

Enhancing Leadership in the Ecuadorian Military:

Conversations on Leadership with members of the Anti-terrorism

Special Forces and Intelligence

Units and with members of the Peacebuilding School

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Abstract

Militaries around the world are studying leadership and consider this training is giving them an advantage both on and off the battlefield. As the first ever research into leadership within the Ecuadorian military, the intent of the present study was to have military personnel explore their personal leadership and discuss individual and institutional ways to increase capacity. Empirical data was collected from men in the Anti-terrorism Special Forces and Intelligence Units of the Ecuadorian Army and from the Peacekeeping School which has military personnel from all three arms of the military, army, navy and air force. In addition, action research in the form of an Interview Matrix Activity and World Café were conducted with the Anti-terrorism Special Forces Unit. Research results were identified. Eight recommendations emerged from these findings that may assist the Ecuadorian military in taking steps to implement foundational leadership training.

Keywords: military, leadership, curriculum, values

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to begin dialogue around leadership with the personnel of a Special Forces Unit, *Grupo Especial De Operaciones (GEO)*, of the Ecuadorian Military.

The project delivered a week of workshop sessions on leadership topics for military personnel within the unit. Many of these topics are not included in the present curriculum at any level within the Ecuadorian military. In addition, at the time of this writing, the researcher was unable to find any research pertaining to the topic of leadership within the Ecuadorian military. An opportunity to learn and discuss the additional topics with personnel within the Unit should lead to further interest in these topics, and, perhaps, their inclusion in a revised curriculum. The intent is to have the personnel think about the concept of leadership within the military and identify personal and institutional ways to increase their own leadership capacity.

Table 1 - Project Deliverables.

| DELIVERABLE | SPECIFICS |
|---|--|
| Creation of eight leadership posters | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display in public areas in GEO• To generate thought and conversation |
| Provision of four workshops sessions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To include an Interview Matrix• Delivered at GEO |
| Completion of a survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gathering soldiers' personal views on leadership |
| Execution of a World Café | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To create an atmosphere conducive to thought and dialogue around military leadership |
| Completion of an exit survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To gage interest in future workshops• To gain valuable feedback |

The result for each of the five deliverables will be a compilation of ideas that will inform the

upgrading and development of future leadership training within the Special Forces. Increasing leadership skills will help servicemen to cross the borders of the box that is the hierarchy of the military and allow them to influence others up and down the chain of command. Officers currently are given their positional power but must develop the skills to win personal power. The intent of the present project was to open a conversation around leadership issues and to start to build some of those skills.

Significance of the Inquiry

To date, there have been no studies on leadership within the Ecuadorian military. Many militaries around the globe are teaching leadership within their organizations. According to retired General C. Obando, developed nations have a global obligation to support developing nations and this obligation extends to the military (personal communication, September 23, 2016). In 2007 and renewed in 2012, the Government of Canada declared engagement in the Americas a foreign policy priority, with the Department of National Defense and the Canadian Armed Forces having an important role to play (ND/CAF, 2014).

The findings of this study are significant to the Special Forces Unit which seeks to update the educational offerings in the institution to meet the needs of a new generation:

The missions and roles of the military have changed to meet the demands of more complex issues facing the military, of quickly advancing globalization and technology challenges.

The military requires innovative ideas and an update of its definition of leadership to improve performance on the world stage (personal communication, Lt. Col. F. Varela May 9, 2016).

The information gleaned from the present study will have practical significance for shaping leadership education within GEO and perhaps the larger military.

Literature Review

The literature review is related to the role of leadership education within the context of the military in a developing nation and was restricted to literature that has been written by Canadian or American military officers.

The literature review is organized in terms of the three areas listed in Table 2. First, values for military leadership are reviewed to help define the characteristics which education would seek to develop. Second, three leadership models that have potential for development within the Ecuadorian military are described and reviewed. Third, the changing role for soldiers within the twenty-first century that led to changes to the education of military personnel in North America are reviewed.

Table 2 - Literature Review Areas

| AREA | SUBTOPIC |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Values for Military Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication• Competing values• Changing values up chain of command |
| Leadership Models | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values based leadership• Intent based leadership• Situational leadership |
| Expanding Roles for Soldiers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soldier as warrior• Soldier as diplomat• Soldier as scholar• Cultural intelligence |

Values for Military Leadership

The Constitution of Ecuador (2008), Section Three, Article 159 states that “the Armed Forces

and National Police Force are institutions aimed at protecting citizen rights, liberties, and guarantees. Further, Article 159 states "obedience of orders from their superiors shall not exonerate those who carry them out from being held liable for them". While militaries are strong hierarchical institutions, here the foundational document, the country's constitution, lays out that everyone has direct liability for one's own actions, even in times of conflict.

The Department of National Defence [DND], (2003) states that "The military ethos comprises values, beliefs, and expectations that reflect core Canadian values, the imperatives of military professionalism and the requirements of operations." The constitutions of both countries give the reader a strong sense of the values of citizens which are reflected in the actions of the military within their country and on the world stage in both peacekeeping and wartime settings.

The DND (2005) acknowledges that there will be times where tensions will arise due to the need to find ways to address issues where two or more values cannot be equally honored. This is most obviously observed during times of combat when mission achievement and keeping one's troops out of harm's way are not both possible. The task for leaders then becomes balancing the outcomes when equally justifiable values are competing and one must, of necessity, take precedence over the others. Although there are risks in making choices, responsible decision-making is the domain of all leaders. The DND (2007) states that "effective leadership is essentially about balance". This balancing is never easy. Developing and honing skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and moral decision making will help leaders to determine the right balance in any given situation. (p.23). Thus there is a need for the study of military leadership which embodies higher order thinking to bring resolution to today's complex global problems.

Strong communication skills are a characteristic of effective leaders found in much of the literature reviewed that dealt with the issues of values and abilities. In Army Leadership (AR, 2007) this is a core leader competency. "Leaders communicate by expressing ideas and actively listening to others. Effective leaders understand the nature and power of communication and practice effective communication techniques so they can better relate to others and translate goals into actions. Communication is essential to all other leadership competencies" (p.3).

Waddell III speaks to the change in values as military personnel climb the chain of command (1994). Waddell III indicates that while working at the operational level the values for servicemen are occupational and move toward institutional values as military persons move up in rank. Consequently, within any military unit there will be both shared and divergent values. An implication for leadership curriculum and development in the military is that changes in leadership need to be addressed as soldiers move up the chain of command and for different military operations.

Leadership Models

Authoritarian leadership was initially the predominant style within most armed forces around the globe but emergent research on followership points toward positive alternatives for these hierarchical institutions. There has been an increase in writing on military followership during the past decade and this includes the work of Corruthers(2009), Mathews(2008), Meilinger(2008), Potter and Rosenbach (2009). Three such models are the Values-Based Leadership Model, Intent Based Leadership Model and Situational Leadership Model, which are explored in more detail below.

Values-Based Leadership Model. Values tell us what an organization regards as ethical for

guiding activities and what characteristics it finds advantageous in its members. The DND (2007) states that military leadership must be values based. This is particularly important in a security environment characterized by complexity, ambiguity, volatility, uncertainty and dangerö (p.3). Military leaders must be able to accomplish their assigned missions while protecting their troops to the best of their ability while anticipating and acclimatising to change and simultaneously representing the military values. Added to the strong discipline instilled during years of military training, an officer leader can use values based leadership to direct their soldiers towards mission success in a way which is ethical and adheres to strong moral principles.

Intent Based Leadership Model. Marquette (2012) shows that leaders can be developed at all levels. Personnel can take responsibility and contribute towards an organizationö goals whereby the success of an organization rests on everyoneö shoulders. Marquetteö intent based leadership philosophy concludes that leaders must create environments where everyone contributes and feels valued ö where every person is a leader.

Situational Leadership Model. Waddell (1994) believes no one theory of leadership is totally correct for all contexts. Waddell developed the Situational Leadership Model which espouses using differing leadership models depending on the maturity of the followers. Leaders need to delegate tasks and öempower subordinates to accomplish the missionö (p.7). The further up the ladder a leader is, the more mature or senior his followers are and the more work that can be delegated. Thus it becomes appropriate to change leadership styles. Leaders, as they rise in the ranks, need more vision and more long term planning as they strategize the implementation of öbigö ideas. Cognitive complexity, as a consequence, must increase so that the abilities of the leader match the needs of the organization. At the same time, the need to

maintain communication becomes increasingly important. Waddell feels that the most effective leaders are those who maintain the highest levels of exposure to their troops.

The Situational Leadership Model also looks at the differences in leadership between times of peace and times of warfare and the shift in leadership that may be required to accommodate the change in soldiers' mental states. Waddell says the leader-follower interaction is even more difficult since it is exacerbated by the fog and friction of war (p.9). He states that during battle, leadership, of necessity becomes more autocratic or authoritarian.

Waddell also articulates the difference in leadership styles which occur in the situation of combined allied forces working jointly. Historical, cultural and doctrinal differences will test the leadership abilities of all involved. The situation then must dictate the most appropriate way to lead such combined forces. The Situational Leadership Model would seem close to ideal and perhaps can be achieved by allowing flexibility for military personnel to adapt their leadership skills and style to the particular peacetime or wartime context. Each scenario can be analyzed and adaptive leadership can be put into place to achieve mission success under changing circumstances.

Expanding Roles for Soldiers

The Army Leadership document (AR, 2007) shows alignment with Clermont's (2015) in looking at leadership values that military soldiers should carry but also the new thinking militaries require for the future. Clermont calls upon the Canadian Armed Forces to pursue the ongoing transformation process that demonstrates(s) the necessity for the institution to further develop more cognitive, intellectual, and communication skills to reflect the nature of (current missions) (p.25). Clement argues that the modern day soldier, in both warfare and peacekeeping missions, also has a diplomatic function. Thus soft skills such as

cultural intelligence, intellectual capacity, communication, negotiation and mediation skills, language skills, and cognitive skills (p.26) need to be built into training programs. Clement follows the literature which has documented the changing role for soldiers around the globe and the subsequent role for more far reaching knowledge, especially communication and cognitive skills (p.34). Clement acknowledges that these skills take time to develop which points to the need to have leadership training at all levels of a soldier's career.

The DND (2006) indicates that service personnel in the 21st century must be warrior + technician + researcher + diplomat. In a 2007 document, DND postulates that the soldier's role as warrior would evolve to include the soldier as diplomat and the soldier as scholar. Clearly, the role of military personnel is expanding and the training must consequently increase to include subjects that have not been traditionally taught in military educational institutions. Spencer and Balasevicius (2009) state that from a military perspective, CQ or cultural intelligence, refers to the cognitive, motivational, and behavioral capacities to understand and effectively respond to the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals and groups under changing circumstances in order to effect a desired change (p.41). Spencer and Balasevicius provide examples of where CQ was used as a force multiplier to achieve mission success in military operations. They make reference to the work of Geert Hofstede's (1984) four value dimensions of Power Distance, Uncertainty-Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism and Masculinity-Femininity. His work on Cultural Dimensions Theory relates the effects of a society's culture to the values of its people and provides a framework for cross cultural interactions. Spencer and Balasevicius propose two training centers, for research, doctrine and training, which could put Canada at the forefront of Cultural Intelligence innovation. They conclude that a fully integrated CQ capability is a

key enabler of today's intelligence-driven operations (p.47). The fast pace of globalization: due to financial, economic, technological, political, ecological and sociological changes has caused an increasing clash of cultures around the world. Militaries need to expand their knowledge of other cultures and augment their theoretical understanding and their practical intercultural skills to achieve mission success.

Clark (2008) raises a similar concern for the US military: the CQ training is inadequate for the environments in which American soldiers are finding themselves. He states the usual procedure to equip a combat troop for deployment to a foreign country is to concentrate heavily on military offensive and defensive skills with only a minor focus on knowledge of local language, customs, religion and history. He concludes that "military transformation" must include transformation of thought and practice (p.66). Clark states that to ensure mission success, units must not only understand the physical environment but also the social and cultural environment where they are expected to serve. Clark recognizes the slow acquisition of cultural intelligence and puts forth that it is necessary that a continuous learning cycle must be started early and span a military person's career.

The consensus is that the role of military personnel is rapidly changing to include additional characteristics that should be included under the umbrella of leadership. The call is for the Canadian and American militaries to put additional emphasis on cultural intelligence. This would lead to the conclusion that militaries in South America must also do so. Within the country and on their borders the Ecuadorian military deal with people of differing ethnicities and cultures. In addition they are deployed in many parts of the world as peace keepers. Thus, these new skills and leadership models that are now considered to be essential skills for soldiers in Canada and the United States should be added to the curriculum and

instruction used to develop Ecuadorian military personnel.

Methodology

Purpose

Foundational leadership is a new area of study for personnel in the Ecuadorian military. Consequently, the purpose of the project was to improve leadership within the Special Forces Unit, GEO, by determining the most important leadership topics to include in the curriculum for officers and soldiers in the Unit, where they thought leadership would be best positioned within the curriculum, and how they felt leadership could best be taught. These questions were explored using two surveys and two exploratory leadership conversations. The results of the data analysis may be used to inform not only future curriculum design.

Project Participants

The participants for this study were military personnel from the GEO; Intelligence Unit, Grupo de reconocimiento Y monitoreo Conjunto (GMREC); and the Peacekeeping School, which are all physically proximate. While the GEO and Intelligence are units of the Ecuadorian Army, the Peacekeeping School has military personnel from the army, navy and air force. Informed consent was obtained for all data collection.

Increasing the Awareness of Leadership

The first activity was designed to create discussion. Each poster was unique and contained a picture of a military action and a word related to leadership. An example is provided in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Posters

Workshops

Four leadership workshops designed to provide military personnel with information and opportunities for discussion were given to approximately 30 men per session.

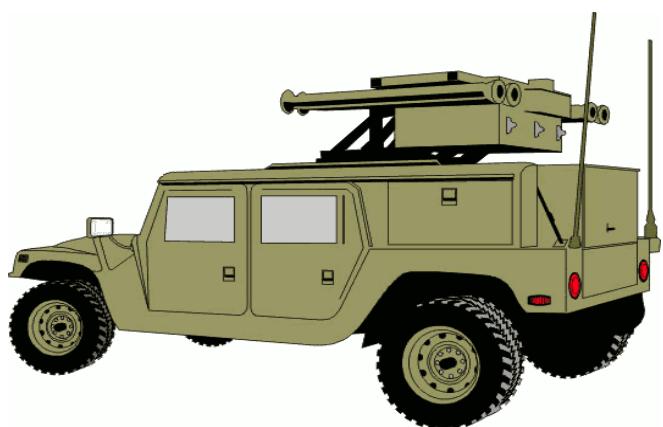
Data Collection

The data for the present study was collected in four stages.

1. The first data collection involved administering a survey to 50 personnel. The survey questionnaire contained nine selection items related to the topics listed in Table 3.
2. The second data collection was completed using the Interview Matrix with the intent to discuss military leadership. As shown in Figure 2, there were four questions that were presented.



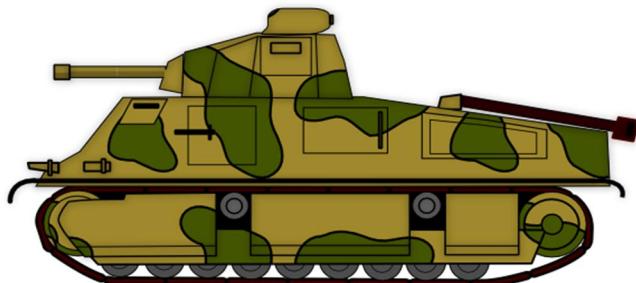
What is the most difficult part of being a leader?



Who has modelled strong leadership in your life, both inside and outside the military?



How can you improve your leadership skills?



How do you measure the success of a leader?

Figure 2 - Interview Matrix Questions

There were three Interview Matrices each involving four soldiers who were organized in pairs. The task for the pair of soldiers was to interview each other for one of the questions using a set of pre-determined probe questions. Each interview took two minutes or four minutes for the pair. New pairs were formed across tables and the process was repeated. Following six rounds, the men from each group who addressed the same question amalgamated their findings, which were then presented to all.

3. The World Café was conducted during the third stage of data collection. The intent was to create an atmosphere conducive to thought and dialogue around military leadership. Four soldiers were at each of four tables with a table host. Each table dealt with one of the following three questions:



GEO is an elite group. What makes GEO a strong leadership team?



Does leadership in the military differ in any way from leadership in civilian life? If so, how?



How could the military help you to become a stronger leader?

There were three twenty minute rounds. The soldiers individually moved tables after each round so that they dealt with each question and interacted with as many different soldiers as possible. The table hosts were briefed on the previous day regarding the information to be gathered and strategies for soliciting ideas so that every soldier was heard. At the end of the third round the information was harvested and table hosts gave an overview of ideas coming from their table.

4. Finally, an Exit Survey was administered.

Using a variety of data collection procedures allowed for triangulation of the data, thereby contributing to a broad-based perspective.

Analysis

The responses to the two surveys were analyzed using standard formulas. For the questions that included “Other, please list,” the suggestions made were recorded.

The responses made during the Interview Matrix and the World Café were coded by the group leaders and table hosts using instructions provided by the researcher. Individual comments were grouped together to form themes by the researcher. Formation of the themes revealed relationships among the themes. Trends found within the conversations provided insights into how participants experienced these leadership conversations. The themes were used to develop the recommendations about leadership for future curriculum.

Results

The results are presented in the order of the four stages of data collection described.

Survey

The survey results are presented in Table 3 and Table 4. The total number of respondents was 50.

As shown in Table 3, the soldiers identified leadership as an essential skill both now and in the future. Of the 50 respondents, whereas 56% indicated they foresaw their leadership roles increasing over the next 5 to 10 years, the remaining were evenly split between not seeing the leadership increasing and being uncertain. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that the military motivated them to learn and develop leadership skills (96%), gave them opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills (92%), and provided them with the opportunity to initiate leadership at work (98%).

Questions 5, 6, and 8 asked the respondents to check all that applied. Consequently, the total for each of these questions exceeds 50. Question 5 concerned ways military leadership could be promoted. Slightly more than three-quarters of the respondents indicated that fostering relationships with military leaders would further their own development as military leaders. The next three ways for developing leaders were checked off by less than 50% of the respondents. In order, these ways were providing more resources (books, websites), more training opportunities and work opportunities. The respondents were also allowed to check ūotherö and then to specify what the other was. Of the respondents, 18% did so and provided the 13 suggestions that have been consolidated into common areas. The first is promote leadership by (a) respecting ideas from both officers and non-officers, (b) having leaders serve as role models that can be emulated and (c) establishing cultural exchanges with militaries in other countries that provide leadership training and promote knowledge about other cultures. The second area concerns benefits provided to military personnel, which apparently aren't equal.

Table 3 - Summary of Survey Responses: Questions 1 to 6 and 8 to 9

| Item | Yes | | No | | Uncertain | |
|--|-----|------|----|------|-----------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| 1. Do you see your leadership responsibilities within the military increasing over the next 5 – 10 year? | 28 | 56.0 | 11 | 22.0 | 11 | 22.0 |
| 2. Does working with the military motivate you to learn and develop your leadership skills? | 47 | 94.0 | 2 | 4.0 | 1 | 2.0 |
| 3. Does working in the military provide opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills? | 46 | 92.0 | 4 | 8.0 | | |
| 4. At work, do you initiate leadership? | 49 | 98.0 | 1 | 2.0 | | |

| | |
|---|---------|
| 5. In what ways could the military foster leadership? | |
| more training opportunities | 16 32.0 |
| more work opportunities | 8 16.0 |
| fostering relationships with others in leadership roles | 39 78.0 |
| providing more leadership resources (books, websites, etc.) | 21 42.0 |
| other, please list | 9 18.0 |
| 6. What leadership subjects would you like to explore more? | |
| Leadership theories and styles | 28 56.0 |
| Leadership characteristics | 18 36.0 |
| Critical thinking | 18 36.0 |
| Personal and positional power | 9 18.0 |
| Conflict management skills | 29 58.0 |
| Time management | 8 16.0 |
| Cultural intelligence | 18 36.0 |
| Awareness of Indigenous issues | 5 10.0 |
| Gender issues | 22 44.0 |
| E-leadership | 4 8.0 |
| English language skills | 17 34.0 |
| Other, please list | |
| 8. Where do you think that leadership should be taught in the Ecuadorian military? | |
| Military High School | 17 34.0 |
| Cadet School | 29 58.0 |
| War College | 8 16.0 |
| Military Academy | 14 28.0 |
| Commando training | 15 30.0 |
| Individual Units | 37 74.0 |

The sixth question asked the respondents to select one or more of 11 leadership topics that each respondent would like to explore. Of the 50 respondents, 58% indicated conflict skills and 56% indicated leadership theories and styles. Gender issues were identified as a topic by 44% of the respondents. Three topics ó leadership characteristics, critical thinking and cultural intelligence ó were indicated by 36% of the respondents and closely followed by English language skills, 34%. The remaining topics ó personal position and power, time management, awareness of Indigenous issues, and e-leadership ó were identified by less than 20% of the respondents. The other topics identified by 8% of the respondents included

leadership principles, how to maintain good leadership, ethics, family values and leadership, knowledge of emotions and emotional and workplace health. Taken together, the respondents, as a group, did not strongly endorse any of the 11 topics nor specify strongly another topic.

The eighth survey question asked what type of unit each respondent thought leadership should be taught in. Again, the respondents could indicate more than one unit. The two most popular locations were the respondents own individual units, 74%, and at the Cadet School, 58%. The remaining four locations were identified by less than 35% of the respondents.

All but two of the respondents indicated that they would like to know more about the American and Canadian militaries implemented mentorship programs. These programs could involve a military person with greater experience in the host country mentoring a military person with lesser experience in a developing country. Clearly, the respondents strongly felt mentoring is a good way to learn about leadership in a changing world.

The seventh question required the respondents to rank 10 values from most important (1) to least important (10) for leaders in the Ecuadorian military. The values are listed from most important to least important in Table 4 together with their mean ranks. The respondents ranked Honesty first, followed by Commitment and then Respectfulness. The difference between each these values was at least one. The next five values ó Dependability, Decisiveness, Intelligence and Courage ó had mean values that ranged from 5.2 to 5.9. The remaining three values ó Flexibility, Resourcefulness and Enthusiasm ó differed from the set of five and between each other by 0.8. However, what must be kept in mind is that while the respondents were asked to rank the 10 values, it should not be construed that the lower ranked values are not important. It may well be that all of the values are needed. Instead, the ranked list provides is an indication of the order in which they should be treated in new curriculum.

Table 4 - Summary of Survey Responses: Question 7

| Item | Mean Rank |
|--|-----------|
| What values are most important to leaders in the Ecuadorian military? | |
| Honesty | 2.4 |
| Commitment | 3.5 |
| Respectfulness | 4.9 |
| Dependability | 5.2 |
| Decisiveness | 5.5 |
| Intelligence | 5.6 |
| Courage | 5.9 |
| Flexibility | 6.7 |
| Resourcefulness | 7.8 |
| Enthusiasm | 8.8 |

Interview Matrix

The themes derived from the responses of the 12 soldiers who participated in the Interview Matrix are listed in Table 5 under the relevant question. As shown, there are 2 themes for each of the four questions. Each theme for each question is discussed below.

Table 5 - Themes Derived from the Responses during the Interview Matrix

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>What is the most difficult part of being a leader? How do you measure the success of a leader?</i> | |
| Soldiers Lack Confidence in Leader | Personal Characteristics of a Successful Leader |
| Undesirable Characteristics of Leader | Military Characteristics of a Successful Leader |

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Who has modelled strong leadership in your life both inside and outside of the military?</i> | |
| Model for Leadership outside of the Military | Personal Military Learning to Improve Leadership |
| Model for Leadership within the Military | Soldiers Influence to Improve Leadership |

What is the most difficult part of being a leader?

Soldiers Lack Confidence in Leader

The first theme concerned the lack of confidence some soldiers had in their leader. For example, one soldier indicated that he did not believe the leader, another said öSoldiers are not willing to follow their leaderö and a third said öSoldiers do not listen to their leader at all times.ö

Undesirable Characteristics of Leader

The second theme concerned undesirable behaviors that leaders exhibited. For example, more than one soldier indicated their leaders failed to provide a good example of how soldiers should behave. Others indicated the leader did not clearly state his objectives. The soldiers commented that their leaders lacked empathy for his soldiers, failed to act justly and fairly at all times, lacked integrity, lacked creativity and failed to see the importance of the need for discipline.

It should be noted at this point that the opposite of what the soldiers said would lead to desirable characteristics. For example, soldiers believe their leader is creative, and has empathy for his soldiers.

Who has modelled strong leadership in your life both inside and outside of the military?

Model for Leadership outside of the Military

Military personnel identified sources of leadership modelling from outside the military which included family members, teachers, political leaders and religious figures.

Model for Leadership within the Military

From within the military, participants listed leaders who were specifically able to motivate their troops well and those who were known to work alongside their troops as öone of themö.

How do you measure the success of a leader?

Personal Characteristics of a Successful Leader

Participants identified personal characteristics which they felt contributed to being a successful leader. These included flexibility, sincerity, courage, perseverance and charisma.

Military Characteristics of a Successful Leader

The men identified military characteristics which contribute to successful leadership. These included the leader's ability to know his troops well, to give clearly understood orders, and to take part in missions alongside his troops. Participants counted achieving orders and accomplishing missions and troops that have allegiance to their leader as measures of success.

How can you improve your leadership skills?

Personal Military Learning to Improve Leadership

Participants listed learning via the internet, learning study skills, reading, and attending seminars as ways they could improve their own leadership skills.

Soldiers Influence to Improve Leadership

In addition, the respondents stated they need to practice leadership, to learn by example, and have contact with other leaders in order to improve their leadership. It was stated that leaders must listen to soldiers and their thoughts on leadership, they must motivate soldiers and be conscious of their needs, be knowledgeable on the topic, have an objective and show concern and flexibility with their troops as they work on their leadership skills.

World Café

The themes derived from the responses of the 16 soldiers who participated in the World Café are listed in Table 6 under the relevant question. As shown, there are three or four themes for each of the three questions. Each theme for each question is discussed below.

Table 6 - Themes Derived from the Responses during the World Café

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>GEO is an elite group. What makes GEO a strong leadership team?</i> | <i>How could the military help you to become a stronger leader?</i> |
| Values Adhered to by the Leadership | Individual Actions to become a Strong Leader |
| Leadership Involvement | Strong Leaders develop Strong Leadership Teams |
| Uniqueness of GEO | A Strong Leader is Concerned about his Officers and Non-officers |
| | Selection of Leaders |

| <i>Does leadership in the military differ in any way from leadership in civilian life? If so, how?</i> | |
|--|---|
| Characteristics Different between Military and in Civilian Life | Respect Differs between Military and Civilian Life |
| Discipline and Risk Differ between Military and Civilian Life | |

GEO is an elite group. What makes GEO a strong leadership team?

Values Adhered to by the Leadership

The first theme concerned the values. This is in keeping with the DND (2007), which states that leadership must be values based. The respondents identified 22 values that the leaders should have and that they ask their soldiers to adhere to. The values mentioned by the respondents included communication, compassionate, committed, confident, courageous, decisive, dependable, desire to work cooperatively together, discipline, empathy, ethical, fairness, flexibility, honesty, humility, initiative, loyal, motivated, open, respect, resourcefulness and tolerance.

Leadership Involvement

Respondents state the Commander at GEO works with his men at all times, communicating effectively and instilling loyalty. The leader ensures everyone has the same objective with a clear mission and solidarity with partners.

Uniqueness of GEO

Participants identified the GEO as being a different and unique specialty in Ecuador where soldiers take initiative and everyone sets an example at all times. The best military personnel are chosen for this unit and they are given excellent physical and technical training. Men stated the soldiers in this unit are sure of their goals, enjoy their work and consider GEO a second home.

How could the military help you become a stronger leader?

Individual Actions to become a Strong Leader

Individual actions to improve leadership were identified. These included repeating and respecting military values on a daily basis, learning new leadership techniques and training every day to become a good leader. Men noted the military provides a good life and gives personnel the ability to learn and to transmit values.

Strong Leaders develop Strong Leadership Teams

It was stated that leaders must be an example and participate in all activities. The leadership could provide more opportunities for leadership training, teamwork, conferences and seminars, opportunities to share ideas and projects with the entire team, and national and international training opportunities. The military must have confidence in its troops and provide motivation to personnel to become strong leaders.

A Strong Leader is Concerned about his Officers and Non-officers

A leader must continue the tradition of strong leaders and take care of all personnel in all aspects of their military life from food to physical training appropriate to the mission to updating equipment.

Selection of Leaders

It was stated that the selection process for leaders must be optimal with selection from all personnel.

Does leadership in the military differ in any way from leadership in civilian life? If so, how?

Characteristics Different between Military and Civilian Life

It was noted that knowledge and training is at a high level in the military and that communication is better in the military than in civilian life. Respondents commented that in the military personnel work because they have a love of their jobs which is not always the case in civilian life. Time is more important in the military and following rules and regulations is especially important in the military.

Discipline and Risk Different between Military and Civilian Life

Participants stated that discipline in the military differs from civilian life with higher morals, ethics and values in the military. It was noted that the risks are high in the military and military orders may have the potential for death.

Respect Differs between Military and Civilian Life

Men stated that in the military, work is done in teams as personnel have respect for their partners at all times. Personnel in the military know the strengths of each other and have great empathy between team members. The military also requires respect for the flag and for all people.

Exit Survey

The results for the exit survey are presented in Table 7. The total number of respondents was 18. Given the small number of respondents, care must be taken in using the results.

Table 7 - Summary of Exit Survey

| Item | <i>f</i> | % |
|---|----------|------|
| Which sessions did you attend? Please check all that apply. | | |
| Values Based Leadership on Monday | 7 | 38.8 |
| Conflict Resolution on Tuesday | 11 | 61.1 |
| Interview Matrix on Wednesday | 9 | 50.0 |
| World Café on Thursday | 13 | 72.2 |
| Foundational Leadership/Windup Activities | 17 | 94.4 |
| Please check the statement which <u>BEST</u> describes how much of the presentations you understood. | | |
| I understood all of the presentation points | 14 | 77.8 |
| I understood most points but missed some details | 4 | 22.2 |
| I understood half of the presentation | 0 | 0 |
| I didn't understand the information presented | 0 | 0 |
| What did you enjoy about the presentations? Please check <u>ALL</u> the statements which apply | | |
| I learned a lot over the course of the week about leadership | 10 | 55.6 |
| I learned a lot over the course of the week about Canada | 6 | 33.3 |
| The information has made me think more about my personal leadership | 14 | 77.8 |
| I felt comfortable sharing my opinions with the group | 14 | 77.8 |
| The format of the sessions was enjoyable | 12 | 66.7 |
| What would you change to make the presentations better? | | |
| Please check <u>ALL</u> that apply. | | |
| Smaller group size | 0 | 0 |
| Better translation services | 1 | 6.6 |
| Increased confidentiality of opinions | 3 | 16.6 |
| More time for discussion | 14 | 77.8 |
| Different topics | 7 | 38.9 |

As shown in Table 7, the 18 soldiers who completed the exit survey had attended varying numbers of workshops as this was dependent on their work schedules for the week. Most, 94% had attended the final workshop as that is when the exit survey was presented.

Question 2 asked the men to rate how well they understood the presentations, given that the presenter was English speaking. All presentation materials and printed materials had been translated into Spanish and there was a translator at all sessions. All of the respondents indicated a high degree of understanding, 78% indicated they understood all presentation points and 22% indicated they missed some details.

Question 3 asked what the men enjoyed about the sessions and asked them to check all statements which applied. Slightly more than three quarters, 78%, indicated the information made them think more about their personal leadership and the same percentage indicated they felt comfortable sharing their opinions with the group.

The final question asked what the respondents would change to make the sessions better. Again, 78% indicated they would like more time for discussion. 39% requested different topics. 17% indicated they would like increased confidentiality of opinions and 7% felt better translation services would be useful. No one indicated a desire for smaller group sizes.

Two additional open-ended questions were asked at the end for the Exit Survey. The first question asked the respondents to provide suggestions for future topics. The second question asked for suggestions for improving the workshops.

Suggestions for future topics. The respondents made four suggestions for future topics. The first was how to deal with poverty when working in areas of poverty. The second suggestion included providing practical sessions that mimic what soldiers do in the field (for example, practising on the shooting range, walking through swamps). The third suggestion was that the topic attitudes in the military needs to be discussed with examples provided of positive, neutral attitude and negative attitudes and the consequences of positive, neutral, and

negative attitudes. The fourth suggestion was teamwork; what is needed for form a functional team?

Suggestions for improvement of workshops. The suggestions for improving workshops were divided into two groups. The first group involved more. For example, more time for discussion, more time for teaching and discussing values and augmented by such aids as videos and more group work. Additional workshops were called for to discuss more fully leadership and other topics such as poverty. Lastly, it was suggested that leadership would be strengthened if the workshops were conducted more frequently such as once each quarter of the year. If so, some of the same topics would be covered each time and other different topics would be covered each time.

The second group of suggestions for improving workshops dealt with staffing and attendance. Additional staff, with different qualifications, are needed so that other topics can be covered. Soldiers should be allowed to attend all sessions so that they get full value from the workshop speakers and activities. Printed books and handouts should be put in PDF form and made available to the soldiers so they can read them and review them on their computers for reading/ strengthen leadership by having sessions frequently.

Discussion

One of the themes was the powerful and continuously articulated opinion of leaders as models for others in the organization. This begins with the Ecuadorian Military Ethos that states “command your soldiers by example”. When asked in the Interview Matrix activity to give examples of those who had modelled strong leadership, soldiers came up with specific military leaders and when questioned why, stated these men were always participating with their soldiers. Themes emerging from both the Interview Matrix and World Café events spoke

about leaders working alongside their service personnel and about leaders taking part with their troops. Waddell (1994) stated that the most effective leaders maintained the most contact with their men. This also leads to the extremely high interest in learning more about mentorship in the military.

Information from DND (2007) states that leadership must be values based. Many of the statements generated in the Interview Matrix activity were centered on values which participants saw as important for leadership. Similarly themes stemming from the World Café were based on values.

Communication is considered a core competency of leadership (AR 2007). Statements generated in both the Interview Matrix and World Café spoke to the importance of communication as an essential leadership skill.

During the week at GEO, during which workshops, Interview Matrix and World Café were conducted, soldiers were strongly engaged with the presentations and action research with extreme focus. It was recognized that the researcher was working with men from elite units and thus the research should also be repeated with less specialized troops. Their interest appeared genuine and they willingly engaged with new subject matter that was delivered through a language translator. This indicates a readiness, at least on the part of this group of men, to embrace new knowledge delivered in a culturally diverse manner. Although the present study did not specifically seek to gage organizational readiness for change, there was a small but important indication of such readiness.

The themes identified in the results with respect to overwhelming desire for more leadership resources and training again support readiness for change. There was a clear willingness and aspiration for personnel to engage in leadership training. This correlates

highly with the literature which indicated that military personnel in both Canada and the United States were ready for more training, even before the institutions were prepared to deliver. Spencer and Balasivicious (2009) predicted that countries that embrace the need to expand the knowledge of their military forces to meet the modern day need of the different cultures in the world, will be the countries which realize military success. The soldiers of the Ecuadorian military who were part of this study are similarly keen to expand their knowledge of cultures, languages and leadership capacities.

The soldiers were able to quickly take in and synthesize information. Their questions gave insight into their thinking and their depth of analysis of the material. When talking about leadership traits and characteristics, such questions as “Are leadership traits something one is born with, or can they be taught?” showed the men were actively listening, absorbing information and using critical thinking even with the language barrier.

Recommendations

The eight recommendations are based on a synthesis of the literature review and the results are listed in Table 8. Further analysis is required to assess organization change readiness.

Table 8 - Recommendations

| INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|
| 1. Establish a Leadership Center pilot project |
| 2. Repeat the present study with same and other units |
| 3. Create a database of resources |
| 4. Begin formal meetings with higher levels within the Ecuadorian military |
| 5. Collaborate with other international militaries |

- | |
|---|
| 6. Explore opportunities internationally for key personnel to further their training |
| 7. Set up workshops with both Ecuadorian and international experts |
| 8. Explore the mentorship model of leadership |

There are many possible implications for implementation to other parts of the Ecuadorian military.

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