

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN THE  
MALAYSIAN ARMY :  
A REVIEW

by

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## FOREWARD

Since its formation 49 years ago the Malaysian Army has grown from a handful of men into a large and diverse organisation with its own complexity. In keeping abreast with technological advancement the Army has equipped itself with up to date armaments and equipment. However in the field of personnel management much is left to be desired. The system of personnel management remained as what it was inherited from the British. A system that was evolved in World War II.

The object of this paper is to review the existing system of personnel management in the Malaysian Army, highlighting the merits and failings of the system, and concluding with a proposal. However the study is confined only to the leadership and motivation aspects of personnel management.

This paper has been written from my experience in the Army which extends over eighteen years, including Boys Service. My experience covers almost the whole range of regimental appointments up to Regimental Second in Command (officiating). I have also served as a Grade Three Staff Officer at the Headquarters of the Third Malaysian Infantry Brigade and also as a Grade Two Staff Officer at the Army Staff Division of the Ministry of Defence, an appointment which I had the pleasure of working closely with the hierarchy of the Malaysian Army. While serving in regimental appointments I have had the opportunity of working closely with all the other Corps in the Malaysian Army as well as some foreign forces namely British, Australian New Zealand, Indonesian and Thais for limited periods.

The contents of this paper are basically my own views of personnel management in the Malaysian Army, supported by theories and views of some management experts. Any views not supported by a recognised authority are

entirely my own conclusions derived from my own experiences. It is noticeable that I have not interviewed unit or sub-unit commanders in supporting my views. I felt this was not necessary as I am sufficiently acquainted with the strength and weaknesses of the subject matter.

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## ABSTRACT

Personnel management is the central pervasive subsystem of all organisations. It is becoming apparent to an increasing number of executives that people rather than technology determine the success or failure of organisations. However systems of personnel management are variable and are influenced by factors such as environment, organisation, profession, situation and time.

In the Army every officer is a manager. Without systematic means of managing men and resources under complex and diverse conditions an officer has little chance of success. This is because in warfare, the effectiveness of all available men and equipment must be maximised.

The present system of personnel management in the Malaysian Army is predominantly autocratic or authoritative in nature. Such a system is most suitable in combat or emergency situations, when time is overriding. The system in spite of its weaknesses have worked well in the past. However with the changing of time there is now a compelling need to review it.

The democratic and laissez-faire approach can be adopted but will only be suitable in certain situations and environment. Motivation, an important element in personnel management should not be overlooked. The application of "Theory Y" which inter alia recognises the principle of integration is recommended. In the Army where team work is of utmost importance, "Theory Z" should be adopted. It is a technique of managing people in such a way that they can work together more effectively.

Thus in the light of a progressive changing society there is a compelling need to review the existing system. However the proposals made are mere guidelines to be adopted where suitable.

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