ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Assessing the Implementation and Outcomes of the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Empowerment Program of the 56th Infantry (TATAG) Battalion, 7th Infantry (KAUGNAY) Division, Philippine Army

Ali B. Sumangil[1]*, Bismark D. Gumela[1,2]

[1]*56th Infantry (Tatag) Battalion, Philippine Army, Fort Ramon Magsaysay, 8100, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, ORCID No.: Ali B. Sumangil: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2889-7161, Bismark D. Gumela: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0000-430X*
[2]*Don Mariano Marcos State University - Open University System, City of San Fernando, La Union, Philippines, ORCID No.: Bismark D. Gumela: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0000-430X*

*Corresponding author: ali_sumangil2004@yahoo.com

A B S T R A C T

This paper assessed the initiative programs developed within the 56th Infantry Battalion, aligned with the NCO Empowerment Program of the Headquarters, Philippine Army, and their effects on leadership confidence, professional initiative, and unit performance among NCOs. A multi-method design was utilized, employing a descriptive-comparative quantitative framework to determine significant differences across profiles, complemented by a descriptive-exploratory qualitative analysis. A total of 303 personnel from 56IB, 7ID, PA participated in the study. Quantitative data were examined using frequency, percentage, average weighted mean, T-test, and ANOVA, while qualitative data were analyzed by Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Results revealed that the level of implementation was rated as "Very High" (AWM = 4.68), while the extent of outcomes was perceived at a "Very High Extent" (AWM = 4.61). A significant difference in perceived outcomes was identified regarding rank (p = 0.008), specifically showing that Junior NCOs (Corporal to Sergeant) benefited most by gaining leadership confidence and professional initiative. While mentorship and recognition bolstered morale, challenges such as hesitation due to traditional command norms and personal welfare issues were identified. Overall, the program significantly enhances leadership development, professional initiative, and unit performance, but requires sustained mentoring and structured leadership training to address organizational barriers. These findings suggest that empowering NCOs at the tactical level strengthens coordination and decision-making, contributing to the broader professionalization of the Philippine Army.

Keywords: *Junior NCOs, Leadership Confidence, Professional Initiative, Unit Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the critical fundamental pillars of the military as it shapes discipline, cohesion, morale, and welfare towards mission accomplishment. The studies by Adair (2022) and Kouzes and Posner (2023) support this, that effective leadership provides direction, motivation, and operational efficiency even in complex and high-risk environments and will lead to mission accomplishment. Also, military history consistently shows that even well-equipped forces can fail under weak leadership (Elliott, 2020), while competent leadership can prevail despite limited resources (Soodalter, 2016). Thus, leadership remains a decisive factor on the battlefield.

Within military organizations, Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) play a critical leadership role by serving as the bridge between commissioned officers and fellow enlisted personnel by translating the commander's intent into tactical action that sustains unit effectiveness (Grinston, 2020; Bucăţa and Andrei, 2024). The NCOs are often described as the "backbone" of a

military organization since they are experienced soldiers with technical expertise and tactical knowledge who embodies as model discipline and military values (Espuelas, 2008). This intermediary position places them at the core of leadership execution at the tactical-unit level.

Numerous international studies consistently underscore the importance of professional NCOs. One of the significant studies by Ross (2023) posits that U.S. Army Special Forces successes during the Global War on Terror were largely attributable to NCOs who demonstrated combat proficiency, discipline, professionalism, and concern for troop welfare. Beyond combat, NCOs also perform administrative, logistical, and humanitarian roles essential to unit readiness (Mack, 2016) as evidenced historically by the U.S. Continental Army by focusing their discipline and sustainment capabilities that contributed to decisive victories against British forces (Lund, 2021).

In response, many armed forces have improved and institutionalized their respective NCO empowerment programs. The U.S. established the Non-Commissioned Officer Leadership

Center of Excellence, providing structured education, mentorship, and leadership development (Crosby, 2020; Kang, 2024; Smith, 2024). Similar initiatives exist in the United Kingdom and South Korea to enhance leadership, critical thinking, and professional growth (Harris, 2023; Kim, 2022; Pius et al., 2023). In contrast,studies on the Russian Armed Forces highlight that the lack of a professional NCO corps led to low morale, discipline, and command and control, causing operational failures in Ukraine (Britzky, 2022; Drum, 2022; Herndon, 2022; Edwards, 2025). These contrasting cases demonstrate the strong link between NCO empowerment and unit effectiveness.

In the Philippines, the Headquarters of the Philippine Army (HPA) institutionalized the NCO Empowerment System to enhance leadership, professionalism, and effectiveness across all echelons. This system consists of two subsystems: the NCO Professional Leader Development Subsystem, which focuses on selection, education, experience, self-improvement, and promotion; and the Support Subsystem, which emphasizes mentoring, leadership feedback, and organizational support.

Together, these two pillars serve as a guide and foundation to enable NCOs to lead effectively with minimal supervision while maintaining high standards of discipline and performance.

At the battalion level, the 56th Infantry (Tatag) Battalion under 7th Infantry (Kaugnay) Division, Philippine Army (56IB, 7ID, PA), implemented these directives through various initiatives and programs such as enhanced leadership training, welfare initiatives, and professional development programs. Key initiatives include the enhanced Squad Permanency System, ensuring consistent leadership and mentorship; a minimum Php 26,000 take-home pay policy that improved financial discipline and resulted in zero AWOL cases; structured leadership engagement activities; a standardized demerit and recognition system; regular squad-level warfighting and leadership training; clear performance-based awards criteria; structured schooling program boards; and strict physical fitness standards of at least 85%. These measures collectively illustrate NCO empowerment in leadership execution, teamwork, and professional growth at the tactical level.

Figure 1. LTC SUMANGIL, Commanding Officer of 56IB, 7ID, PA pinning an award to an outstanding NCO (Tatag CMO Facebook, 2025).

Despite these initiatives, empirical research examining NCO empowerment at the tactical level, particularly within a battalion-sized Philippine Army unit, remains limited. Existing studies focus on other AFP branches (Bernal et al., 2014), regional trends (De Vera and Martir, 2025), or other uniformed services such as the police (Pagluntudan, 2025), leaving a gap in tactical unit-level analysis. Therefore, this limit understanding of how empowerment policies influence leadership confidence, initiative, and unit performance in operational settings.

To address this gap, the researchers anchored this study on Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, which explains leadership effectiveness through the quality of leader–subordinate relationships characterized by trust, communication, respect, and support (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Dalagan, 2018). Given that close, continuous interactions are inherent in NCO leadership, the LMX provides an appropriate framework for examining empowerment implementation and outcomes at the tactical level.

Hence, this paper examines the implementation and outcomes of the NCO Empowerment Program in the 56th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army. It aims to describe

respondents' sociodemographic profiles, determine the level of program implementation, assess outcomes in leadership confidence, professional initiative, and unit performance, and identify significant differences based on respondent characteristics. It also explores qualitative perspectives on leadership enhancement, interpersonal dynamics, and implementation challenges, integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to explain the transition from policy to tactical practice. Guided by these objectives, the study addresses the following questions: What is the sociodemographic profile of the respondents? What are the perceived levels of program implementation and outcomes in terms of leadership confidence, professional initiative, and unit performance, and do these outcomes significantly differ across sociodemographic groups? What are the NCOs' perspectives on leadership growth, interpersonal dynamics, coordination, unity, and program challenges with suggested improvements? Finally, how do quantitative and qualitative findings converge in assessing the implementation and outcomes of the Non-Commissioned Officer Empowerment Program of the 56th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of the study area

The study was conducted throughout the former Area of Operations (AO) of the 56IB, 7ID, PA, since the participants, who were the unit's personnel, were strategically dispersed across different military posts. The former AO of the 56th Infantry Battalion covers three municipalities in Davao del Norte which are Talaingod, Santo Tomas, and Braulio E. Dujali along with five barangays in San Fernando, Bukidnon, and four barangays in the Paquibato District of Davao City which place the

battalion in a strategically important zone at the boundary of Northern Mindanao (Region 10) and Davao Region (Region 11). This AO has long been recognized as one of the most challenging security environments in the Philippines since it was historically considered an NPA-infested area with multiple guerrilla units operating across its interconnected indigenous communities (Coda, 2021). Upon the deployment of 56IB in the area in February 2018, the insurgency gradually faded and was considered finally insurgency-free on 25 July 2022 (Palicte, 2022). The battalion headquarters was previously located at Purok 6, Barangay Sto. Niño, Talaingod, Davao del Norte.
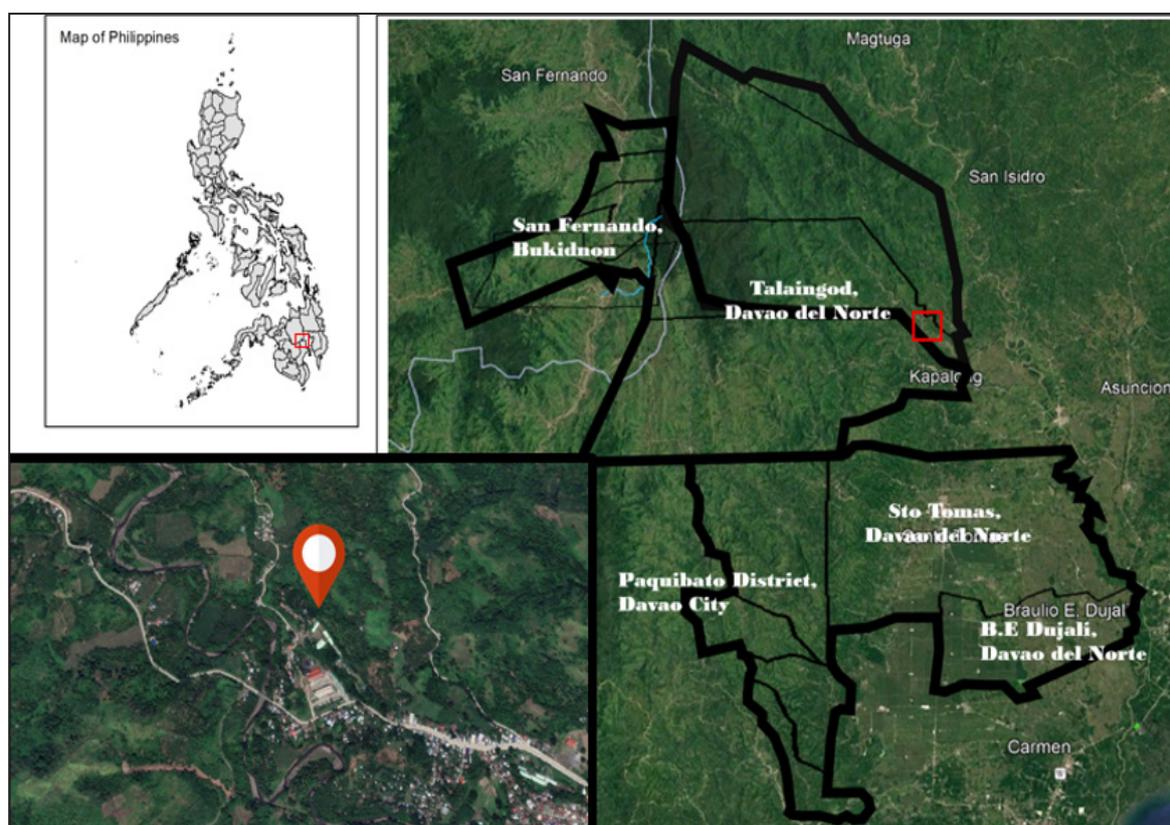

Figure 2. Map of the former area of operations of 56IB, 7ID, PA and the previous location of battalion headquarters.

Data collection

This study employed a multimethod research design to examine the implementation and outcomes of the NCO Empowerment Program of the 56th Infantry Battalion (56IB), 7th Infantry Division, Philippine Army. According to Morse (2003), a multimethod approach integrates quantitative and qualitative methods while maintaining their distinct but complementary roles, allowing both measurable outcomes and participant experiences to be examined comprehensively. For the quantitative component, a descriptive–comparative design was utilized to describe program outcomes and examine differences across respondent profile groups without manipulating variables (Cantrell, 2011). This approach assessed variations in leadership confidence, professional initiative, and unit performance. The qualitative component adopted a descriptive–exploratory design to capture NCOs' self-reported experiences, perceptions, and perspectives regarding program implementation, which is appropriate for online, text-based data collection with limited real-time probing (Lambert and Lambert, 2012).

Data were collected using multiple instruments aligned with each research component. A researcher-made questionnaire gathered respondent profiles (sex, age, rank, and assigned company). Likert-scale questionnaires measured the level of program implementation and its outcomes in leadership development, teamwork, unit readiness, and overall competency. Semi-structured open-ended questions were used to elicit participants' experiences, challenges, and perceptions, enabling a more holistic understanding of NCO empowerment in the 56IB. Due to the battalion's wide area of operations and limited access to electricity and internet connectivity, convenience sampling was employed to include accessible personnel who met the study criteria (Golzer et al., 2022). As of 01 October 2025, the 56IB had 441 personnel. Using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level, the minimum required sample size was 206; however, 303 personnel participated, which is acceptable within a 0.05 margin of error. Google Forms served as the primary data collection platform, allowing respondents to answer independently and without interviewer influence, thereby promoting honest and reflective responses (Torrentira, 2020). This platform was suitable given the dispersed deployment of troops across remote areas.

Table 1. The likert response scale for program implementation and outcomes.

Weight	Level of implementation	Extent of outcomes
5	Very High Level	Very High Extent
4	High Level	High Extent
3	Moderate Level	Moderate Extent
2	Low Level	Low Extent
1	Very Low Level	Very Low Extent

To standardize the responses, a five-point Likert scale was used, as shown in Table 1. During data collection, respondents chose from categories to show their level of agreement or frequency. In this system, a weight of 5 is the highest score (Very High), while a weight of 1 is the lowest score (Very Low).

Table 2. Interpretation guide for level of implementation.

Mean range	Verbal interpretation	Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very High Level	The program activities are consistently executed without exception.
3.41 – 4.20	High Level	The program activities are executed frequently with minor gaps.
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate Level	The program activities are executed occasionally.
1.81 – 2.60	Low Level	The program activities are rarely executed.
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low Level	The program activities are not executed at all.

For the statistical analysis, these responses were grouped and interpreted using the mean ranges described in Table 2 and 3 to ensure clarity for program implementation and empowerment outcomes. The scale as shown in Table 2 above interprets the consistency and frequency with which the NCO program components are executed within the battalion.

Table 3. Interpretation guide for empowerment outcomes.

Mean range	Verbal interpretation	Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very High Extent	Respondents demonstrate a complete mastery or maximum empowerment.
3.41 – 4.20	High Extent	Respondents demonstrate significant levels of empowerment.
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate Extent	Respondents demonstrate a baseline or average level of empowerment.
1.81 – 2.60	Low Extent	Respondents demonstrate minimal signs of empowerment.
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low Extent	Respondents demonstrate no measurable empowerment.

Likewise, the scale in Table 3 interprets the depth and extent of the results achieved through the NCO Empowerment Program. For the qualitative component, semi-structured open-ended questions enabled respondents to describe their experiences, perspectives, and challenges regarding NCO empowerment in English, Visayan, or Tagalog, allowing for more accurate and expressive responses (Saglam, 2024). Meanwhile, the quantitative instrument, consisting of 20 Likert-scale items (10 for level of implementation and 10 for outcomes), underwent content validation by three doctorate-level experts. A pilot test with 100 respondents yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency. Data collection was conducted from 07 to 11 October 2025, with prior coordination with the Battalion S1 and Company Commanders to ensure broad participation.

Data analysis

For the quantitative component, responses were collected via Google Forms, exported to Google Sheets, and then downloaded as an Excel file, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency and percentage distributions were used to describe the respondents' profiles. The Average Weighted Mean (AWM), interpreted using Tables 2 and 3 to determine the level of program implementation and its outcomes in terms of leadership confidence, professional initiative, and unit performance in the 56IB. For inferential statistics, differences in perceived program outcomes across respondent groups were tested using independent t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) based on demographic and service-related characteristics.

For the qualitative component, Reflexive Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed to examine NCOs' insights and self-reported experiences. The open-ended responses, collected via Google Forms, were systematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes. Textual data were exported to MS Word, coded into key phrases and keywords, and organized into subthemes or core ideas and main themes using QDA Miner Lite by Provalis Research, which facilitated data organization and visualization (Elfarem et al., 2025). Themes were reviewed, refined, renamed, and defined to ensure accurate representation of the data before being discussed in relation to the study objectives.

To enhance credibility, follow-up phone calls and interviews were conducted with 24 selected respondents through the Viber application to clarify and validate key responses. These follow-ups were used to support the interpretation and consistency of the identified themes rather than as new data which strengthened the reliability of the findings. Following the simultaneous bidirectional mixed-methods strategy of Moselholm and Fetters (2017), quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to identify areas of convergence and divergence. This approach ensured that

statistical results were supported by participants' lived experiences, resulting in a more comprehensive and robust analysis of the NCO Empowerment Program.

RESULTS

Quantitative: sociodemographic profile of the respondents

Sex and Age

Figure 3 below reveals that the majority of the respondents were predominantly male for 97.4%, while only 2.6% were female. This result is expected in the military context around the world, where the vast majority of personnel are men due to the physically demanding nature of military service in warfighting. However, the small proportion of female respondents still indicates the growing inclusion of women in military organizations, which highlights their empowerment even in masculine-dominated organizations, and also the gender diversity within the ranks of uniformed personnel.

In terms of age distribution, most respondents who participated in the survey belonged to the 26–35 years old group (61.4%), followed by those aged 36–45 (23.8%), 18–25 (11.2%), and 46–55 (3.6%) as shown in Figure 3 above. This implies that the majority of personnel involved in the 56IB are at the peak of their physical capabilities and productive, which are necessary and essential due to the demanding, ever-changing military duties and responsibilities. Moreover, the presence of younger soldiers also suggests the continuous recruitment of new members in the ranks of the Philippine Army, while the smaller percentage of older respondents reflects those who have advanced or longer years in service.
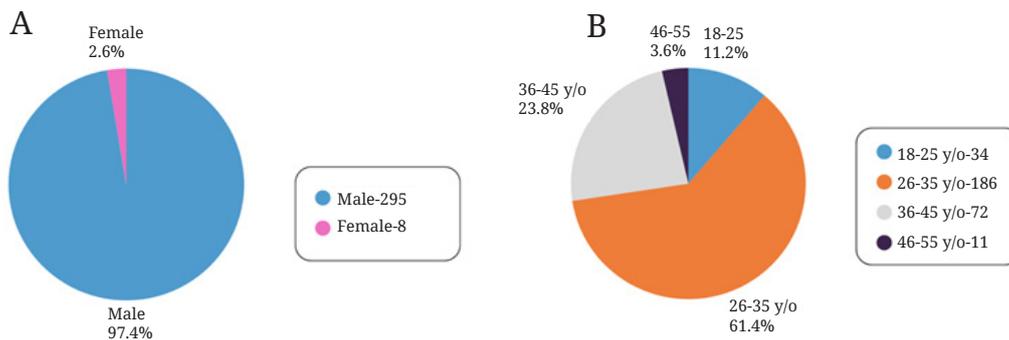

Figure 3. Distribution of respondents: (A) Sex, and (B) Age group.

In terms of age distribution, most respondents who participated in the survey belonged to the 26–35 years old group (61.4%), followed by those aged 36–45 (23.8%), 18–25 (11.2%), and 46–55 (3.6%) as shown in Figure 3 above. This implies that the majority of personnel involved in the 56IB are at the peak of their physical capabilities and productive, which are necessary and essential due to the demanding, ever-changing military duties and responsibilities. Moreover, the presence of younger soldiers also suggests the continuous recruitment of new members in the ranks of the Philippine Army, while the smaller percentage of older respondents reflects those who have advanced or longer years in service.

Rank and assigned company

Regarding the ranks of the respondents, as shown in Figure 4, the largest group consisted of Junior Eps which are Privates to Private First Class (41.3%), followed closely by Junior Non-Commissioned Officers with ranks Corporal to Sergeant at 39.9%. Meanwhile, the Senior NCOs with ranks Staff Sergeant, Technical Sergeant and Master Sergeant accounted for 12.2%, while the Officers made up 6.3% of the total. This distribution shows that the majority of the respondents in 56IB have a fundamental hierarchical distribution of ranks following the triangle or pyramid shape of manpower distribution or the chain of command concept. The base consists of a high volume of lower ranks enlisted personnel, which is the primary workforce of the unit going to the middle section of the triangle, where senior NCOs provide supervision and expertise. The officers are placed on the apex, which are the smallest number but are responsible for overall command, planning and strategy.

As shown also in the figure 4 is for the company assignment. The highest number of respondents came from the Headquarters Company (30.0%), followed by Alpha Company (24.4%), Charlie Company (23.1%), and Bravo Company (22.4%). The equal distribution of respondents across the companies indicates that the data are evenly gathered from different line companies, which ensures fair representation. Notably, the larger percentage of respondents in Headquarters Company is caused by the larger manpower since it consists of the battalion staffs that carry out the administrative function, intelligence, combat support, and sustainment hub.
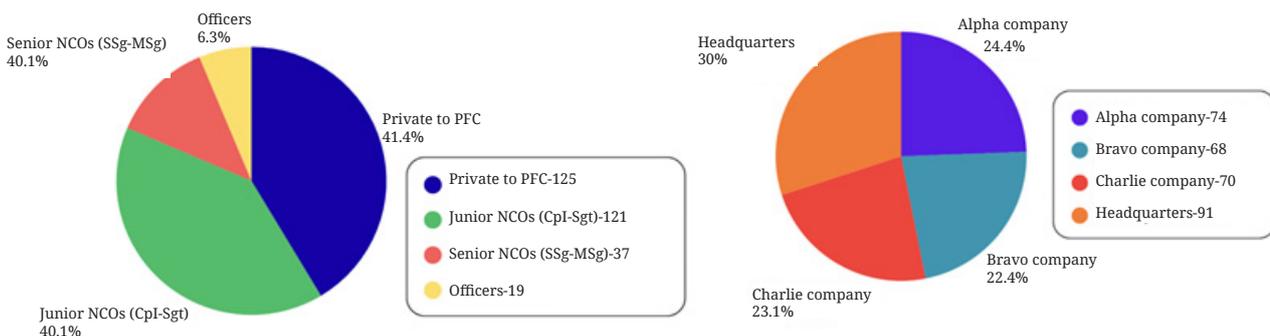

Figure 4. Distribution of respondents: (A) Rank, and (B) Assigned company.

Quantitative: Implementation of NCO program in 56IB

Table 4 below presents the level of implementation of the NCO Program in the 56th Infantry Battalion. The data show that all indicators or parameters were rated as "Very High Level," with an overall average weighted mean (AWM) of 4.68 (SD = 0.43). This indicates that the NCO Program is being consistently and effectively carried out within the unit. The highest mean score of 4.81 (SD = 0.39) was recorded for the statement "*NCOs are given opportunities to lead teams and small units independently.*" This shows that NCOs are trusted by the Officers to take

independent leadership roles and make decisions on their own, with initiative. Likewise, activities such as *TI and E, Sergeant Major Time, and First Sergeant Time* (M = 4.71, SD = 0.40) *and Quarterly Physical Fitness Tests* (M = 4.71, SD = 0.38) are done regularly, proving that discipline and training were implemented and maintained. Other aspects of the program, like *Mentoring by senior NCOs* (M = 4.68, SD = 0.42), *promotions based on merit* (M = 4.69, SD = 0.41), and *career development through training programs* (M = 4.67, SD = 0.43), also received very high ratings.

Table 4. Level of Implementation of the NCO Program in 56IB.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. NCOs are given opportunities to lead teams and small units independently.	4.81	0.39	Very High Level
2. Senior NCOs provide regular mentoring and coaching to subordinates.	4.68	0.42	Very High Level
3. TI & E, Sergeant Major Time, and First Sergeant Time are consistently conducted.	4.71	0.40	Very High Level
4. Outstanding NCOs and squads receive recognition and rewards.	4.66	0.45	Very High Level
5. Financial assistance programs are available for emergencies and hospitalization.	4.67	0.44	Very High Level
6. NCOs are regularly sent to schooling or seminars.	4.60	0.47	Very High Level
7. There are clear career development paths through training programs.	4.67	0.43	Very High Level
8. Promotions are based on merit and readiness for higher responsibility.	4.69	0.41	Very High Level
9. Physical Fitness Tests are conducted quarterly as required.	4.71	0.38	Very High Level
10. NCOs actively monitor the welfare and discipline of their subordinates.	4.61	0.46	Very High Level
Overall AWM	4.68	0.43	Very High Level

Quantitative: Outcomes of the NCO program

Table 5 shows the extent of outcomes of the NCO Empowerment Program in the 56IB. The results show an overall average weighted mean (AWM) of 4.61 (SD = 0.46), interpreted as "Very High Extent." This means that the program was perceived as very effective by the respondents in achieving its intended outcomes for NCOs and the unit as a whole. Regarding empowerment, the highest rating was obtained for the statement "*NCOs have become more confident in making decisions*" (M = 4.65, SD = 0.44), which clearly shows that the program has successfully strengthened leadership confidence and autonomy. In terms of leadership roles, *improved leadership skills*

(M = 4.63, SD = 0.46) and *better teamwork and cooperation among companies* (M = 4.62, SD = 0.45) were also highly rated, indicating that the program has developed strong interpersonal skills between peers and subordinates while *enhancing the organizational discipline of NCOs in 56IB* (M = 4.62, SD = 0.44). Furthermore, as to professional development, indicators such as the *development of initiative and professionalism* (M = 4.58, SD = 0.47), *stronger communication among NCOs* (M = 4.59, SD = 0.46), and *higher morale* (M = 4.60, SD = 0.48) suggest that the program effectively professionalized the rank and file, ultimately contributing to *better operational readiness and mission accomplishment* (M = 4.55, SD = 0.50).

Table 5. Extent of outcomes of the NCO empowerment.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. NCOs have become more confident in making decisions.	4.65	0.44	Very High Extent
2. The program improved the leadership skills of NCOs.	4.63	0.46	Very High Extent
3. NCOs handle responsibilities with minimal supervision.	4.55	0.49	Very High Extent
4. The program developed initiative and professionalism among NCOs.	4.58	0.47	Very High Extent
5. The program improved cooperation among teams and companies.	4.62	0.45	Very High Extent
6. There is stronger communication between NCOs and peers/subordinates.	4.59	0.46	Very High Extent
7. Morale within the unit has significantly improved.	4.60	0.48	Very High Extent
8. NCOs have contributed to better operational readiness and mission accomplishment.	4.55	0.50	Very High Extent
9. The overall performance and discipline of the unit have improved.	4.62	0.44	Very High Extent
10. The unit responds more effectively to missions and emergencies.	4.62	0.43	Very High Extent
Overall AWM	4.61	0.46	Very High Extent

Quantitative: Extent of outcomes of the NCO empowerment program in 56IB across the profile of respondents

Table 6 presents the test of differences in the extent of outcomes of the NCO Empowerment Program, grouped by respondents' profile variables. The results show that there were no significant differences in program outcomes across sex ($p = 0.226$), age ($p = 0.860$), and assigned company ($p = 0.368$), indicating that respondents' perceptions of the program were generally consistent regardless of gender, age group, or company assignment. However, the p-value for rank ($p = 0.008$) is smaller than the 0.05 significance level, indicating a significant difference across ranks. As shown in the table, Junior NCOs (Cpl to Sgt) received the highest ratings (M = 4.68), suggesting that those in leadership roles benefited most from the NCO program in terms of empowerment and leadership development.

Table 6. Difference in the extent of outcomes of the NCO empowerment program in 56IB across the profile of respondents.

Variable	Categories	Mean	Test statistic	*p*-value	Decision
Sex / Kasarian	Male	4.60	$t = -1.221$	0.23	Do not reject the null hypothesis
	Female	4.68			
Age / Edad	18–25	4.62	$f = 0.252$	0.86	Do not reject the null hypothesis
	26–35	4.61			
	36–45	4.60			
	46–55	4.63			
	56 and above	4.65			
Rank	Private to PFC	4.59	f = 2.334	0.008	Reject the null hypothesis (significant)
	Junior NCOs (Cpl to Sgt)	4.68			
	Senior NCOs (SSg to MSg)	4.55			
	Officers	4.61			
Assigned company	Headquarters company	4.61	f = 1.057	0.37	Do not reject the null hypothesis
	Alpha company	4.60			
	Bravo company	4.62			
	Charlie company	4.61			

Qualitative: Enhancement of NCO effectiveness and professional growth

Table 7 below shows that the innovative programs developed by the 56IB have led to positive changes in the unit. First, many respondents reported significant improvement in leadership development, noting that they have been given more opportunities to make decisions independently within their respective squads or teams. This indicates that the program successfully transitioned NCOs from passive followers to active decision-makers. As one informant noted, *"The NCOs were given the chance/opportunity to develop their skills and capabilities... They learned how to lead their squad or team."* Another informant added that the implementation *"helps them develop their leadership skills, increase self-confidence, and maintain discipline among everyone."*

Second, the program also improved their confidence and morale, which is essential for operational readiness. As one informant shared, *"The program offers a great help for NCOs to gain broader understanding and better decision-making. The troops became more confident in their work."* This boost in self-belief also improved organizational transparency, with another informant stating, *"I noticed a significant improvement in the confidence and discipline of the NCOs. Communication between enlisted personnel and officers has also become more open."*

Also, the programs have significantly strengthened discipline and teamwork among squad or team members. One informant mentioned, *"Teamwork, confidence, and the NCOs' diligence in performing their duties have improved."* NCOs reported that the actions or tasks became easier to complete as they improved coordination. Finally, another informant noted, *"The movement and operations of the troops became easier because of this NCO empowerment. Squad leaders developed a greater sense of responsibility, and their subordinates became more disciplined."*

Table 7. Improvement of NCO effectiveness and leadership.

Theme	Core ideas	Frequency (N = 303)
Leadership Development and Decision-Making	Opportunity to develop skills and lead squads independently	47
	Improved decision-making and broader understanding	43
Confidence and Morale	Increased confidence in performing tasks	40
	Enhanced self-confidence and discipline	36
Discipline and Teamwork	Better operational coordination	33
	Improved teamwork, diligence, and collaboration	38

Qualitative: Coordination and unity

The results shown in Table 8 below indicate that the soldiers of 56IB have stronger interpersonal skills. One observable improvement is better communication, where NCOs, Officers, and subordinates are able to freely express their intentions and exchange information openly and clearly. As one informant noted, *"The level of communication and coordination between NCOs and Officers increased, resulting in faster and more effective execution of orders."* Another informant added that *"problems within the squad are addressed faster because communication among members has improved."*

These improvements made the team more united and reduced misunderstandings. Also, there have been observable close relationships among squads, sections, and companies in terms of teamwork. One informant observed, *"The program improved collaboration within teams—squads, sections, and companies."* Accordingly, the respondents reported greater confidence in fulfilling their tasks, which makes missions and taskings easier. As another informant shared, *"Teamwork, confidence, and the diligence of NCOs in fulfilling their duties have significantly improved."*

In addition, the program rendered greater unity among the NCOs as they came to respect and understand their squad members more, thereby improving camaraderie and discipline. One informant stated, *"Members of the squad developed mutual understanding and respect for one another."* Finally, another informant concluded, *"Through unity and understanding among NCOs, soldiers of the 56IB became more disciplined."*

Table 8. Enhanced interpersonal dynamics under the NCO empowerment program.

Theme	Core ideas	Frequency (N = 303)
Communication and coordination	Improved communication between NCOs and Officers	31
	Faster problem-solving within squads	18
Teamwork	Enhanced collaboration across squads, sections, and companies	39
	Increased teamwork, confidence, and diligence	33
Unity	Mutual understanding and respect among squad members	24
	Improved discipline through unity and understanding	20

Qualitative: Challenges encountered during the implementation

Although the implementation of the NCO Empowerment Program of 56IB has shown positive developments, several challenges continue to hinder its full effectiveness, as reflected in the responses shown in Table 9. Some NCOs still experience hesitation in decision-making, especially those adjusting from a traditional setup where they were used to waiting for an officer's directives. As one informant explained, *"Initially, they are unaccustomed to applying NCO empowerment because some senior NCOs are used to always having an officer supervising them and they just wait for the officer's order."* This reliance makes it difficult for them to immediately embrace independent decision-making, often causing a fear of mistakes or authority-related constraints. Another informant noted that NCOs specifically face *"hesitation in decision-making due to fear of mistakes or authority constraints."*

Leadership and interpersonal relationship issues also emerged as significant hurdles. Respondents described difficulties in building trust with subordinates, which affected cohesion and consistent supervision. Establishing this trust is a foundational requirement for empowerment to work at the squad level. One informant shared, *"The challenges our NCOs face are building trust with their subordinates."*

Additionally, personal welfare and morale concerns such as financial problems, family-related issues, and emotional burdens were reported to significantly impact NCOs' decision-making. One informant pointed out that challenges are most visible in *"those who have problems, especially with money and family... personnel with low net income and those feeling low morale."* This link between personal well-being and professional performance was further highlighted by another informant who mentioned the *"difficulty in decision making, especially when there is a personal problem."*

Table 9. Challenges encountered in the NCO empowerment program of 56IB.

Theme	Core ideas	Frequency (N = 303)
Hesitation and adjustment to authority	Initial discomfort in applying NCO empowerment	14
	Hesitation in decision-making due to fear or authority constraints	12
Leadership and interpersonal Relationship challenges	Difficulty in building trust with subordinates	15
Personnel welfare and morale issues	Financial and family-related problems affecting performance	18
	Personal problems affecting decision-making	14

Qualitative: Suggestions to improve the NCO empowerment program in 56IB

Table 10 below presents the respondents' suggestions for improving and sustaining the NCO Empowerment Program in 56IB. Some indicated that there is a need for continuous training and professional development through leadership seminars to improve their decision-making skills, communicate effectively, and provide mentoring to subordinates. As one informant suggested, there should be *"continuous leadership training and seminars focused on decision-making, communication, and mentorship."* Another informant emphasized the need to *"improve and continue the program so it becomes even better."*

Respondents also emphasized the importance of clear guidance and structured mentorship. The respondents noted that senior NCOs should provide consistent direction, feedback, and counseling to Junior NCOs to help them adjust their leadership skills and develop the right mindset. One informant noted, *"There is a need for more guidance from senior NCOs to*

those under them to help change the mindset of some personnel." This was supported by another who called for *"continuous mentorship, structured feedback, and counseling to support NCO decision-making."*

Also, the respondents recommended continued recognition and motivation for personnel who have excelled in their respective duties to maintain high performance. As one informant mentioned, the unit should *"improve leadership trainings and maintain the recognition system for outstanding NCOs."* Another respondent added that leadership should *"acknowledge outstanding performance to motivate NCOs to apply empowerment in their daily duties."*

Finally, respondents suggested involving more NCOs in planning and decision-making. They believed that giving NCOs involvement in such duties aligned with their competence and knowledge would maximize their potential. One informant stated, *"NCOs should be given more opportunities to participate in planning."* Another informant concluded that *"NCOs should be utilized based on their skills and knowledge."*

Table 10. Recommended improvements for strengthening the NCO empowerment program.

Theme	Core ideas	Frequency (N = 303)
Continuous Training and Professional Development	Ongoing leadership training and seminars	46
	Desire to improve and continue program	25
Clear Guidance and Structured Mentorship	Need for structured mentorship and feedback	28
	Guidance from senior NCOs to influence mindset	22
Recognition and Motivation	Improve recognition systems for outstanding NCOs	19
	Acknowledge performance to encourage empowerment	15
Involvement in Planning and Decision-Making	More opportunities for NCO participation in planning	12
	Assign NCOs based on skills and knowledge	10

Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings

The integration was achieved by directly linking quantitative trends with qualitative explanations which allows numerical results to be contextualized by the self-reported experiences of the respondents.

The link between autonomy and leadership confidence

The quantitative data show a strong correlation between the opportunity to lead independently (M = 4.81) and increased decision-making confidence (M = 4.65). In simple terms, the more the 56IB trusts its NCOs to operate without constant supervision, the more confident those NCOs become in their roles. Qualitatively, soldiers explained that they are "learning how to lead their squads" and gaining a "broader understanding" of their duties. However, the qualitative "Challenges" section provides a necessary reality check: some NCOs still feel hesitation because they are used to a traditional system where they wait for an officer's order. This shows that while the program is statistically successful, the mental shift toward total independence takes time.

Efficiency driven by discipline and coordination

The study recorded a "Very High" rating for the conduct of TI&E and Sergeant Major's Time (M = 4.71), which matches

the high score for unit discipline (M = 4.62). This suggests that the structured military routines are effectively translating into better-behaved and more professional troops. The qualitative feedback deepens this by showing that discipline is not just about following rules; it is about operational ease. Participants noted that "operations became easier" because squad leaders felt more responsible for their teams. This means that empowerment has turned "discipline" from a strict requirement into a tool that makes the battalion's work more efficient and collaborative.

Communication as a foundation for unity

One of the most consistent findings was the high score for communication between NCOs and peers/subordinates (M = 4.59). The quantitative test showed no significant difference across companies (p = 0.368), meaning this improvement is felt equally across the entire battalion. The qualitative findings explain why: the "channel" between Enlisted Personnel and Officers has become *"more open"*. Soldiers reported that better communication leads to the *"faster and more effective execution of orders"*. This suggests that the program has successfully broken-down communication barriers that allow information, policies, messages and directives to be disseminated more quickly, which is important in military environments.

Significant differences in impact based on rank

A key statistical finding was that the program's outcomes vary significantly by Rank (*p*=0.008), with Junior NCOs (Cpl to Sgt) reporting the highest benefit (M = 4.68). The qualitative data explains this gap. Junior NCOs are the "front-line" leaders who feel the most immediate change when they are given the power to lead their squads. Meanwhile, Senior NCOs reported slightly lower scores (M = 4.55), likely because their challenges are more complex. According to the "Suggestions" section, Senior NCOs are now expected to be mentors and counselors, which requires a different set of skills and more emotional effort than the direct tactical leadership required of Junior NCOs.

Addressing the "Human Element", the Welfare and Morale

While the implementation means are "Very High," the qualitative data identifies "*Personal Welfare*" as a major hurdle. Issues like "f*inancial problems*" and "*family-related stress*" were mentioned as primary factors that can weaken an NCO's ability to make decisions. This integration is vital because it shows that empowerment is not just about training, it is also about support. The high statistical scores tell us the program works, but the qualitative voices tell us that for it to be sustainable, the battalion must continue to make programs to address the personal and financial well-being of its soldiers.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of various programs aligned with the NCO Empowerment Program in the 56th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, proponent by LTC ALI B SUMANGIL INF (GSC) PA, Commanding Officer, has significantly enhanced leadership capacity and professional growth among Enlisted Personnel, especially NCOs. The key programs encourage a sense of accountability for their respective responsibilities by providing opportunities for independent decision-making and by encouraging initiative. This is supported by the study's findings regarding the level of implementation, which was reported as very high, particularly in providing opportunities for NCOs to lead teams independently. As a result, NCOs reported a very high extent of leadership confidence in making decisions and the ability to handle responsibilities with minimal supervision. These quantitative results are supported by qualitative themes and core ideas indicating that NCOs of 56IB now possess a broader understanding of their roles, allowing them to lead squads with greater autonomy. This is particularly evident among Junior NCOs, who showed a significant difference in perceived outcomes, as they gain the most from leadership skills and opportunities to lead small teams and make real-time decisions. Qualitative feedback from participants highlighted that being given the chance to lead directly developed their internal capabilities, particularly troop-leading skills. This is supported by Sott and Bender's (2025) finding that when an inexperienced individual is consistently placed in real situations that require judgment and initiative, their confidence, competence, and leadership maturity naturally increase, reinforcing the program's intended outcomes.

Critical thinking also plays a central role in this process. According to Guillot (2004), critical thinking is the most important trait that every military leader must possess, as it enables sound decision-making, adaptability to changing situations, and effective problem-solving to accomplish missions. Since the NCOs were immersed in real-time leadership situations through the programs developed by the 56IB, their critical thinking skills are significantly enhanced, thereby improved their ability to assess situations, anticipate challenges, and make informed, timely decisions in complex operational environments. This sentiment is reflected in the thematic results where respondents noted that the troops became more confident in their work and possessed better decision-making skills. These outcomes were supported by the research of Alim et al. (2025) that complex operating environments with military training have increased the cognitive readiness of the Royal Malay Regiment. Moreover, this supports the research of Morris (2025) that empowerment interventions enhance leadership competence by linking training gained from trainings, seminars and career courses to practical experience, allowing the NCOs to translate theoretical knowledge into actionable skills. Because of this, their leadership and critical thinking skills naturally and steadily improve over time that enhances their ability to lead tactical small-unit operations (Gagnon, 2024).

Aside from individual leadership development, the programs developed to further support NCO empowerment have strengthened unit performance through cohesion, communication, and teamwork. The results of this research showed high levels of improved cooperation or camaraderie among teams and companies with stronger communication with peers and subordinates. Qualitatively, this was reflected in faster problem-solving within squads and greater coordination between NCOs and Officers. Therefore, it clearly shows that the conduct of regular structured mentorship and consistent feedback promotes trust and camaraderie, critical elements for effective military operations, findings that align with Aman's (2018) study. This was supported by thematic data showing that mutual understanding and respect among squad members served as the foundation for improved coordination. Additionally, the findings highlight a clear relationship between empowerment and operational performance from the study of Soegiarto et al. (2024) and Caballero (2021) as seen in the improved unit discipline and performance as well as operational readiness, showing that leadership development at the NCO level contributes not only to individual skill growth but also to the creation of a stronger and more resilient competent unit organization capable that can withstand any situation. Moreover, it agrees that empowered NCOs serve as the key link between officers and enlisted personnel, ensuring efficient coordination and timely decision-making during missions. As noted by respondents, this empowerment results in the faster and more effective execution of orders, allowing the unit to respond more effectively to missions and emergencies (Madhakomala and Supriyati, 2020).

The program has also made a significant positive impact on morale and professional initiative. According to Isaac (2025), published by the US Army University Press, recognition, career development opportunities, and formal acknowledgment of contributions help NCOs feel valued and respected, thereby increasing engagement and initiative. This is validated by the study's results showing significantly improved morale and the development of professionalism and initiative. The qualitative themes regarding recognition and motivation emphasize that acknowledging outstanding performance encourages NCOs to apply empowerment in their daily duties. Therefore, it is true that when NCOs perceive that their efforts are meaningful, they are more likely to demonstrate initiative, commitment, and proactive behavior—key attributes for mission success (Gade, 2003). Thus, the combination of empowerment and recognition also strengthens internal motivation, enabling the 56IB to maintain a high-performing and disciplined force which resulted in the numerous accomplishments in Davao Region. It is traditionally known that for every positive outcome in a

project, there is always a challenge to improve it. Thematic analysis revealed that hesitation and adjustment to authority remain a primary barrier, as some NCOs are still unaccustomed to acting without direct officer supervision or guidance. Some NCOs hesitate to exercise autonomy because they are deeply accustomed to the idea that officers provide all direction and supervision. As a result, reliance on officers for all decisions can reduce operational efficiency, delaying actions and slowing the unit's responsiveness in critical situations (Robinson, 2023). Furthermore, qualitative responses highlighted personnel welfare and morale issues, specifically financial and family-related burdens, as factors that impair cognitive focus. Problems such as external pressures, family obligations, financial constraints, and personal stress limit focus and decision-making. Bialystok et al. (2009) found that individuals suffering from these problems may hinder effective performance during operations, leading to slower responses, frequent mistakes, or less confident leadership. Consequently, the respondents' suggestions for continuous training and clear guidance underscore the need for a sustained support system. Therefore, these patterns of problems suggest that empowerment programs should be combined with continuous guidance, mentorship, and welfare support from officers and senior NCOs to help overcome both organizational and personal barriers, and this approach was indeed effective, according to Ellerman's (2016) study in the US Army Reserves.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Empowerment Program is implemented at a very high level, effectively enabling NCOs particularly Junior NCOs to strengthen leadership confidence and professional initiative. The program enhances independent decision-making skills while improving teamwork, communication, and overall unit performance, confirming that structured empowerment contributes to both individual leadership development and the collective effectiveness of the 56th Infantry Battalion (56IB). Through recognition systems, mentoring, career development activities, and practical leadership opportunities, NCOs are able to translate theoretical training into operational skills. As a result, empowered NCOs function as a critical link between officers and enlisted personnel, facilitating efficient coordination and timely mission-related decisions that support operational success. Despite these positive outcomes, certain challenges remain. Some NCOs continue to hesitate in exercising autonomy due to traditional top-down command norms, while personal welfare concerns such as financial and family-related stress can limit their ability to fully demonstrate initiative and leadership effectiveness. These findings suggest that empowerment initiatives must be complemented by sustained mentoring, consistent recognition, and strengthened welfare support mechanisms. Overall, the program proves highly effective in developing confident, capable, and proactive NCO leaders, ultimately contributing to improved unit performance, organizational cohesion, and operational readiness within the 56IB.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue strengthening the delegation of authority to the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) level to enhance initiative, leadership confidence, and unit performance.
- Sustain and improve formal mentorship programs were Senior NCOs guide Junior NCOs in independent decision-making and professional development.
- Address personnel welfare concerns, particularly financial and family-related stressors, to support cognitive focus and leadership effectiveness.

- Establish a consistent recognition and incentive system for NCOs who demonstrate initiative and outstanding performance to maintain morale and proactive leadership culture.
- Conduct future longitudinal and comparative studies to examine the long-term effects of empowerment across different unit types and its relationship with NCO welfare and decision-making effectiveness.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

A.B.S: Guidance and supervision. B.D.G: Writing, conceptualization, methodology, data gathering and analysis, validation, review and editing

DECLARATION

Informed consent statement

The purpose, goals, and process of the study were clearly explained to the Company Commanders and First Sergeants by the Personnel Officer and the researchers. Afterwards, it was disseminated to lower units through morning formation to ensure honesty and voluntary participation. Therefore, each personnel of the 56IB was informed that they had the right to refuse or stop answering the questionnaire at any time without facing any penalty or negative consequence. Moreover, the respondents gave their consent through a digital agreement included in the Google Form before answering the questionnaire. This section explained that their answers would remain confidential, their identities would stay anonymous, and that the information collected would be used only for academic purposes. No personal information, such as names or e-mail addresses, was collected to protect their privacy. All data were stored safely in a password-protected database that could only be accessed by the researchers with proper security clearance from the higher headquarters. The information gathered was used only for research and institutional purposes and was not shared with anyone outside the authorized individuals.

Conflict of interest

The authors declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

REFERENCES

Adair, J. Eric. (2022). Decision making and problem solving : break through barriers and banish uncertainty at work.

Alim, H., Subramaniam, A., Mohamad Nor, N., and Abd Wahab, A. Y. (2025). From Military Training to Cognitive Readiness: The Role of Military Leader. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 15(2). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v15-i2/24566

Aman, S. (2018). Effect of Mentoring on Military Personnel Retention. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 156–168. https://doi.org/10.33805/2576-8484.132

Bernal, B. L. F., Buenconsejo, J. G., Santos, F. E. H., and Te, J. A. B. R. (2014). Empowering the backbone of the Philippine Airforce: Zooming in on non-commissioned officers. Bachelor's Theses. https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/etd_bachelors/5938

Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using the matic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101.

Britzky, H. (2022). *The US military's greatest strength is one of Russia's biggest weaknesses.* https://taskandpurpose.com/news/russia-noncomissioned-officers-us-military/

Bucăţa, G., and Andrei, C. (2024). The Impact of Leadership and Management Changes on the Military Organization. *Land Forces Academy Review,* 29(4), 459–472. https://doi.org/10.2478/RAFT-2024-0048

Caballero, C. (2021). The influence of organizational learning capability on organizational commitment of Private Schools' Library Personnel. *Davao Research Journal,* 12(4), 6-14. https://doi.org/10.59120/drj.v12i4.106

Cantrell, M. A. (2011). Demystifying the research process: Understanding a descriptive comparative research design. *Pediatric nursing,* 37(4), 188.

Coda, E. (2021). *Former NPA- infested areas now tourism spots.* https://piadavaoregion.blogspot.com/2021/10/former-npa-infested-areas-now-tourism.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawOL3CN-leHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFQVkU2YWFUMmhPVEFpcVJMc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQ0MjIyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHkB8UCUWfunjlDgjM4WNd1M766pf_y3e_K99hqOAD-SmtGOidHwYbV_MEKiF_aem_cXfBBlte-iZwMx3qNT1sc

Dalagan Jr, S. (2018). Collaborative Leadership and Quality of Work Life of School Heads in Davao Region. *Davao Research Journal,* 12(1), 45-52. https://doi.org/10.59120/drj.v12i1.16

De Vera, F., and Martir, E. (2025). Leadership Development, Career Progression and Operational Effectiveness. *International Journal of Science and Management Studies (IJSMS),* 62–81. https://doi.org/10.51386/25815946/ijsms-v8i5p104

Drum, K. (2022). *Here's why the Russian army sucks so badly* – Kevin Drum. https://jabberwocking.com/heres-why-the-russian-army-sucks-so-badly/

Edwards, C. (2025). Russia nears 1 million war casualties in Ukraine, study finds|CNN. https://edition.cnn.com/2025/06/04/europe/russia-war-casualties-1-million-ukraine-intl

Elfarem, C., Daoudi, D., Ziani, M., and Kartouch, S. (2025). QDA Miner Lite: A Content Analysis of the Main Features for Qualitative Analysis. *International Journal of Human Post-Edited AI Qualitative Data Analysis,* 1(01), 18–25. https://researchpublication.org/index.php/ijhpaqda/article/view/6

Elliott, S. (2020). Romans at war : the Roman military in the Republic and Empire. https://books.google.com/books/about/Romans_at_War.html?id=GGUHEAAAQBAJ

Espuelas, J. A. B. (2008). Examining the Capacity of the Philippine Army's Enlished Corps to Accomplish the Government's Counterinsurgency Strategy: Sharpening the Tool.

Gagnon, J. O. (2024). An interpretive phenomenological analysis of an interpretive phenomenological analysis of leadership development for college students in an leadership development for college students in an army rotc program army rotc program. https://rdw.rowan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4203&context=etd

Graen, G. B., and Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly,* 6(2), 219–247. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5

Grinston, M. (2020). *Army-NCO-Guide-*2020. https://www.ncolcoe.army.mil/Portals/71/publications/ref/Army-NCO-Guide-2020.pdf

Golzar, J., Noor, S., and Tajik, O. (2022). Convenience Sampling. *International Journal of Education & Language Studies,* 1(2), 72–77. https://doi.org/10.22034/IJELS.2022.162981

Guillot, C. W. M. (2004). Critical Thinking For The Military Professional. https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Chronicles/guillot.pdf

Harris, D. (2023). *Leadership Strategies of the Department of the Army Reserve Equal Opportunity Programs - ProQuest.* https://www.proquest.com/openview/8350b840c5c6817b-61fe0918e08a9ce1/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Isaac, A. (2025). Fostering a Culture of Respect and Recognition. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2025/June/People-First/

Kang, A. (2024). The Efficient NCO: Developing an AI-Ready Leader.https://armyuniversity.edu/Organizations/LearningSymposium/OnlineContentFiles2024/Papers/V_Paper_Kang_TheEfficientNCO.pdf

Kim, J. (2022). Country Report: South Korea; Defense Reform and Force Enhancement Plans. DGAP Report, 22. https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/85180

Kouzes, J. M. ., and Posner, B. Z. . (2023). *The leadership challenge workbook.* https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Leadership_Challenge_Workbook.html?id=h-StEAAAQBAJ

Lambert, V. A., and Lambert, C. E. (2012). Qualitative descriptive research: An acceptable design. *Pacific Rim international journal of nursing research,* 16(4), 255-256.

Lund, M. S. (2021). America's First Military Professional: General George Washington at Valley Forge, 1777-1778.

Mack, G. (2016). Non-Commissioned Officers' Perceptions of Leadership Training to Handle Combat Stress: A Phenomenology Study.

Madhakomala, R. R., and Supriyati, Y. (2020). Comparative Study of Post-Marriage Nationality Of Women in Legal Systems of Different Countries The Role of Transformative Leadership in Empowering into Personals of School Force Staff and Commands. International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding The Role of Transformative Leadership in Empowering into Personals of School Force Staff and Commands. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding,* 9, 355–361. https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v7i9.2043

Morris, L. D. (2025). Research culture takeover week 2025: "We deserve more than just a seat at the table; we deserve to feel safe sitting there": Real inclusion and research culture. University of Leicester. https://ireacch.le.ac.uk/event/research-culture-takeover-week-2025-we-deserve-more-than-just-a-seat-at-the-table-we-deserve-to-feel-safe-sitting-there-real-inclusion-and-research-culture-hyb/

Morse, J. M. (2003). Principles of mixed methods and multimethod research design. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (Eds.), Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research (pp. 189–208). Sage.

Moseholm, E., and Fetters, M. D. (2017). Conceptual models to guide integration during analysis in convergent mixed methods studies. *Methodological Innovations,* 10(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799117703118

Pagluntudan Jr., F. K. (2025). Cross-Cultural Competence and Public Service Motivation of Police Officers in Davao Oriental, Philippines. *Davao Research Journal,* 16(4), 40-46. https://doi.org/10.59120/drj.v16i4.473

Palicte, C. (2022). *Army declares Davao Norte 'insurgency-free' | Philippine News Agency.* https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1176593

Pius, A., English, V., Gautam, V., and Banda, M. (2023). *Perspective transformation of work-based learning: A pedagogical justification of chartered manager degrees for UK postgraduate apprentices in management fields.* https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4559672

Saglam, Y. (2024). Which Data Gathering Method is Superior: An Open-Ended Questionnaire or a Semi- Structured Interview? *International Journal on Studies in Education (IJonSE)*, 6(3), 375. https://doi.org/10.46328/IJONSE.220

Smith, A. (2024). Corps Compass Mentorship Program prepares future sergeants major for leadership > U.S. Army Reserve > News. https://www.usar.army.mil/News/Article/3775928/corps-compass-mentorship-program-prepares-future-sergeants-major-for-leadership/

Soegiarto, I., Ainul Arifah, N. J., Rahmadhani, M. V., and Ilham, I. (2024). Effects of Leadership Development Programs, Mentorship, and Employee Empowerment on Organizational Performance. *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 5(2). https://doi.org/10.56442/IJBLE.V5I2.755

Soodalter, R. (2016). The futile charge of the light brigade: the British cavalry might have achieved glory at Balaclava in 1854–had it not been led in the wrong direction. *Military History*, 32(6), 24–30.

Sott, M. K., and Bender, M. S. (2025). The Role of Adaptive Leadership in Times of Crisis: A Systematic Review and Conceptual Framework. Merits 2025, Vol. 5, Page 2, 5(1), 2. https://doi.org/10.3390/MERITS5010002

Torrentira Jr., M. C. (2020). Online data collection as adaptation in conducting quantitative and qualitative research during the covid-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(11). https://doi.org/10.46827/EJES.V7I11.3336