

ASSESSMENT OF THE GRADUATES OF CANDIDATE SOLDIER COURSE (2020-2022) IN THE MILITARY WELLNESS MODULE

Carole S. Untalan¹, Annalyne T. Pahunang¹, Nestor L. Sabud, Jr.¹, ¹Corpuz .Emmanuel G, Dailyn S. Leopardas¹, C² and Denis A. Tan², Jenyliza T. Uchang², Erly C. Cordovah

¹4th Division (Mentor) Training School¹, Camp Osito Bahian, Brgy. 10, Malaybalay City Bukidnon

²Science Education Department, Central Mindanao University, University Town, Musuan, Bukidnon, 8710 Philippines

Correspondence Tel.: +639175018095, denistan@cmu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT: *The research entitled "Assessment of the Graduates of Candidate Soldier Course (CSC)- Military Wellness Module, 2020-2022" focuses on the integration and effectiveness of the Military Wellness Modules into the training program of CSC. Since the wellness module precisely addresses soldiers' physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, the present research has assessed the effectiveness of the implemented wellness initiatives among the recent graduates from CSC. It utilized a mixed-methods approach, where data were gathered through structured surveys and face-to-face interviews with supervisors of CSC graduates from different battalions within 4ID. Wellness dimensions to be analyzed involved leadership-followership, spirituality, financial literacy, social activities, sports, family orientation, and environment-related activities. The results showed that, although the greater number of graduates coped well with the wellness programs, showing remarkable development in many areas, there were significant discrepancies in both implementation and outcomes for the different units. Some graduates showed deficiencies, especially in leadership-followership, spirituality, and financial literacy, and this indicates that the programs are not that very effective across all participants. This is a reflection of the effectiveness of these wellness practices differing across units and thereby shows the further need to work on standardization and targeted improvements. The study concludes that while the Military Wellness Modules have generally been a success in fostering soldier wellness, continuous assessment and refinement are necessary in case the identified gaps are to be bridged, with programs meeting the diverse needs of all soldiers. This may include harmonization of best practices, greater training for unit leaders, and making wellness programs more specific for each unit to best help the soldier in his overall development*

Keyword Candidate Soldier Course (CSC), Military Wellness Module, Soldier Wellbeing, Leadership-followership, Spirituality, Financial Literacy, Social Activities, Physical and Mental Wellbeing, Unit Discrepancies, Program Standardization, Targeted Improvements, Soldier Development

1. INTRODUCTION

the training program in national security, the military role of cannot be undermined. Among the basic training courses, the Candidate Soldier Course (CSC) is the foundation and transformation of a civilian into a disciplined, physically fit, tough soldier. The course generally consists of and mentally to many modules of physical, mental, and tactical training developed to create the necessary skills and attributes in an individual to make them into a fine soldier [1]

years, there has been the realization and emphasis on the overall well-being of military personnel, considering that mere physical fitness is inadequate to meet the strong tasking current military service demands. The result was the introduction of Military Wellness Modules bundled up in the CSC and provided a talk on physical fitness, amongst other modules that cut across being mental health, emotional resilience, and social well-being. The intent of these modules is to overall increase the health of the soldier, ensuring they are better prepared and readiness to surmount the physical and psychological challenges of the military [2]

While wellness modules in the practice of creating and promoting a healthy lifestyle remain incredibly important, a dearth of empirical research with regard to how there is a dearth of effective they are. Thus, this study answers the above research derived from recent graduates of the Candidate Soldier Course. Determining the influence of such modules will be crucially being and readiness of a soldier-on the well-being of the personnel [3-the long in training and for the long.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of Military Wellness Modules into the Candidate Soldier Course represents a significant shift in military training philosophy, emphasizing a more comprehensive approach to soldier readiness. However, the effectiveness of these modules in enhancing the well-being and operational readiness of soldiers remains under-researched. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical data on how these modules have impacted the graduates of the CSC from 2020 to 2022.

The primary problem this study seeks to address is whether the Military Wellness Modules have significantly improved the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of CSC graduates, as intended. This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What military wellness did the graduates develop?
2. Do the units differ on their military wellness practices?
3. How do the end user perceived military wellness developed among the graduates?

Review of Related Literature

1. The Evolution of Military Training Programs

Military training has undergone significant transformations over the decades, driven by the need to adapt to the changing nature of warfare and the complexities of modern military service. Traditionally, military training programs were centered around physical conditioning and combat readiness, with limited focus on the mental and emotional well-being of soldiers [4]. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of a holistic approach to soldier development, leading to the integration of wellness modules within training programs [5].

The Candidate Soldier Course (CSC) is a critical training program aimed at preparing new recruits for military service. It combines rigorous physical training with instruction in military tactics, discipline, and teamwork (Smith & Brown, 2020). Recognizing the importance of mental and emotional resilience, the CSC has evolved to include Military Wellness Modules designed to enhance the overall well-being of soldiers [6]. These modules address various aspects of wellness, including stress management, mental health support, and the development of social and emotional skills [7].

2. The Importance of Military Wellness

The concept of military wellness encompasses the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of soldiers. It is increasingly acknowledged that a soldier's effectiveness on the battlefield is not solely determined by physical strength and tactical skill, but also by their mental and emotional resilience [8]. Research has shown that soldiers who are mentally and emotionally resilient are better equipped to handle the stresses of military life and are more likely to have successful careers [9].

Military Wellness Modules are designed to foster this resilience by providing soldiers with the tools they need to manage stress, build strong interpersonal relationships, and maintain a healthy work-life balance [10]. These modules are based on the understanding that the well-being of soldiers is directly linked to their performance and readiness [11]. For instance, studies have shown that wellness programs can lead to reduced rates of PTSD, lower levels of anxiety and depression, and improved overall job satisfaction among soldiers .

3. Assessment of Wellness Programs in Military Training

Despite the recognized importance of wellness in military training, there is a need for more empirical research to assess the effectiveness of Military Wellness Modules, particularly within the context of the Candidate Soldier Course (CSC). Previous studies have highlighted the positive outcomes associated with wellness programs, but few have focused specifically on the CSC and its graduates[12].

Research conducted by Brown and Miller [2] on the impact of wellness programs in military settings found that participants reported improved physical and mental health, greater resilience, and higher levels of job satisfaction. However, these findings were based on programs implemented in established military units, rather than training programs for new recruits. Therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap by assessing the impact of the Military Wellness Modules on graduates of the CSC from 2020 to 2022.

The study will explore how these modules have influenced the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of graduates, and whether they have contributed to their overall readiness for military service. By examining the experiences of CSC graduates, this research will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of wellness programs in military training and offer recommendations for future program development.

II. METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The primary tools for data gathering included structured survey questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. This dual approach was designed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Military Wellness Module on the graduates of the Candidate Soldier Course (CSC) from 2020 to 2022.

2. Participants

The study focused on the supervisors of the CSC graduates assigned to various battalions within the 4th Infantry Division (4ID) Area of Operation. The supervisors were chosen as respondents due to their direct interaction with and assessment of the graduates' performance in real-world military operations.

The survey was distributed to supervisors of CSC graduates from 21 course classes

3. Data Collection

The primary data collection tool was a structured survey questionnaire designed to gather feedback from supervisors on their impressions of the CSC graduates. The survey aimed to evaluate the graduates' performance based on several criteria, including physical fitness, mental resilience, discipline, teamwork, and overall readiness for military duties. The rating scale used in the survey is as follows:

- Outstanding (91%-100%): Maintains a high standard of performance in all areas.
- Very Satisfactory (85%-90%): Always meets requirements and excels in most areas.
- Satisfactory (75%-84%): Meets normal requirements and job standards.
- Unsatisfactory (71%-74%): Sometimes deficient on important performance job requirements and standards.
- Poor (70% and below): Grossly deficient in performance usually falls in all job requirements.
- Not Observed

The survey was administered by highly skilled researchers who were trained to recognize and address ambiguous or challenging responses. Their expertise ensured that the data collected was accurate and reflective of the respondents' true perceptions.

To complement the survey data, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a subset of respondents. These interviews provided deeper insights into the supervisors' experiences and opinions regarding the effectiveness of the Military Wellness Module. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for open-ended responses that could capture nuances not easily addressed in the survey.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion on Military Wellness Developed by Graduates

Data analysis has indicated that over 2020-2022, CSC graduates have developed dimensions in military wellness in a number of programs that include leadership-followership, spirituality, financial literacy, social activities, sports, family-oriented activities, and environment-related activities. Each

of the program designs develops particular aspects of soldier wellness that all contribute to holistic development.

The Leadership-Followership Development was conceptualized to cover the development of both leadership and followership skills among soldiers because both are essential for effective military operations. Most CSC graduates developed the necessary leadership and followership skills, hence the overall success of the program. On the other hand, the data also indicate that a fair number of soldiers could not apply the aforementioned skills in behavior as depicted by some unsatisfactory ratings. This would serve to indicate that, though the program is very helpful, it may not serve all participants equally well. The findings are consistent with those by Kolditz [13], who insisted on the training in leadership, taking into account the different level of readiness and capability among the soldiers. This program should be adapted to avoid one-size-fits-all approaches to meet the needs of various soldiers, aiming at intended better outcomes. It ensure that all participants in the program can apply successfully principles of leadership and followership in their role.

The aim and objective of the Spirituality Management program included the holistic development of soldiers using spiritual wellness. Most of the respondents claimed that the graduates coped well with the program, and therefore, the efficacy of the program was overall good. However, the unsatisfactory ratings reflected some flaws in its effectiveness. This might mean that spiritual wellness was facilitated overall, but perhaps the program needs an adjustment in order to service all soldiers uniformly, especially those who might be less willing or prepared for that sort of integration. These findings correspond with Pargament's [14] work because he suggested that spirituality plays an ambivalent role in building up resilience and morally correct decision-making in military contexts. The program needs to be modified so it serves the myriad spiritual needs of soldiers: namely, it must be fine-tuned to be more inclusive, so that there can be different levels of spiritual preparedness.

Financial Literacy is an essential program for soldiers, equipping them with the necessary skills to manage personal finances, prepare for future needs, and avoid falling into financial traps. The Financial Literacy program was an overall mediocre success; most of the graduates were coping and had already learned most of the basic financial management skills taught in the program. In any event, poor development of these skills was observed in a minority of soldiers, according to comments received. This means further program development to ensure that all soldiers have strong financial management skills. The findings of the study support the assertion of financial literacy in military environments since, according to Lusardi and Mitchell [15], it is significant for long-term financial security and choice. The program improvement will yield results entailing increased financial security for all categories of participating soldiers.

Another critical domain of focus of the training was Military Social Activities, which tends to develop camaraderie and morale. The generally successful program usually had a majority of the graduates with very good social skills, although some unsatisfactory ratings in the program still exist, which means the program is not consistent and it

thereby causes variable results among soldiers. This correlates with the assertion of Bartone in 2006 that social cohesion and morale were critical to the maintenance of military capabilities and needed to be developed, uniformly, to an increasing level. This scheme must be bettered in such a manner to be filled with a more standard approach in which all the soldiers benefit more equitably from the social wellness initiatives.

Physical fitness is supported through sports programs as part of CSC. Vast majority of the respondents reported it to have made a difference, and in general, Graduates achieved high levels of physical fitness. There are a few poor ratings, though, which suggests that there may be some problems with the actual implementation of the program delivered, or graduates did not follow it through. Although the latter presents physical fitness as a priority, it does not seem to be applied effectively and equally in all soldiers' training. According to research work done by Shephard [16], the critical role of physical fitness in military readiness means more intense and continuous application of sports activity in programs.

Family-Oriented Activity program targeted developing social and emotional well-being by developing supportive and cohesive families. The highest percentage of the graduates was able to adapt according to this program, and the outcomes were good. However, some soldiers did not measure up in integrating the life principles based on the fact that they had unsatisfactory ratings. Efforts must be geared towards meeting the needs and overcoming the present hardships of soldiers to balance family and military requirements, as was demonstrated by Segal [17] in administrative considerations of the military family program. A lot could be done in assisting soldiers to overcome demands in these two areas of life existence in ensuring that they stay closer to their families while attending efficiently to their military duties for improved performance and efficiency of the program.

Another area of the CSC was Environment-Related Activities, which are a program developed to inculcate in the soldiers, the sub-culture of protecting the environment. Most of those who responded said that the graduates adapted to and put into practice principles of environmental wellness successfully. On the other hand, unsatisfactory ratings of some respondents suggest that not all soldiers did apply those principles in their duties consistently. This may suggest a need for a more practical or rigorous delivery of the program. Seelig [21] affirms the same by relating that environmental stewardship is an intensive area in military matters which can only be fruitful with continuous education and implementation of the specified policy. The program should be stronger in offering a guarantee that the environmental wellness principles will be continuously and consistently applied by the soldiers in their posts to bring better results out of the system. By and large, this is a development of military wellness among graduates of the CSC across the programs. However, this finding presents an even greater need for flexibility and responsiveness in these programs as the presence of unsatisfactory ratings is indicated across every area.

This will achieve more universally successful outcomes, be tailored to meet whatever desired challenge for some soldiers. Further, gaps have to be covered in earnest as far as effective and consistent program execution can help drive a holistic development of wellness among the military. Manipulative further refinement should be undertaken on the thorough evaluation of these wellness programs so that all soldiers will be well-prepared, both in personal resilience and professional competence, to lessen the attrition rates.

Variations in Military Wellness Practices Across Units

Analysis of military programs on wellness indicates that there are a lot of differences in their implementation and outcome in various units; hence, they are not common in nature. These differences are to be seen under one of the major wellness dimensions: leadership-followership, spiritual, financial literacy, social activities, sports, family-orientation, and environmental activities.

The variance of the unsatisfactory ratings between the Leadership-Followership Development and Spirituality Management Programs indicates that some units are more effective in integrating these wellness aspects into their training regimens than others. This may be as a result of different training methodologies, leadership styles, or purely levels of commitment by unit commanders to these programs. Research by Daanen et al. [18] looks at leadership as one of the major drivers in the dissemination of wellness practices within organizational culture, providing an explanation of why some units fare relatively better than others in these areas. This therefore suggests that the availability and efficiency of leadership and spirituality training for unit commanders should be put first, to ensure that all soldiers derive equal benefit from these programs.

Mixed results in the Financial Literacy and Military Social Activities programs suggest many units are successful in promoting these aspects of wellness, with significant variations in how they are implemented. These differences likely stem from one or more of three sources of variation: resource allocation, program delivery, or emphasis placed on these programs by unit leaders. Lusardi and Mitchell [19] add that, ideally, with the varied application of financial literacy training, results are likely to be the same, as dictated by the data obtained. This then requires standardized training protocols and uniform resource allocation that would offer every department the ability to present financial literacy and social wellness programs.

Results may vary from one unit focusing solely on sports or family-oriented programs, as their resource endowment is different, their stringent focus on any of these activities, or maybe their training styles. In this respect, a unit that possesses relatively more resource and an approach to the improvement of physical fitness and family support, it is expected to perform relatively well. This finding is in accordance with Gabbard's research [20], which suggested the need for increased investment and support from unit leaders because the success of physical and social programs, in reality, depended on it. This would go a long way towards standardizing outcomes and ensuring that all soldiers benefited from these wellness initiatives.

The variability of environment-related activities success, as similarly portrayed with the unsatisfactory ratings would

indicate that certain units treat environmental practices as higher than some units do treatment of these. This may arise on the variance level of commitment to environmental stewardship or understanding the real essence of the program. To Seelig [21] the environmental practices will work efficiently in military units if supported with institutions, enough focus of leadership. Therefore, in order to enhance the inputs of such activities, concerted efforts need to be made to mainstream environmental stewardship within each unit, driven by leadership and institutional support.

Differences in military wellness practices that exist for implementation of programs and program evaluations do express the need for standardizing military wellness practices. Units with lesser effectiveness can be supported with more training for the leaders or more resource allocation intended for program delivery. Such inequalities may be addressed with measures to standardize best practices across the units, ensuring that the wellness programs are applied more uniformly. Other sources of discrepancy between units can be addressed by offering more training for leaders of units and modifying programs so that they fit the specific units and contexts better. These are necessary to enhance program efficiency and ensure that every soldier gets full benefits from the military wellness initiative.

End Users' Perceptions of Military Wellness Development Among Graduates

These end-user perceptions, particularly those of supervisors and commanders, help to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of the military wellness programs for their CSC graduate. Overall, perceptions tend to reflect a generally positive view of the programs, but disturbing areas of concern have been identified that suggest areas in need of being addressed.

Furthermore, it shows that the wellness military programs were in general useful in that they acted as a tool of imparting necessary skills and characteristics in the graduates. Endorsement of graduates' sound assimilation in areas such as leadership-followership, spirituality, financial literacy, social activities, sports, family-oriented activities while being part of the program, and environment-related activities, all point to the individual program effectiveness in nurturing and breeding the significant areas of wellness as mentioned above. This is in line with other studies on military training programs, which usually show that organized wellness programs yield improved soldier performance and greater effectiveness overall.

But from these very positive consensus impressions, the fact that there are some programs with clusters of unsatisfactory ratings hints at other issues of salient concern about effectiveness in some programs. These concerns suggest some inconsistency in either the quality of program delivery or receipt across the various units. For instance, the gaps identified with the Leadership-Followership and Spirituality Management Programs suggest that not all graduates fully benefited from these aspects of the training. Same can also be seen in the programs on Financial Literacy, Military Social Activities, and the rest of the same nature. Such disparities may result from implementation differences in the program or in the way such programs are incorporated in the normal routine of daily trainings [20] & [19].

User feedback strongly highlights the process of assessment and re-tuning of all military wellness programs. Embracing the gaps and inconsistencies thereby identified is undertaken in ways that improve the analogously global profile of such initiatives. The feedback of the supervisors and commanders may help in structuring additional targeted and efficient training modules so that all the soldiers can be benefited by those intended initiatives. In addition, the manner in which the programs are implemented and the ways in which best practices are conducted across these units need to be refined in order to yield more consistent, reliable outcomes. Already, as noted by Seelig [21]), it will only be through continuous improvement and adaptation that relevance and effectiveness can be preserved over time in a military environment that is perpetually dynamic in nature.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment of the Graduates of Candidate Soldier Course, 2020-2022: Military Wellness Module provides some glimpse of incidents into the effectiveness and differentiation in soldiers' military wellness. The results indicate that wellness programs conducted for graduates of the CSC have generally been adequate to foster salient features of wellness among soldiers, such as leadership-followership, spirituality, financial literacy, social activities, sports, family-oriented activities, and environment-related activities. Most graduates adapted well to these programs, which is indicative of the positive effect of the latter on holistic soldier development. On the other hand, unsatisfactory ratings are shown in most of the areas, indicating full implementation and effectiveness are yet to be achieved, to wit, leadership-followership, managing spirituality, financial literacy, and environmental practices. These findings mean these programs will not impress as well in every unit and to all participants. It also points out variability in the success of these units in integrating wellness practices within training in some units more than others. While the supervisors and commanders generally viewed the wellness programs positively, they did note areas that needed improvement, which underlined the need for continuous assessment and refinement so that the programs really meet the needs of all soldiers.

The results of the study now produce a number of recommendations for further optimizing the effectiveness of military wellness programs. First, all units should ensure that standard best practices are instituted consistently so that their application and impact are maximized on wellness modules. Core guidelines with standardized operating procedures will ensure these areas continue to be implemented uniformly and effectively in diverse training environments. Second, improvements are needed in areas where ratings were unsatisfactory-for instance, leadership-followership and financial literacy. Empower these skills among the graduates with extended training, resources, or practice in the field. Third, changes at the unit level should be done through conducting evaluations to identify certain challenges or issues a specific unit may face. The intervention should be tailored to meet those issues and allow all units to smoothly integrate wellness into their training. Fourth, a continuous mechanism for improvement through feedback should be instituted. The ability to take input from the end users will also allow the programs to change and remain relevant to use participants.

Finally, the wellness programs should be regularly evaluated and monitored in order to understand their impacts and efficiency. Periodic reviews, surveys, and performance appraisals will provide data that shall be used in informed adjustments and assure continued success of the programs.

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