UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE MALAYSIAN ARMED FORCES: A STUDY ON PERCEPTIONS AND APPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The development of modern warfare is reflected by the rising importance of having knowledge advantage over adversaries. Leadership, sense making, problem solving and decision-making are more complex and more demanding in military situations. Command and control is taking on new dimensions, and the role of military personnel is evolving into that of 'thinking soldier'. The "information superiority" becomes the determinant of the future war management and requires a drastic improvement in information management, assurance, exchanging and sharing of superior knowledge. The aim of the study is to examine the attitude of the MAF officers' towards Knowledge Management that include knowledge creation, Knowledge Management processes, Knowledge Management applications, and technology. Five hypotheses were developed in order to examine the degree of statistical significant difference in perceptions towards Knowledge Management. The results of the study showed that, the perceptions towards knowledge creation, Knowledge Management processes, Knowledge Management applications and technology by the MAF officers were not significantly different. However, there is a statistical significant difference in perceptions towards knowledge creation based on respondent's rank, academic background, and working experience. The perceptions towards technology were only significantly different based on the respondent's academic background. Further, the results showed that a positive correlation existed between Knowledge Management applications and Knowledge Management processes, and technology. There was also a positive relationship between technology and knowledge creation, and Knowledge Management processes. Further analysis on the Knowledge Management applications, the results demonstrated a relatively low Knowledge Management practices in the MAF due to lack of exposure and awareness among the MAF personnel.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The future warfare needs thinking soldiers, people who are innovative and creative to fight new dimension of warfare by transforming itself into a network-centric, knowledge-based force to achieve Future Forces. Soldiers of the future will fight a war using their intelligence and expertise, and interoperability as an important factors of the military's ability to attain information superiority. To remain relevant to the Future Force, the military must adapt to the new challenges as future operations will be conducted in a different and changing operational environment, which will enhance decision dominance. The operational environment is characterised by the responsiveness, agility, and full spectrum capability to dominate unstable situations which requires the military to focus its cultural thinking on the knowledge-based organisation.

In anticipating the future needs, the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) is extensively developing its forces by transforming into a network-centric, knowledge-based force. The future vision is to have a force with agile capabilities and adaptive processes powered by excellent network-centric access to knowledge, systems, and services that are interoperable in the joint environment. With regard to the new warfare, it marks the importance of having knowledge advantage over enemies in the unpredictable and critical operations that demand soldiers to select, filter, and analyse information from various sources. Failure to learn from the lessons of previous wars or anticipate the organisational changes necessary to succeed has led to defeat of military forces throughout this century (Proctor & Gubler, 1998).

Every military organisation has widely recognised that individuals within the organisation are the main assets and the source of organisational knowledge. Almost every leader in the military has an information-rich database readily available (Degen, 2008). Unfortunately, much of that information becomes outdated and obsolete quickly. The question arises, "Who is managing this data to ensure that the obsolete is discarded and the useful is captured and fully codified?"   Information, regardless of its source, can translate into an advantage on the battlefield. We believe that the tools of the information age are keys to tactical or operational adaptation on today's battlefield.

With regard to the future direction, the MAF is projected to move from threat-based strategy to capability-based approach. This approach is to develop core capabilities in order to