

# Accreditation of the Philippine Army Career Courses through Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP)

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the selected career courses and various micro-credentials and top-up courses offered by the Philippine Army to determine if they can serve as prerequisites for management courses outside the military institution. It also examined whether the courses could be used to gain a college degree through the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP). This study used the CHED's ETEEAP assessment system to analyze data and documents gathered. The researcher employed a qualitative-descriptive approach to gather the best answers to the questions, utilizing Denzin's methodological triangulation to enhance data validity and reliability. The research informants/participants were identified using a non-probabilistic, purposive sampling technique. The result showed that the Philippine Army career courses provide significant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to prepare soldiers for management positions. The soldiers' work experiences based on the job description and the soldier's designation, validated by the work performance feedback, appeared sound for ETEEAP equivalency. However, interventions such as curriculum revision, alignment, and validation should be implemented in addition to the specific requirements, achievements, and processes of CHED. The study proposed revising curricula on sustainment courses to align with the Bachelor of Management curriculum. A policy framework on expanded tertiary education is also being proposed to facilitate the accreditation of the sustainment courses of the Philippine Army under ETEEAP.*

**Keywords—** Polytechnic University of the Philippines; Philippine Army ETEEAP; Philippine Army Education Accreditation; Philippine Army Education Management; Philippine Army curriculum gaps

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Training and education are two inseparable entities in the military profession, as they are essential in transforming civilians into military personnel, from the lowest-ranking individuals to small- to medium-unit leaders, to ensure that soldiers can perform as expected and contribute to overall mission achievement. For this reason, soldiers participate in training sessions from pre-entry to retirement. Soldiers gain lifelong learning from these courses and training, which they apply both during and after their military service. This is essentially the rationale for evaluating military training as undergraduate courses in various armed forces.

The United States Armed Forces offers programs that enable individuals to convert their military education, training, and experience into college credit, providing service personnel with more time, money, and peace of mind during or after retirement (Today's Military, n.d.). The American Council on Education (ACE) and the Department of Defense (DoD) collaborate to evaluate military training and education, and recommend the appropriate college credits for active-duty members [1]. This is where the troops' training, military occupational experience, and required ACE college credits are confirmed and recorded. Which ACE credit suggestions are accepted, changed, or rejected is at the discretion of the individual school. Whether the credit suggestions are accepted

depends on the academic institution's policies and procedures governing transfer credit, the course of study, and degree requirements.

In Australia, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) launched a transition program known as the Military Academic Pathway Program (MAPP). The program's primary goals for troops, particularly those retiring or being separated from the military, include physical rehabilitation, mental health, well-being, vocational training, and reskilling [2]. The demanding four-week program aims to prepare students for the academic and cultural demands of a university and assist them in becoming self-sufficient learners. Consequently, Australian troops can earn academic degrees by applying the expertise they have gained through their military training.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) in the United Kingdom encourages lifelong learning among members of the armed services and the veteran population through the Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC) program and the Further Education and Higher Education (FEHE) plan [3]. The grand service personnel and service leavers receive financial assistance to further their academic or professional goals.

In contrast, troops in the Philippines are frequently transferred to locations far from colleges and universities, making it unlikely that they will have the opportunity to earn a degree. Furthermore, the military has limited access to

education through the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP). As exposed in various career-related courses, job exposure, and previously acquired knowledge and skills, soldiers applying for a degree through ETEEAP are limited to a B.S. in Criminology because of the Army's focus on internal peace and security operations. Still, it does not have a comparable program that would allow them to receive credit for their training, education, and experience in various service disciplines, which can advance their career both while in service and upon retirement.

The ETEEAP of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is an educational assessment system that acknowledges knowledge, skills, and prior learning acquired by people through non-formal and informal educational experiences (CHED, 2024). The program appears significant as it encourages individuals who have been in the industry for a long time but cannot afford a college education due to time and opportunity limitations.

The ETEEAP was established on May 10, 1996, by former President Fidel Ramos through Executive Order Number 330. The CHED runs this program in collaboration with deputized colleges and institutions nationwide seeking to offer the program. These universities now include it in their academic curricula, and graduates receive the same treatment as other students—the passing of the Republic Act Nr. The 12124, also known as the ETEEP Act of 2025 [4], solidifies the Philippine government's commitment to ensuring that education is relevant to the needs of the people and accessible, particularly for those already employed, which is commendable.

RA 12124 (2025) grants qualified individuals appropriate academic degrees, where the ETEEAP will be used to identify, evaluate, validate, and assign equivalent undergraduate-level and special graduate programs based on prior learning from formal, non-formal, and informal learning systems, relevant work experiences, and the completion of competency enrichment and other program requirements. As long as the sources of learning apply to the second degree being pursued under the ETEEAP, a bachelor's degree holder may petition for the equivalency and accreditation of prior and work-based learning toward the grant of up to the second degree

This makes the ETEEAP program a beacon of opportunity in the Philippines. It is an alternative path to higher education that would benefit individuals who dream of acquiring a college education [5]. It serves as a gateway to professional advancement, enabling working professionals to earn a bachelor's degree based on their talents and work experience, even without completing their undergraduate education. It reduces educational disparity as the program gives people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to pursue education a chance.

Relatedly, the ETEEAP can allow Philippine Army soldiers to acquire a college degree. Unlike the Philippine National Police and other uniformed services in the country,

whose recruits are all bachelor's degree holders [6] the minimum requirement for a candidate soldier is at least 72 units in college or must be a skilled high school graduate (with national certification) to qualify [7]. Once they enter the service, every soldier undergoes various training, from pre-entry to career and specialization training. They must continue attending required courses, training, and seminars to maintain their education and enhance career and service opportunities throughout their tenure until they retire from the service [8].

As part of professional advancement, officers must continue graduate studies in the program of their choice. Enlisted personnel may continue their studies and earn a college degree of their own choice and at their own expense. Since the Philippine Army requires officers to pursue graduate studies while encouraging enlisted personnel to acquire college degrees or specific academic qualifications, the career and specialization courses they gain cannot be used as entry credentials if they decide to pursue a college degree. In essence, it would have been progressive if military courses could be credited for ETEEAP to promote both ETEEAP and military education.

Accrediting Philippine Army career courses, including micro-credentials and top-up courses to ETEEAP, can strengthen the civil-military ties of the organization as it promotes the Army's community service component through civil-military operations (CMO). It is crucial to remember, especially in the Philippines, that having a military in schools can pose alarm and second thoughts to people. For instance, the Department of Education (DepEd) forbids elements of the Armed Forces from entering school grounds, promoting the school as a "zone of peace" [9]. However, in some cases, the mere presence of soldiers, whether in uniform or civilian attire, provides peace of mind to administrators, faculty, and students, especially since soldiers are actively involved in community relations activities.

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EETEEAP can also empower soldiers to engage in other non-traditional military operations, utilizing the degree they acquire while in service, particularly after retirement. Moreover, it will be an avenue to attain the Philippine Army's vision of having "a well-educated and trained Army" as a product of professional education and training, which includes building and modernizing soldier capabilities, effectively and efficiently developing the character and competence of soldiers befitting a "world-class Army that is a source of national pride by the year 2028" [13].

In the Army's Civil-Military Operations Regiment (CMOR) alone, which is composed of 17 sub-units scattered all over the country, out of the 281 graduates of advanced NCO career courses, only 51 of them are degree holders, 68 earned the minimum of 72 units in college, while 162 are high school graduates. With the opportunity of the EETEEAP that could be offered to soldiers, the Philippine Army can attain its vision to professionalize the Army in the future through EETEEAP (Civil-Military Operations Regiment, 2024). Hence, this study.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

### 2.1 The Soldier's Pre-Entry Training: Transforming Recruit Into A Full-Blown Soldier

A soldier's career begins when they complete their application requirements and submit them to the recruitment center. After a series of qualification exams, aptitude tests, and board deliberations, a successful candidate will be issued a "Call to Military" order, which will require them to leave their current civilian state for military training. One of the pre-qualification requirements for the candidate soldier is to have gained at least 72 units in college or be a skilled high school graduate with national certification (Philippine Army, 2020). This requirement is not similar to that of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Bureau of Fire (BOF), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and other uniformed institutions, whose recruits are all bachelor's degree holders [14][15][16], the Philippine Army accepts undergraduate applicants. It means that all members of the PNP, BJMP, BOF, PCG, and other uniformed institutions are college graduates.

Soldiers, once admitted into service, undergo a series of training. It begins with pre-entry training, followed by career and specialization training. They must continue attending the required courses, training, and seminars to maintain their education and enhance career and service opportunities throughout their tenure until they retire from the service [17].

All soldiers start their careers as entry-level employees. They come from all different backgrounds—they may be recent high school graduates, recent university or service academy graduates, or they may be changing careers or jobs—and are thrown into an organization whose culture, molded by the demands of war, is very different from anything they have ever encountered. To be respected team members, they must simultaneously learn many new tasks [18].

According to a report, [19] all recruits undergo comprehensive and rigorous training, depending on their status, prior to entering the service. While the duration of training varies across services, the shared objective is to comprehensively prepare recruits for their future military roles, addressing all aspects—physical, cognitive, and emotional.

This is also in line as what an article [20] stated, that recruits are being prepared for all aspects of duty, including mental, emotional, and physical. The program provides service members the necessary equipment to carry out their duties as soldiers in the greatest Army in history. This training is not intended to make the recruits' lives difficult but to help them overcome difficulties. Through classroom instruction, fieldwork, and physical exercise, individuals become stronger and more capable. Although it is difficult, many soldiers find lifelong value in it.

The journey in the Army begins with basic training. Highly qualified and motivated instructors will help recruits reach their full potential, find their purpose, develop a desire to serve, and internalize the Army's fundamental principles [21]. Here, the would-be soldiers will learn how to use a rifle, provide first aid, live and work in the field, and improve their fitness and wellness. As stated in Military One Source (2022), the first stage in becoming a soldier is basic training, often referred to as boot camp or combat training. Basic training will teach would-be soldiers how to use a weapon, rappel, and march, as well as discipline and teamwork. The labor is intellectually and physically taxing. It entails pushing oneself to the edge and encountering tension. Therefore, new recruits must prepare in advance and know what to expect.

Pre-entry training will help recruits shed their civilian habits and learn to adopt the fundamental military way of life, known as "Military Professionalism." This pre-entry training will also serve as the foundation for the soldiers' lifelong learning, particularly about their future military roles. This will encompass the prior knowledge that the EETEEAP will assess (CHED, 2024) if a soldier applies for a college degree through EETEEAP.

### 2.2 Training for combat readiness: Teaching soldiers to win wars

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encompass the prior knowledge that the ETEEAP will assess [25] if a soldier applies for a college degree through ETEEAP.

### **2.3 Leading from the front: Developing leaders, enhancing skills**

Leadership is essential in the Philippine Army, an organization where people are crucial to achieving its primary purpose. Leadership is one of the crucial topics in soldiery, and it transcends from pre-entry to retirement. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of solid leadership in the military because it is essential to both mission accomplishment and the welfare of the soldiers under command. Within the military, leadership encompasses not just managerial and leadership skills but also a readiness to serve and make sacrifices for the benefit of the group. Good military commanders must act quickly under duress, communicate clearly with superiors and subordinates, and uphold high morale and discipline within their forces [25] As the saying goes, "A unit is just as strong as the man who leads it." Leadership development and training are two military functions that complement each other. Well-trained soldiers and units are only helpful if they are led effectively, and poorly trained soldiers make it difficult for even the most outstanding leader to achieve much. Leadership development and training are two complementary aspects of learning. As a result, the services invest a significant amount of time and effort in developing their leaders [26].

"Should We Educate or Train Leaders in the Army" (2023) states that training is important in developing leaders, as it provides practical experience with tools and procedures and refines their tactical and strategic skills. Training places a strong emphasis on operational proficiency and the development of specialized skills necessary for military operations. It fosters the capacity to function well under duress. Additionally, training is frequently context-specific, enabling leaders to adjust to their particular difficulties in battle scenarios.

An author [27] states that leader development is a priority because today's soldiers must be prepared to meet the Army's current and future readiness requirements. Talent management and leadership development should be combined to put leaders in the right positions at the correct times. The operational force (unit), the individual, and the institutional Army (education and training) all share responsibilities for leader development. It includes several components at various levels. General officers are responsible for ensuring that the Army has mechanisms in place for training senior leaders at higher levels. Leaders are personally responsible for their subordinates' development at the unit level. Unit commanders and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are responsible for this practical job.

According to an author [28] the institutional, operational, and self-development domains of training and education provide opportunities for the lifelong synthesis of information, abilities, and experiences that contribute to leaders' growth. Therefore, all soldiers should actively work toward becoming

excellent leaders, as it is a lifelong process. Understanding motivations, positively influencing mindsets, and developing leaders prepared for a rapidly changing and uncertain environment should be the primary focuses of leadership and skill training.

Private sector businesses invest in staff development to promote creativity and enhance performance while also investing in innovation and technology to streamline operations and maintain competitiveness. The Army Transformation Roadmap (ATR) envisions a world-class Army by 2028, along with its resource management strategy framework. The ATR incorporates long-term strategic planning, intermediate targets, and frequent assessments to guarantee progress toward creating a modern and reputable Army. Competency-based human resource management is emphasized. Unit leaders should be responsible for deciding how to allocate resources effectively. They can adjust programs and actions based on unit demands, conditions, and objectives. Leaders have discretionary power over their units and subordinates but are also responsible for the results of those decisions.

The Programs of Instruction (POIs) published by the Philippine Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) for sustainment career courses enhance students' competency in resource management, one of the warfighting competencies. This module enables students to understand fundamental principles and concepts of army and sustainment operations relevant to their roles as sustainment NCOs.

The Philippine Army published its Stakeholder Engagement Handbook in 2012 to educate soldiers on the general knowledge of engaging stakeholders. The handbook contains all the information soldiers will need to successfully conduct stakeholder engagement, from the most basic planning mode to the most complex stage of developing required skills and approaches.

An author [29] emphasized the distinction between teaching to think and training to fight. According to him, repetition, realistic situations, and muscle memory are essential for learning a particular combat skill. Thinking about war and the battlefields that follow calls for introspection, study, and guidance. He also said that research, introspection, writing, and interaction with a mentor who can enhance the learning process are the only ways to acquire this knowledge. Similarly, soldiers will never decisively defeat a competent and talented foe by merely reading, thinking, and ranting about the use of weapons systems, especially in the intricate surroundings of combined arms formations. The only way to gain a clear edge and become proficient in combating a crew, staff, or task force is to go through rigorous training, repetition, evaluations, and retraining.

In this, ETEEAP presents an opportunity to level up their leadership skills by making them qualified to accomplish such tasks. The program encourages individuals who have been in the industry for a long time but cannot afford a college

education due to time and opportunity limitations. It cannot be denied that ETEEAP can hone a soldier's leadership attributes and technical skills by recognizing their contributions to society in various fields or disciplines through their duties and responsibilities.

### 3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study explored whether selected career courses of the Philippine Army coupled with various micro-credentials and top-up courses can be used as requisites to continue education outside the military institution, such as management, for soldiers' promotion and career growth after retirement. It also examined whether the courses could be used to gain a college diploma through the ETEEAP.

Further, the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the career courses, micro-credentials, and other top-up courses of the Philippine Army that can be accredited to degree in management under the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) focusing on:

1.1 Program/course objectives; and

1.2 Course contents?

2. What work experiences of the Philippine Army soldiers related to management can be used as benchmarks of ETEEAP equivalency in terms of:

2.1 Job description;

2.2 Personnel designation; and

2.3 Work performance feedback?

3. What are the interventions needed to make the educational programs of the Philippine Army the basis for the Philippine Army soldiers to qualify for ETEEAP and improve their career prospects?

4. How can the Philippine Army soldiers have prior learning assessed and recognized under ETEEAP in terms of:

4.1 Specific requirements;

4.2 Achievements; and

4.3 Processes?

### 4. METHODOLOGY

The case study was used to gather the best answers to the questions that led to an understanding of the current educational system and programs of the Philippine Army soldiers. Although TRADOC has been implementing individual training for soldiers for the past years, the case study explored the current curriculum, its learning methodologies, and the job qualifications that will suit the requirements set by the universities offering ETEEAP.

#### 4.1. Tradition of Inquiry and Generation Method

A non-probabilistic purposive technique was employed, in which the researcher established criteria to classify the informants/participants for the KII and FGD. Accordingly, [30] non-probability purposive sampling employs a non-random criterion, such as the availability, location, or specialized knowledge of the individuals being studied. The researcher examined the experiences of the informants and participants, including their positions, career

paths, and qualifications in both military and academic fields. The researcher's goal in this study is to obtain detailed insights rather than generalize findings. That is why purposeful sampling is beneficial in this study.

The researcher employed the following criteria: (1) relevance to the goals of the study; (2) competence or specialization; (3) diversity of viewpoints; (4) willingness and accessibility; and (5) inclusion and exclusion. The informant or participant must possess information, experience, or traits directly relevant to the subject under study to meet the first condition. Second, the participant or informant should be an authority on the topic or possess specific expertise in the area. Third, to capture a comprehensive understanding of the subject, the informant or participant should represent a range of perspectives. The availability and willingness of the informant/participant to participate in the study are the fourth requirement.

Moreover lastly, the participant or informant must be qualified to participate, given the study's objectives. They are reminded and informed that the information they will be sharing is limited to the focus of the research and not about any unnecessary details that may tarnish the image of their organization. All of the participants and identified informants met the criteria. KII and FGD were then conducted to generate the data. The interview was semi-structured, supported by the interview guide. Before the interview, a request was presented to the Commander, TRADOC; Commander, CMO Regiment; and the Philippine Army Education and Training Staff to introduce the study and seek permission.

Furthermore, the researcher also requested TRADOC's academic plans, training policies, guidelines, curricula, and instructional programs (POIs). Upon approval, initial coordination was made with the Center Directors, Commandants, and Training Group Commanders through the Combined Arms Center. The researcher forwarded the initial questions to them to answer in writing. Then, the interview was scheduled to follow up on their answers and assess their behavior toward the problem. An interview guide was used to maintain control of the interview while allowing flexibility in the interviewee's responses. The style of questioning was informal, allowing the interviewees to elaborate on their responses based on their emotions.

The researcher also facilitated a free flow of discussion in every question, based on the interview guide, but with a certain degree of limitation. Lastly, the training manuals, curricula, programs of instruction (POIs), training policies and directives, and standing operating procedures (SOPs) were also reviewed to provide further insight into the data gathered from the informants. External informants followed the same procedure. After being obtained from the interview, the data was transcribed and narrowed down into themes.

Themes emerged through a thorough examination and interpretation of the data. To thoroughly understand the data, the researcher immersed himself in and reviewed the transcripts several times. The segments of the data were then assigned codes or summaries that captured the essence of the

data. From the data itself, the codes were derived inductively (i.e., a bottom-up approach). The researcher grouped similar codes during the coding process to find more general patterns or ideas. Themes, which represent recurring concepts, ordinary meanings, or essential subjects in the data, were then developed from these patterns. The themes were then examined to ensure they were consistent, backed by the evidence, and unique. During the analysis, some themes were merged, divided, or redefined to ensure that they remained distinct from each other. After that, the researcher contextualized the themes by connecting them to the theoretical framework and research topic. Lastly, themes were presented in the study's findings, accompanied by data quotes and tables that demonstrated their validity and origin.

The researcher used Denzin's methodological triangulation approach to improve the validity and reliability of the data. An author [31] noted that triangulation—utilizing multiple external data-gathering techniques for the same events—may benefit from various external analysis techniques. Researchers employed triangulation to examine the data and then share their findings with others to gain a deeper understanding of how others experience a shared occurrence. Applying triangulation—using data from various sources—can improve the study's reliability.

#### 4.2. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The research was conducted at the Headquarters of the Philippine Army in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, and the Training and Doctrine Command in Camp O'Donnell, Brgy. Sta. Lucia, Capas, Tarlac, where most Philippine Army schools are located. The primary units involved in the study are the Civil-Military Operations School (CMOS) and the Sustainment Center. The researcher also involved external stakeholders from academia or higher education institutions: one from Luzon, one from Visayas, and one from Mindanao, as well as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to validate, compare, and provide a different perspective on the curriculum being used by the TRADOC.

Informants. The participants of this study for the in-depth interview were the commanders, commandants, directors of different schools, and course/ training directors who are handling different career courses such as the AGS NCO Advance Course (AGSNCOAC), FS NCO Advance Course (FSNCOAC), QMS NCO Advance Course (QMNCOAC), and Ordnance Service NCO Advance Course (OSNCOAC). ETEEAP implementers from the PUP Open University System (PUPOUS), education experts from Samar State Polytechnic University (SSPU), and Sulu State University (SSU), and a former CHED Regional Director were also involved in in-depth interviews as external key informants to determine the feasibility of aligning the course curriculum of the Philippine Army training and courses to that of the academic courses. The researcher pre-selected the PUPOUS as a sample university in Luzon due to its maturity in offering and implementing ETEEAP and other distance learning education.

More so, SSPU in Visayas and SSU in Mindanao were also considered as sources informants of higher education experts, not just for their accessibility and convenience of the researcher, but more so, their university would like to apply for deputization of CHed to offer ETEEAP as major military camps and installations are within their reach. Selected soldiers who are graduates of the AGS NCO Advance Course (AGSNCOAC), FS NCO Advance Course (FSNCOAC), QMS NCO Advance Course (QMNCOAC), and Ordnance Service NCO Advance Course (OSNCOAC) were also involved as participants for focus group discussion to cross-validate the gathered information during the in-depth interview.

The interviewees were designated as Informants 1 to 11 for confidentiality purposes. At the same time, the participants in the FGD were identified as Participants 1 to 11

### 4.3. Research Instrument

Since this study employed a qualitative approach, data were gathered through focused and key informant interviews aided by an interview guide. The researcher established criteria to classify the participants in this study based on their knowledge of the Philippine Army's Training and Education System and its benefits on soldiers' careers. The researcher employed the following criteria: (a) relevance to the goals of the study; (b) competence or specialization; (c) diversity of viewpoints; (d) willingness and accessibility; and (e) inclusion and exclusion.

Before the interview, the informants were provided with open-ended questions that were filled out without pressure. Their answers were used for in-depth interviews. During the interviews, the informants and participants were given an overview, and the researcher explained the purpose of the study.

The informants and participants were initially asked about personal details for demographic purposes. The informants and participants were asked about their experiences as military instructors, curriculum developers, and soldier students. After this, they were asked questions that elaborated on the research problem. Questions focused on the research questions to explore the objectives of the courses, the description of jobs designated for program graduates, and performance feedback. Their answers were cross-checked with the requirements of the higher educational institutions offering ETEEAP. The informants and participants were asked about their understanding of the current educational system of the Philippine Army, specifically regarding personal and professional growth, as well as the ETEEAP. These questions led to the assessment and validation of the Philippine Army's current educational system, benchmarked against the ETEEAP. The informants and participants from the Philippine Army were also asked if they would avail of the ETEEAP if given permission.

Using the document analysis template, the curricula, its content and objectives, and the methodology were also

assessed to validate the information the informants and participants provided during in-depth interviews and FGD.

The data obtained from the interview was transcribed. Then, the thematic analysis was conducted, and codes were assigned to narrow them down into themes, allowing the researcher to avoid frequently returning to the transcript or recorded audio. The analysis started once all the data had been transcribed and coded. After the data was interpreted, triangulation was conducted to verify the validity of the result.

### 4.4. Ethical Considerations

During this study, the researcher considered various ethical guidelines to protect participants and informants. The researcher did not gather the data unless the Ethical Clearance for the University Research Ethics Center (UREC) is secured. Upon receiving the Ethical Clearance on September 9, 2024, the researcher immediately sent out a request letter to the different training schools and institutions both in the military and the academe, as well as to the concerned individuals pre-identified as informants and participants of the research.

At the outset, the participants and informants were informed that the information they would disclose would be used purely for the conduct of the study and would not be divulged to any event unrelated to the study. As such, the dignity and well-being of the participants and informants were prioritized, especially since they belong to an institution wherein individual dignity is preserved.

The researcher sought the approval of the Philippine Army's staff for education and training as well as the commander of the Training and Doctrine Command for the review of the operating document (POIs, policies, directives, and SOPs) as they are the one safekeeping such document, responsible for its implementation, and review and revise related policies whenever necessary.

Since most of the documents were borrowed from sources that are restricted and not for public viewing, the security and integrity of all standing operating procedures (SOPs), directives, policies, and other classified documents that were reviewed were religiously observed. As such, the research data remained confidential throughout the study.

In the furtherance of the study, the researcher obtained permission from the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) for the participation of some officers who are military instructors as informants. TRADOC operationally controls various organic, extension, and affiliated centers and schools catering to different specialization and career courses for officers and enlisted personnel.

The use of the informants' and participants' names in the study report was secured, though they allowed the use of their designation or positions to add credibility to the information and credence of the study. However, participants and informants were requested the use of codes instead of their real names to protect them from eventualities.

Lastly, the informants' and participants' approval for the audio recording during the interview was also asked. The audio recording was conducted to ensure that all information

disclosed by the informants and participants was considered and included in the course of this study.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Career Courses and Accreditation under ETEEAP

The Philippine Army provides a wide range of career and specialization courses designed to enhance the skills and competencies of its personnel. These courses include basic and advanced training in areas like logistics, finance, adjutant general service, infantry, armor, and combat support, all of which aim to develop leadership, resource management, and operational skills that are directly applicable to civilian management roles. Under the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP), these military courses can be credited toward a degree in management, provided that the competencies acquired are properly recognized and aligned with industry standards.

The program objectives of these courses focus on developing skills necessary for effective leadership and resource management. Soldiers are trained to manage both human and material resources efficiently, which is a core component of management in civilian sectors as well. The course contents cover various essential topics, including resource allocation, command leadership, and strategic planning, all of which are vital for individuals holding management positions. Additionally, the Philippine Army offers micro-credentials through short courses and seminars, which serve as supplemental learning opportunities. These micro-credentials can reduce the number of subjects soldiers need to take when applying for a degree through ETEEAP, facilitating a smoother transition into civilian educational programs.

### 2. Work Experience of Soldiers Relevant to Management

The work experiences of Philippine Army soldiers offer valuable insights into management tasks, making them highly relevant for ETEEAP equivalency. Soldiers frequently occupy leadership positions, where they are responsible for managing teams, making decisions, and ensuring the effective use of resources—skills that directly translate into managerial functions in the civilian workforce. Job descriptions for these roles often include overseeing operations, managing personnel, and handling logistics, all of which are integral aspects of management.

In terms of personnel designation, soldiers can hold roles such as squad leaders, company commanders, and resource managers. These positions require not only leadership but also the ability to manage operations and people effectively, which are foundational to management in any organization. Furthermore, work performance feedback in the Philippine Army is often focused on how well individuals perform in these roles. Feedback systems evaluate leadership effectiveness, resource management skills, and the ability to maintain operational efficiency, all of which are essential in a management context. This feedback is crucial in demonstrating the relevance of military experience to civilian management roles when applying for ETEEAP accreditation.

### 3. Interventions for Improving ETEEAP Access and Career Prospects

To facilitate greater access to ETEEAP and improve the career prospects of Philippine Army personnel, several key interventions are needed. One significant intervention is curriculum alignment. The Philippine Army must ensure that its career courses are structured in a way that aligns more closely with civilian management curricula, incorporating skills like project management, data-driven decision-making, and other industry-standard practices. This would not only make the courses more applicable for ETEEAP but would also ensure that soldiers are equipped with the skills necessary for successful careers after military service.

Another crucial intervention is industry collaboration. By partnering with universities and industry practitioners, the Philippine Army can ensure that its courses remain up-to-date and aligned with the latest trends in management education. Collaboration with civilian educational institutions will also create clearer pathways for soldiers to transfer their military education into academic credentials, making the transition smoother for soldiers seeking to further their education or pursue new career opportunities after retirement. These interventions would not only facilitate greater recognition of the military training but would also enhance the career prospects of soldiers by preparing them for both military and civilian managerial roles.

### 4. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition under ETEEAP

For Philippine Army soldiers, prior learning assessment (PLA) under ETEEAP is crucial for recognizing the skills and competencies they have acquired through their military training and experience. The specific requirements for ETEEAP accreditation involve soldiers demonstrating that their military training is equivalent to civilian academic coursework. This includes knowledge assessments to evaluate theoretical understanding, as well as practical exercises that assess the application of that knowledge in real-world scenarios.

In terms of achievements, soldiers must provide evidence of their performance in key management tasks, such as leadership, resource management, and strategic decision-making. These achievements can be substantiated through on-the-job training (OJT), completed courses, and documented missions that highlight their leadership and management abilities. The processes for assessment involve compiling a portfolio of military education, training, and performance evaluations, which are then reviewed to determine their equivalency to civilian degree requirements. Soldiers may also be required to participate in additional assessments, such as exams or project submissions, to further validate their learning and competencies. By recognizing and accrediting prior learning through ETEEAP, the Philippine Army can offer its personnel a viable pathway to further education and career advancement outside the military.

In summary, the Philippine Army's career courses, combined with its micro-credentials and specialized training, provide soldiers with skills and experiences that can be accredited to a degree in management under ETEEAP. However, to improve the transferability of these military experiences into civilian qualifications, several interventions are required, including curriculum adjustments and enhanced collaboration with academic institutions. Prior learning assessment processes must be robust to ensure that soldiers' achievements are fully recognized and appropriately accredited, thus improving their career prospects both within and outside the military.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were derived by the researcher based on the findings:

1. The wide variety of career courses offered by the Philippine Army complements the ETEEAP. It provides soldiers with a solid basis for discipline and skill development. These courses enhance the Army's operational effectiveness and efficiency by equipping personnel with essential management and resource management skills, particularly for squad leaders and non-commissioned officers. These educational programs help soldiers transition to civilian careers after serving in the Army, equipping them with valuable skills that can be applied in various fields.

2. Soldiers are given the chance to improve their leadership and administrative skills. In roles that oversee training, morale, welfare, and operational performance, soldiers get the requisite experience. The NCO empowerment initiative enhances the ability of NCOs and promotes mentorship among units. While troops learn skills applicable to civilian work, the Army's curriculum does not correlate with typical bachelor's degree programs, making ETEEAP approval difficult. There is limited college-level training because current educational programs primarily focus on graduate courses. For troops to be eligible for bachelor's degrees in management, the Philippine Army must implement extensive internal and external interventions to improve its educational programs, especially in sustainment career courses.

3. Due to curriculum inconsistencies, the Philippine Army's current career courses must be modified to meet ETEEAP accreditation requirements. The Army must examine current courses and learning outcomes to ensure they fulfill the required competencies to comply with ETEEAP criteria. Moreover, the Army Personnel Management Center's career advisers are crucial in helping soldiers develop professionally and position themselves for future promotion opportunities by assisting them in obtaining ETEEAP certification.

4. The tremendous organizational and logistical skills that soldiers in the Philippine Army possess are demonstrated by the successful integration of sustainment operations with ETEEAP standards. A strong basis for academic acknowledgment of these competencies in management-related tasks is provided by their military

experiences and training accomplishments, which can be evaluated for ETEEAP accreditation. The special character of military honors and recognitions, such as academic distinctions, further validates these abilities. However, aligning the Army's curricula with the ETEEAP's standards and securing the support of the CHED or HEIs is essential.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following are the recommendations of the researcher:

1. On the one hand, the Philippine Army should focus on the enhancement of the program/course objectives and course contents of the four career courses that are inclined to the management field, such as the Adjutant General Service NCO course, Finance Service NCO course, Ordnance Service NCO course, and Quartermaster Service NCO courses otherwise known as Sustainment Operations courses. These career courses provide knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare soldiers to become knowledgeable in positions that supplement the organization's needs, particularly in resource management. The Philippine Army should also enhance the objectives and content of in-house and in-service training, as this training supplements the skills and competencies of soldiers as they progress in their military careers. On the other hand, curriculum developers should focus on developing competencies and skills essential not only for the organization's goals and mission but also from a general management perspective, while considering soldiers' needs and absorptive capacity to develop effective training methodologies. They should ensure that the curricula for these four sustainment courses meet the standards of the management courses in the education industry. Hence, the Philippine Army should conduct needs assessments, design curricula, produce educational resources, develop exercises, and organize tests based on management standards.

2. Since the Philippine Army is institutionalizing the competency-based job description, the soldiers' experiences as small unit leaders, ranging from squad leaders, section leaders, and platoon sergeants, involve management of personnel, finances, and supplies, not to mention the troop's morale and welfare, mental health, and physical health must be included in the document as proof of soldiers' performance. These experiences provide practical and ethical leadership, as well as an understanding of sustainment operations, financial management, and resource allocation, which apply to management disciplines in the civilian sector. The NCO empowerment program is a valuable venue for enhancing soldiers' managerial skills, duties, and influence, as NCOs are tasked with performing roles that officers typically handle. In this program, senior NCOs mentor junior NCOs, supervise administrative operations, educate them on military customs and traditions, and plan social events. This program provides professional experience that closely mirrors civilian work settings and competencies required in the ETEEAP, and therefore, it should be sustained and institutionalized Army-wide. The Philippine Army's performance feedback systems, such as rubrics, commander's feedback, peer ratings,

instructor evaluations, performance reports, and annual inspections, are all effective but subject to manipulation if not properly conducted. The Philippine Army should develop a unified evaluation system that caters to the criteria set for ETEEAP. It must be objective to measure the soldiers' proficiency and aptitude in addressing problems, the quality of their output, identifying areas for improvement, and contributing to the unit's mission. This also includes evaluating fellow soldiers' performance, comprehension, peer interaction, deference to authority, and assessing management skills.

3. Since the Philippine Army's educational programs are not yet at the level of ETEEAP accreditation because the curricula being used differ from those of academic institutions, it is necessary to align the Army's career courses with ETEEAP standards, particularly the four sustainment courses that are closely aligned with management courses. The Philippine Army should revisit the curricula of these courses, using the curriculum in academia as the basis for objective formulation and collaborating with academic schools. The Philippine Army should study subjects and learning outcomes to determine what students should learn. The Army should also review the curriculum to ensure alignment with ETEEAP standards. The Philippine Army should also establish a system that will provide feedback to Headquarters on the responsiveness and effectiveness of these programs.

4. The Army Personnel Management Center (APMC) should give career advice to soldiers seeking professional growth opportunities, career paths, and relevant training courses and certification programs. They should be responsible for obtaining ETEEAP accreditation for the career and personal advancement of the soldiers. The Philippine Army should also develop a framework that will serve as the foundation of the APMC for pre-evaluating the soldiers availing ETEEAP to ensure that the soldiers' vast expertise soldiers assigned to sustainment jobs, orders issued, and other documentary proof for holding management-related positions, such as position descriptions, duty statements, performance evaluations, letters of recommendation, project reports, training certificates, awards and decorations, certificates of appreciation, recognition, and commendation, will not be wasted. The Philippine Army should also seek the intervention of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and deputized Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for curriculum review, alignment, skills and performance evaluation, and enhancement of training programs.

The Philippine Army soldier, who has been in service for several years, has already acquired various qualifications that the ETEEAP can credit. However, there is a need for multiple interventions to ensure that the Philippine Army is aligned with the ETEEAP procedures. With the recommended policy framework, the current curriculum, job description, and knowledge and skills will serve as the input for review and evaluation. The Philippine Army Education and Training Staff and the Training Command must extensively coordinate, collaborate, and enter into a

partnership agreement with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which can be endorsed to AFP Education, Training, and Doctrine Command and Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Education and Training, J8, AFP for adoption at the AFP level, to guarantee career accreditation in other primary services.

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