

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide details on the research methodology utilized for the overall study. This encompasses the research method that is employed and a brief outline of the respondents selected for this study. Continuing the process will be the elaboration on the collected data especially amongst the mid-level leaders in the Army. Finally, the limitations of this study are also pondered.

4.1 RESEARCH METHOD

The research on the subject matter has never been conducted before specifically pertaining to the Army performance management system in complete and exclusively for the mid-level leaders. Thus far the closest on this subject matter only touched into the perceptions and views about the present performance appraisal for Officers generally in the Malaysian Army. This explains the dire need for an attempt to carry out an exploratory research so that it provides a correct perspective and much needed information on the subject matter and supposedly defines it clearly. The provision of current information and also additional available data is to understand the nature of the subject matter

better so that future in depth study can be undertaken to pursue a more conclusive findings.

It is undeniable that a qualitative approach would be best for this research, as the subject performance management is still new in the Army and the notion arises whether respondents are portraying a true picture of the system. Secondly, those not familiar with the subject matter might just tact along with other respondents in order to abstain from being disloyal to the organization whilst fulfilling the researcher's requirements. This is a true reflection of the members in an organization, which the emphasis and concentration is on values and culture. In addition, the subject matter is not formally taught in the organization possibly not understanding its importance and magnitude. Besides, it would be more appropriate for the research to adopt the qualitative approach since much of what is being researched is very subjective and neither quantifiable nor measurable.

The centralized effort of data collection was conducted utilizing the survey via self-administered questionnaires method. This was perceived to be the most effective approach to obtain the data from the respondent to fulfill the research successfully. The self-administered questionnaire survey process is expected to provide vital useful information about performance management in the Army focusing on the mid level leaders. The self-administered questionnaire survey process provides quick, inexpensive, efficient and accurate means of assessing information from the respondents since the researchers have much limitation

(Zikmund, 2003). In order to ensure the self-administered questionnaires were clear, concise and accurate, a pretest were conducted on 15 experienced respondents who met the criteria of mid level leaders. The outcome of the pretest actually improved the final list of self-administered questionnaires for the survey. The reproduction of the self-administered questionnaires were prepared for 250 respondents which is almost 10 percent of the estimated mid level leaders in the Army.

4.2 THE RESPONDENTS

Since the research is on mid level leaders in the Army, a subset of the population was selected to be the samples for the survey utilizing self-administered questionnaires. To get the most accurate information on the subject matter, the conduct of the survey was not concentrated at one area but was well spread. With all the constraints, the researchers traveled to near by areas to collect the intended data whilst for areas far way, it was mailed to the Formation HQ and units on the ground to react. This is due to time factor and also to conduct concurrent activity at different locations.

In addition to that the respondents were selected from units located at the Northern region especially in Sungai Petani, Taiping and Ipoh. The Central region encompasses Kuala Lumpur, Seremban and Port Dickson including some training institutions. The Eastern region respondents were from Kuantan whilst

the Southern region was from Malacca, Johor Bharu and PULADA in Ulu Tiram. A big group of students attending courses in training institutions were also included and this inclusion basically had created the chances of the representative to come from all over the country. Amongst the respondents there were some female officers, allowing perspectives from both gender. Respondents include individuals who work in different fields of management with various appointments ranging from staffs in HQ, command function in units, instructors in Training Centers, specialist officers and others. These respondents also come from the three distinctive groups that is the combat units, combat support units and service support units, which in reality is combined to structure from the smallest right up to the largest formation in the Army. Therefore, all areas involving the mid level leaders have been covered so that the information will be fruitful and worthwhile.

However, from the 250 self-administered questionnaires distributed only 232 copies were returned with individual views on the subject matter. 18 respondents did not return the survey materials to the researchers. This could be because they did not have the knowledge on the subject matter or just did not want to participate. For confidential reasons most of the respondents preferred to remain anonymous although their ranks were grouped for statistical purposes. The overall respondent actually makes up approximately 8.5 percent of the overall holding of mid level leaders in the Army. Respondents are differentiated according to rank, gender, ethnicity, specialization in arms and nature of job of

the respondents. The breakdown of respondents according to their rank is shown in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1
BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS BY RANK

Rank	Number of Respondents
Lieutenant Colonel	6
Major	87
Captain	139
TOTAL	232

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

As elaborated earlier approximately 250 respondents were selected using probability sampling by stratified sampling procedure. Zikmund mentions it in the book business research methods that probability-sampling technique has a known nonzero probability of selection and utilizing the stratified sampling procedure is simple random sub samples are drawn from within different strata that are more or less equal on some characteristics. In this case the sampling rank ranging from Lieutenant Colonel, Major or Captains and varying from 10 to 30 years in military active service. The stratified sampling was used to have a

more efficient sample than from simple random sampling in the hope to reduce random sampling error.

Self-administered questionnaire (See Appendix 1) was the main effort of data collection. The questionnaires were divided into three parts whereby Part 1 had 15 questions to clearly understand the current performance management practices in the Army involving mid level leaders. Subsequently, Part 2 had 8 questions designed to get details about the motivating factors and its link to performance management. The final part was only to get demographic data of the respondents. The questions were design using the Likert Scale and also category scale. Likert scale is to identify the extreme positive and also negative perception of the respondents whilst the categorical scale is to provide more flexibility to the respondent in answering the prepared questions.

The questionnaires were posted to far areas of respondents and mostly were given approximately 2 weeks to fill up the questionnaires and returning it back to the researcher by postal arrangements. This process took some time to be effectively conducted with constant monitoring and reminder via phone calls to all destinations as mentioned earlier. The data were arranged properly and given identification numbers. The data were also carefully screened and scrutinized before it was loaded into the computer for the conduct of depth analysis using SPSS and completing the most important step in this research. This was to clear all doubts and identify the errors. The actual analysis will be

elaborated in depth in the next chapter. There was not much problem on the aspects of understanding the questionnaires although some did but with the given duration to react it is assumed to be resolved amicably.