CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter III explains the methodology employed in this study. There are five sections in this chapter namely: selection of measures, research instruments, sampling design, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

Selection of Measures

Generally, two main types of measures were employed in the analysis of data obtained from a primary survey. Frequency counts and percentages as well as mean scores were used to summarise the results. To test for significant differences in opinions between various groups, a One-Way ANOVA and chi-square tests were employed.

Enlistment Influence

On what influences a soldier to join the Army, according to Brown and Maskos (1976), it was assumed that more than one single factor would influence a soldier's decision. Based on this assumption, they had listed eight factors and asked the respondents to rank each of them independently based on the level of importance.

In this study however, all the factors were adopted except for "Combat Arms Bonus" because there are no such bonuses in the Malaysian Army. Thus the factors that were included in this survey were:

   a.   Chance to learn a skill or getting an education.

   b.   Chance to serve the country.

   c.   Chance to travel and get away from home.

   d.   Military Career

   e.   Civilian unemployment.

   f.   Influence of friend.

   g.   Family influence.

Respondents were required to rank the factors that had motivated them to enlist in the Army based on their level of importance whereby, 1 was referred to as "most important" and 7, as "least important". Percentages of responses were computed for each factor. The higher the percentage, the more important is the factor.

On the soldiers' preferred location of assignment, the respondents were given three choices namely: Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. They were asked to indicate where they would like to be based in the future. Generally the soldiers in US preferred to be located closed to their hometowns. Most of them were not interested in going for overseas assignments. In the context of the Malaysian Army, there are limited overseas assignments. So, the respondents were asked instead about their locational preference within Malaysia. A nominal scale was used and frequency count

and percentages were computed to determine their preferred location of assignment.

Satisfaction with the Army

With regards to job satisfaction in the Army, the factors suggested by Brown and Maskos (1976) as well as Stouffer (1966) were adopted with some modification to suit the Malaysian environment and for simplicity. Factors such as, "I love the Army life" and "section and platoon commanders depended too much upon threat to get things done", were adopted from Brown and Maskos (1976). However the factor of "my best friend is in the Army" was adapted from Stouffer (1966) to be more specific. That statement was replaced with, "my best friend is in my platoon/section/troop". Statements like, "the Army takes care of my welfare" and "the Army makes a man of you" were taken from Stouffer (1966) and added to the list.

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' attitudes towards the Army. Mean scores were computed and cross-tabulated with two groups of respondents namely those from the parachute and standard combat units. This was done to determine if there are distinct similarities or differences in opinions between the two groups of respondents about life in the Army.

Social Attitudes

The factor on social attitudes was divided in two parts. The first part was to assess the soldiers' attitudes towards the Army's tradition in order to

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determine if they were committed to military goals. The second, was to assess the soldiers' attitudes towards the society from which they belonged to. All items were adopted from Brown and Maskos (1976) with slight modifications. However one item, "the country should have the best military in the world" was dropped because it was deemed to be not relevant in the Malaysian context. The other items which were adopted included: "relax Army haircut standard", "Army should maintain traditions", "Malaysia is the best country in the world" and "Malaysia has the best multiracial society in the world".

An additional item on, "the decision to allow wearing of jeans is good" was included. This question was deemed relevant because soldiers generally like to wear jeans. The decision by the Malaysian Army to allow that is expected to draw positive responses from the soldiers since for years it has been a tradition in the Army not to allow the soldiers to wear jeans.

The five-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' social attitudes where 1 was referred to as "strongly disagree" and 5, as "strongly agree". Mean scores were computed and cross-tabulated with two groups of respondents namely those from the parachute and standard combat units. This was done to determine if there are similarities or differences in opinions between the two groups of respondents based on their social attitudes.

Attitudes Towards Combat Assignments

Assessment on the soldiers' attitudes towards combat was divided into three parts. They included: "trust and respect for fellow soldiers", "training for combat" and "readiness to participate in combat".

Statements based on trust and respect for fellow soldiers included: "respect for a combat shirker", "trust fellow soldiers in combat" and "help fellow soldiers injured in combat". All these items were adopted from Brown and Maskos (1976).

The part on training was adopted from Stouffer (1966) because training is deemed to have strong relationship in predicting combat performance. Among the statements which were adopted included: "I am confident that I am sufficiently trained for combat"; "I am currently physically prepared for combat" and "I am currently mentally prepared for combat".

On their readiness to participate in any combat, all the statements from Brown and Maskos (1976) were adopted with some adaptation and additions. They were: "the Army needs you to go into combat"; while "invasion of America" was replaced with, "invasion of Malaysia"; "resurgence of CPM in their arms struggle" and "peacekeeping operations under the UN banner". These last two statements were considered relevant in the context of Malaysia.

To measure "trust and respect for fellow soldiers" and "training", a five-point Likert scale was employed whereby 1 referred to as "strongly disagree" and 5, as "strongly agree". Mean scores were computed and cross-tabulated with two groups of respondents namely those from the parachute and

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standard combat units. This was done to determine if there are similarities or differences in opinion between the two groups of respondents.

As for the respondents' readiness to participate in combat, a four-point category scale was used to measure their attitudes. The percentage scores from each factor was computed and cross-tabulated with two groups of respondents namely those from the parachute and standard combat units. This was done to determine if there are differences in combat attitudes between members of the two groups.

Research Instrument

Primary data was collected by using the survey method. The survey instrument constituted a seven-page self-administered questionnaire. The questions were generally divided into four sections. The first section measured the soldiers' attitude towards Army life. The factors listed were basically taken from the research conducted by Brown and Moskos (1976) and Stouffer (1966). Some modifications were made to suit the Malaysian context.

On the factors which influenced enlistment, the questionnaire listed seven factors and asked each of the respondents to rank them independently based on its level of importance where 1= the most important and 7 = the least important. Factors such as: "to learn a new skill, a chance to serve my country, a chance to travel, unable to be employed in the civilian sector, influenced by friends, adore a military career and influenced by family members" were provided. The factors of "combat arms bonus" which was

used in the study conducted by Brown and Moskos (1976) was dropped because the Malaysian Army do not provide such bonuses to the combat arms unit.

Preference for location of assignment for example had been modified to include Sabah and Sarawak due to the state of origin of the soldiers. Unlike the Americans, they have bases all over the world where one could serve whereas in Malaysia, all troops are deployed within the country.

Section II measured the soldiers' social values and commitment towards military goals. Various factors on social attitudes were listed. Again some modifications were made to suit the existing policies of the Malaysian Army. One such item was the issue of having a short haircut and the other was the issue on allowing the soldiers to wear jeans. The respondents were also asked on their views about Malaysia.

Section III in the questionnaire measured the soldier's attitudes towards combat assignments. There were three parts in this section. The first measured the respondents' attitudes towards fellow soldiers in combat. Here an additional factor on, "helping fellow soldiers injured in combat" was adopted. The second part was based on training. These items were taken from Stouffer (1966). The third part, which was the main crux of the study, measured their readiness to participate in combat. Five factors were listed and the soldiers were required to determine their willingness to participate in combat. Again modifications were made and the items on, "resurgence of the arms struggle by the Communist Party of Malaysia" and "participation in peacekeeping operations under the UN banner" were included.

The last section, in the questionnaire attempts to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This section contained nine questions covering the soldier's unit, age, marital status, place of birth, rank, length of years in service, number of years in current unit, highest academic qualification acquired and the number of jumps attained for both static and free-falls.

The completed questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot survey on 20 respondents. The objective was to test the contents of the questions for clarity. The final questionnaire was based on the feedback obtained from that pilot survey. They were printed in two languages namely English and Bahasa Malaysia. The original English version of the questionnaire was translated back to back into Bahasa Malaysia (Zikmund 1997).

Sampling Design and Data Collection Method

The general objective of this study was to examine the combat readiness of the combat arms of the Malaysian Army and in particular the paratroopers. A comparison was done between the paratroopers (Parachute Infantry Battalion and Armour Parachute) and infantrymen from the standard Infantry Battalion and Armour Regiment. A convenience sampling method was used to select the respondents.

The sampling frame or the working population consisted of soldiers who had less than 10 years of service because they are known as the "untested" soldiers. They were considered to be so because the cut-off year was 1990, a year after the Communist Party of Malaysia had laid down their

arms. A total of 240 respondents were taken since Sekaran (1992) suggested that the minimum sample size for each category be 30 respondents. Table 1 shows the composition of the samples.

TABLE 1

SAMPLE COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS

Nos	Units	Population	Sample
a.	Parachute Infantry Battalion	900	
	- Private		30
	- Lance Corporal/Corporal		30
	- Armour Para's	210	
	- Trooper		30
	- Lance Corporal/Corporal		30
b.	Standard Infantry	700	
	- Private		30
	- Lance Corporal/Corporal		30
c.	Armour Regiment	650	
	- Trooper		30
	- Lance Corporal/Corporal		30
	Total	2460	240

In terms of the data collection technique, prior arrangement was made to assemble the respondents for the survey in a hall at their various units. Questionnaires were then distributed to each respondent and an explanation provided for each question, by reading them aloud. Clarification was made, when respondents were uncertain of the meaning of the statements that appeared in the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted at four different locations. For the Armour Parachute unit, the survey was conducted on the 9 September 2000 at

Sungai Buloh, Kuala Lumpur. The survey on the Standard Infantry unit was conducted on the 11 September 2000 at Senawang, Negeri Sembilan.

As for the Armour Regiment, the survey was conducted on the 15 September 2000 at Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. For the Parachute Infantry unit, the survey was conducted in Terendak Camp, Melaka on the 18 September 2000. The selection of the units was based on convenience and availability of units at that particular point in time. All the questionnaires were administered and collected in a hall at the various units mentioned. Clarifications and doubts were resolved in-situ and the whole process took less than half a day to complete at each location.

Data Analysis Techniques

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 7.5 for Windows) was used to analyse the primary data. Generally the data were analysed as follows:

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The analysis was done by using the frequency counts and percentages.

Social Attitude

An analysis on what had motivated the respondents to enlist in the Army was done by using frequency counts and percentages. The soldiers' social value and their commitment towards military goals were determined by

using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Mean scores were computed and cross-tabulated with two groups of respondents namely those from the parachute and standard combat units. This was done to determine if there were any significant differences in opinions between the two groups of respondents on their commitment towards military goals.

Combat Attitudes

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there were any significant differences in attitudes towards combat between the paratroopers and soldiers from the standard combat units.

A chi-square test between the number of jumps attained by respondents and their readiness to participate in combat was also carried out to determine if there is a relationship.

Readiness to Participate in Combat

The chi-square statistical test was also used to measure the respondents' readiness to participate in combat. Percentage scores obtained from the two groups of respondents were also compared to determine if there were any significant differences in their opinions.

Characteristics of Paratroopers

To verify the theory that paratroopers tend to develop a strong sense of group cohesion and are more aggressive as a result of the training that they

have undergone a one-way ANOVA was used to compare the difference between the various groups of paratroopers.

On their readiness to participate in combat, the chi-square test was used to compare the differences in opinions between the various groups of paratroopers.