

**CAREER MANAGEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY
GRADUATES: BASIS FOR POLICY IMPROVEMENTS**

Charles V. Calucag

Master in Public Administration

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to determine how relevant are the programs of both the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines concerning the training, deployment and ultimately their career administration and development to the graduates of the Academy. It sought to determine the career management of the Philippine Military Academy graduates from 1997 to 2001 and aimed to determine the current status, assignments, designations, challenges while in the service and recommendations of the PMA graduates. The study made use of the mixed-method research design that involved 123 Army Officers who graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in the academic year 1997-1998 to 2000-2001 as participants. The study utilized the following instruments: the Career Management Assessment Tool, the Document Review Form and Work Life Balance or Fulfillment questionnaire, Compliance and Implementation questionnaire. The officers' career compliance and personnel management implementation are at "moderate extent" on their career management. The officers have a "great extent" of fulfillment which is affected by the marital status, specifically on the relationship category. The participants wanted some improvements in terms of the policies on career management. The challenges experienced by the participants in the service can be appropriately improved through the implementation or enhancement of some policies on career management.

Keywords: *Career management, Philippine military academy, army officers*

INTRODUCTION

The idea that an individual career management and the organizational career management when combined will result to a successful organization is absolutely true, though individual career management will solely depend on the person itself. There are different factors that affect a successful career; one of these is the support of the organization in the management of the career of the individual employee that enhances the development of every individual's career.

Individual Career Management is a process where an individual person is required to assess his/her own self, he/she must set the goals, and most importantly to take actions, and if it fails, there's a need to be reassessed or evaluated. Individual employee should set his/her personal compass for the future or make his/her personal roadmap to guide his actions to realize whatever dream he desires and to be fulfilled and ultimately be happy, whether in the aspects of health and wellness, financial security, and work/life balance.

Organizational Career Management is likewise a process where every company has the responsibility to take care on their employees' welfare, it has different roles to play to motivate their employees, to plan their career, coach, clarify concerns, assist in their goal setting and acts as an adviser.

In the military organization, career management of the officer corps is accomplished by following the promotion system. The AFP maintains a standard career progression for its officer corps. All officers in the AFP start as second Lieutenant and are promoted based on time in grade and performance through the rank of Colonel. It manages its officers by year group or as a class. A year group or a class is a group of officers who are commissioned in a specific fiscal year.

For the AFP, it follows the concept of the proper selection of officers for training and education opportunities which is the initial step of the promotion process. Training and education is a function of career management such that after graduation from such courses, selected officers are designated or assigned to key positions which will eventually qualify them for promotion if they perform very well.

For almost two decades, the Academy has produced several female graduates who are now serving in the different branches of service in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It is quite clear that the Philippine Military Academy and the Armed Forces of the Philippines have already a vast experience of having female trainees and eventually serving in the military. Although several adjustments in its systems and policies were already made along the way to enhance the training and deployment of these female officers, a formal study is yet to be done to come up with appropriate findings, suggestions and recommendations to improve the current systems.

In comparison to foreign Armed Forces, the gender issue is no longer a problem. They have already accomplished much. Specifically, in the United States Armed Forces, all positions in the military are already open to both genders. In the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the current policies and regulations stating that duties of female soldiers are restricted to administrative and non-combatant duties are still in effect. Researches and studies, both foreign and local, have shown that female officers are capable of performing not only administrative but also combat duties in the field.

Hence, this study attempts to determine how relevant are the programs of both the Philippine Military Academy and the Armed Forces of the Philippines concerning the training, deployment and ultimately their career administration and development as graduates of the Academy.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, the study sought to determine the career management of the Philippine Military Academy graduates from 1997 to 2001. It aimed to determine the current status, assignments, designations, challenges while in the service and recommendations of the graduates of Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of:
1.1 age;

- 1.2 gender;
 - 1.3 civil status;
 - 1.4 rank;
 - 1.5 Armed Forces of the Philippines Occupational Specialty (AFPOS);
 - 1.6 years in military service; and
 - 1.7 year of graduation?
2. What is the promotion rate of the participants?
 3. What is the extent of compliance to the career pattern of the participants?
 4. Is there a significant difference on the extent of compliance to the career pattern when grouped according to the profile variables?
 5. What is the participants' extent of fulfillment in terms of:
 - 5.1 health;
 - 5.2 spiritual;
 - 5.3 relationship;
 - 5.4 work-life balance; and
 - 5.5 financial?
 6. Is there a significant difference in the participants' extent of fulfillment when grouped according to profile?
 7. What is the extent of implementation of the policies pertaining to career management?
 8. Is there a significant difference in the extent of implementation of the policies pertaining to career management when grouped according to gender?
 9. What are the challenges experienced by the officers in the service in terms of:
 - 9.1 deployment;
 - 9.2 workload;
 - 9.3 relationship towards juniors/seniors/peers; and
 - 9.4 physical and medical problems?

10. What are the policies affecting the officers in the AFP?
11. What are the participants' suggestions and recommendations to improve the administration and programs for the female officers in the armed forces?
12. What policy can be introduced to improve the career management of the graduates?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study made use of mixed-methods. Mixed methods is a research approach, in which the researcher collects, analyzes and integrates both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher collected the quantitative data, specifically the profile, promotion rate and compliance to the career pattern of each class and the assessed extent of implementation of the policies on career management. For the qualitative data, this was used to find out the participants' current status in the military service, experiences, challenges encountered for the duration of the service and gather recommendations to improve the system of training, policies on career management in the military.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study are the Army officers who graduated from the Philippine Military Academy of the academic year 1997-1998 to 2000-2001. From the total number of graduates, all of the female army graduates who are still active in the service and have graduated from 1997 to 2001 were included in the study.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants When Grouped According to Year of Graduation

Batch (Classes)	Frequency	Percentage
2001	28	22.76
2000	41	33.33
1999	18	14.64
1998	10	8.13
1997	26	21.14
Total	123	100.00

There were one hundred twenty-three officers (123) who responded and answered the questionnaire. The number was taken from the active officers with the total number of three hundred forty-five (345).

Instrumentation

The study utilized the following instruments: the Career Management Assessment Tool, the Document Review Form and Work life balance or Fulfillment questionnaire. Compliance and implementation questionnaires were also utilized.

The Career Management Assessment Tool has three parts: Part I covered the profile of the participants which include the age, civil status, rank, AFPFOS and number of years in the military service. Part II covered the assignment and designations of the participants, units they have been assigned to and the inclusive dates. Part III covered the problems or challenges experienced by the participants in terms of deployment/ settlement; workload, relationships, physical and medical problems, policies concerning female officers in the AFP and programs related to female officers in the AFP together with the suggestions and recommendations to improve the administration and programs for the female officers in the Armed Forces.

Another tool is the Document Review Form. The researcher validated the participants' profiles from the Army Personnel

Management Centre specifically the officers' summary of information. It is from there that the latest promotion of the officers was checked so that the promotion rates of each batch can be computed.

The third tool was the Extent of Fulfillment, Compliance and Implementation questionnaire. Part I covered the extent of fulfillment. It has 25 statements in which the participants can rate as strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire measures the extent of fulfillment in the different areas, specifically health (1-5), spiritual (6-10), relationship (11-15), work-life balance (16-20), and financial (21-25). The items from the questionnaire were taken from the review of related literatures on fulfillment.

For part II, it asked the question, what is your extent of compliance to your career pattern? The percentage computation is taken from the number of the participants with the degree of extent chosen over the total number of the participants, multiplied by 100.

And in part III, it asked the participants to rate the extent of implementation of the policy on career management. The percentage computation is taken from the number of the participants with the degree of extent chosen over the total number of the participants, multiplied by 100.

Data Gathering Procedure

Initially, the proposal of the study was approved by St. Paul University Philippines Ethics Review Committee. After which, a visit was made to the Philippine Military Academy Registrar's Office to obtain the list of graduates specifically from 1997-2001.

To obtain the list of current and actual officers in the active service, the researcher contacted the Army Personnel Management Office. Personal meeting with the participants was conducted from their respective office assignments in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and informed consent was sought. The objectives of the study were explained along with the procedures of the study. The benefits of the study were also explained to the participants. Their consent to access their personal data from the personnel office was sought. Voluntary

participation, privacy and confidentiality of data were emphasized and assured. For those who were accessible to the researcher, the contact numbers and emails were taken from the personnel office. The informed consent form was emailed to them and the researcher exerted effort to contact them to ensure informed consent before data collection started.

The Career Management Assessment Tool for the participants was distributed through the use of mail and electronic mail. For the collection of the accomplished survey questionnaires, the researcher personally retrieved them wherein the participants were requested to send through mail or electronic mail.

For the promotion rate, the percentage of graduates promoted from one rank to another was taken from the promotional data list and seniority lineal list of graduates of each class. For the Extent of Compliance to Career Pattern, the percentage is taken from the participants with the degree of extent chosen over the total number of participants multiplied by 100. After which, the tally was taken for the computation of the percentage and likewise, for the assessed extent of implementation of the policies.

Data Analysis

To analyze and interpret the gathered data, the following statistical tools were used:

1. Frequency count and percentage distribution were used to determine the profile of the participants and total male and female graduates within the five-year period. The same statistical tool was used to determine the profile of the participants in terms of personal, service related information, and promotion rate.
2. The promotion rate was computed based on the total number of officers of each class by considering the actual number of officers promoted to the next rank after a time period over the total number of officers of the class multiplied by 100. Example is: (Major to LTC) actual number of officers promoted over total number of officers per class multiplied by 100%.
3. Mean was used to determine the extent of fulfillment, compliance

to career pattern, extent of implementation of the policies on career management. The table below was used in describing the extent of fulfillment, compliance and implementation of the policies on career management.

Table 2
Mean Range and Its Qualitative Description

Mean	Qualitative Description
4.20 - 5.00	Very Great Extent
3.40 - 4.19	Great Extent
2.60 - 3.39	Moderate Extent
1.80 - 2.59	Less Extent
1.00 - 1.79	Least Extent

4. The use of ANOVA is to test significant difference in the extent of fulfillment, the extent of compliance to the career pattern and the extent of implementation to the policy on career management when participants are grouped according to profile variables.
5. Thematic Analysis was utilized to analyze the challenges and recommendations provided by the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Participants

The participants are composed of PMA Graduates from class 1997 to 2001. The total number of active army officers that were considered in the survey is 345. However, only 123 responded. Other officers who were not included in the survey are in foreign schooling/posting or deployment. Some are on the process of retirement while others are out of contact. On age profile, majority belong to age bracket 41 to 45. On gender, 94% are male officers and only 6% are female. On civil status profile, the married officers comprise 98%. On rank profile of the participants, 55% are LTC and 45% are Major. For the military occupational specialty (AFPOS) 60% belong to the infantry, 10% for

cavalry, 7% for military intelligence, 6% for ordinance service, 4% for engineering and field artillery, 3% on signal corps and quartermaster service and only 2% for finance service. For the profile of participants per batch (class) based on the years in service and year, graduated class 1997 is 21%, class 1998 is 8%, class 1999 is 15%, class 2000 is 33% and class 2001 is 23%.

Promotion Rate of Participants

The promotion rate of the participants is computed by class. It is the number of promoted officers over the total number in class multiplied by 100. Class 1997 has 95% rate of promotion, class 1998 has 88.88%, class 1999 has 89.53% while class 2000 and 2001 has 100% rate in their current rank.

Extent of Compliance to the Career Pattern of the Participants

The participants have a “moderate extent” of compliance with their career pattern set by the army.

Test for Significant Difference in the Extent of Compliance to the Career Pattern When Grouped According to Profile Variables

There is no significant difference in the participants’ compliance on the extent of career pattern when grouped according to age, gender, civil status, rank, year in service, year of graduation. However, there is a significant difference with respect to AFPOS.

Extent of Fulfillment

The extent of fulfillment of the participants in terms of health, spiritual, work is at “great extent,” relationship and financial are at “very great extent.” Overall extent of fulfillment is “great extent.”

Test for Significant Difference in the Extent of Fulfillment When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Based on the findings, there is no significant difference in the participants’ extent of fulfillment when grouped according to age,

gender, rank, AFPOS, year in the service and year of graduation. However, there is a significant difference when grouped according to civil status.

Challenges Experienced by the Officers

The challenges encountered by the officers include lack of administrative and logistical support, social isolation, lack of personnel and multi-tasking, mismatch of acquired specialty, transition of personnel, professional treatment among colleagues and poor health facilities.

Extent of Implementation of the Policies

Based on the findings, the personnel management office for the career management of army officers gained 59.35% implementation rate which is “moderate extent” as assessed by the participants and 19.51% with “great extent” as the second highest rate of implementation.

Test for Significant Difference in the Extent of the Implementation of the Policies to Career Management When Grouped According to Gender

The extent of the implementation of the policies to career management with regards to gender is at “moderate extent” with a mean 3.28 for female and 2.98 for male. The extent of implementation of the policies rated by female officers is significantly higher than the male officers.

Suggestions and Recommendations to Improve the Administration and Programs for the Female Officers in the AFP

The following are the suggestions given: Increase the number of female personnel in the AFP; improve leadership training and development programs for women in the early stages of their careers; actively solicit feedback from women, particularly junior women, about how to address the challenges they face, and implement some of their recommended solutions; establish a public dialogue between the most senior military and private sector women on improving women’s

leadership and career development; jointly conduct leadership and skills programs for female high school and college students; help female veterans transition effectively and fairly to the private sector; include men in the solution, through initiatives like the UN's "He or She" campaign; ensure that the first women to serve in combat positions are set up for success; and consider more formal mentorship programs for women.

The Proposed Policies to be Reviewed

The following are the different policies that need enhancements and improvements in the career management:

First is improvement of promotion policy in relation to the quantitative rating system. More consideration or points should be given to the degree of responsibility and sensitivity of assignment.

Second is attrition policy should be reviewed and strictly implemented.

Third is policy on housing - sincere and equitable awarding of quarters without familiarity and 'palakasan' system.

Fourth is equal opportunity in offering foreign schooling and should be based on merit system.

Lastly, is the rotation policy (assignment and re assignment). Number of years in certain areas of deployment (geographical assignment in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that the officers' career compliance and personnel management implementation are at "moderate extent" on their career management. The fulfillment of the officers is to a "great extent" and affected by the marital status, specifically on the relationship category. The participants wanted some improvement in terms of the policies on career management. The challenges experienced by the participants in

the service can be appropriately improved through the implementation or enhancement of some policies on career management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Personnel management office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, may consider to:
 - Increase the number of female personnel in the AFP.
 - Consider more formal mentorship programs for women.
 - Provide facility support to new assignments like quarters, access to school and good medical facilities. - Prioritize mobility and logistical support to reporting personnel.
2. Human resource department,
 - May assign officers to units with specific functions in consideration with their respective occupational specialty to address common concerns on workload; Strict implementation of attrition policies and directives.
 - Enhancement of the current SOI reflecting the minimum career management requirement with corresponding QRS points/rating.

For future researchers to consider the specifics of promotion rate of each level of the rank, and to improve on the procedures of this study and to cover other batches or classes and also include the officers coming from the OCS and commission.

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