly evaluate the evolving threat environment, adjust their strategies, and implement creative countermeasures like creating plans to take out the opponent vehicle or using electronic warfare tactics to interfere with their communication networks. Military officers may successfully navigate unpredictable battlefield conditions, retain operational supremacy, and accomplish missions by fostering adaptation and innovation through PME. By encouraging critical thinking, experimentation, and the exploration of new concepts, PME prepares military leaders to thrive in uncertain and volatile environments.

Besides that, PME also assists in career advancement and life-long learning. Military officers must continuously acquire new knowledge and skills throughout their careers in order to adapt to changing circumstances and stay relevant in their professions. This is known as lifelong learning. PME provides chances for training, development, and structured educational programs that support lifelong learning in the military. Military professionals who actively participate in PME improve their skills, keep up with new strategies and technology, and widen their horizons. Furthermore, as stated in the Defence White Paper, "In the near future, a combination of weapons and AI technology will pose a new threat to the nation. Potentially, AI will not only increase the efficiency and lethal effect of kinetic

weapons but also guide weapons. Such AI-guided weapons are defined as Autonomous Weapons Systems." (Ministry of Defence, 2019). Hence, PME in terms of keeping updated on the latest threats and technology is undeniably important. This dedication to continuous growth immediately promotes careers while also enhancing individual talents. Moreover, PME provides access to career advancement in the military hierarchy. Promotion to higher positions and more responsible ones frequently requires the completion of PME courses and the acquisition of necessary certificates. PME also promotes a culture of lifelong learning, which motivates military officers to keep learning new things throughout their careers.

To illustrate, an officer takes PME's foundation courses early in their career to develop fundamental knowledge and abilities. They pursue intermediate and advanced PME programs, including command and staff college or war college, as they gain experience and show skill. These programs are crucial for professional advancement. Officers participate in lifelong learning during these sessions, picking up fresh perspectives, methods, and leadership skills. Alongside improving their professional skills, this ongoing learning process equips individuals for leadership positions and increased responsibility in the military. Officers contribute what they have learned to the operational efficacy of their units as they advance, showing how PME has a real effect on career promotion and the lifetime pursuit of excellence in military service.

In conclusion, PME is essential to military performance and readiness in the modern era. PME equips military professionals to face the challenges of modern warfare with competence and confidence by creating leaders of character. It also develops creative thinking, equips leaders with the skills necessary to handle the complexity of modern combat, and creates a dedication to lifelong learning. Other than that, it offers a disciplined setting for

lifelong learning, maintaining that military personnel have the cognition, knowledge, and skills necessary to adjust to changing circumstances. The significance of PME will only increase as the security environment changes, guaranteeing that armed forces stay competent, professional, and prepared to defend national interests and preserve the ideals of peace and security. Moreover, PME is essential in developing expertise, fostering professional socialization among military personnel, and reshaping the arms industry. All things considered, PME is valuable because it helps create capable and flexible leaders who can lead successfully in unpredictable and changing situations.

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