

THE ARMY CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT
MODEL: KNOW-DO-BECOME

by

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Research Question:

What models do we use to develop a soldier's character or morality? What must the Army Profession do to develop character in Soldiers and Army Civilians? What is the role of education, training, and experience?

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A man can be a superb creative artist . . . or a scientist . . . and still be a very bad man. What the bad man cannot be is a good sailor, or soldier, or airman. Military institutions thus form a repository of moral resources that should always be a source of strength within the state.¹

— General Sir John Hackett

We cannot assume that [an officer's] private life is above reproach. He may be loyal to his superiors and his profession but disloyal to his wife He may keep physically fit but have General Grant's weakness for strong drink. He may work hard for victory but never go to church to pray for it. However, if he has competent professional virtues he may still be an exemplary military leader.²

— General Maxwell Taylor

INTRODUCTION

The above epigraph demonstrates two contrasting views regarding the role of character in a military leader. While personal views may vary, the Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1 articulates that one of the three distinct roles for the Army professionals is honorable servants of the nation.³ This infers that the Army has a moral responsibility to ensure its members are professionals of character, who live and uphold the Army Ethic and maintain the trust of the nation. Despite the doctrinal emphasis of character in the Army professionals, Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE) has noted that currently, there is “the absence of an accessible, accepted, comprehensible, and adaptable concept for developing and assessing character.”⁴

¹ Sir John Winthrop Hackett, “The Military in the Service of the State,” in *War, Morality, and the Military Profession*, 2d ed., ed Malham M. Wakin (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 119.

² Maxwell Taylor, “A Do-It-Yourself Code for the Military,” in *U. S. Army War College Selected Readings. Professional Ethics for Senior Leaders* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1995), 141.

³ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 2-6.

⁴ Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), *Developing the Character of Trusted Army Professionals: Forging the Way Ahead*, 3, accessed May 19, 2016, <http://cape.army.mil/repository/white-papers/character-development-white-paper.pdf>.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine existing models for character development and recommend a model for the Army character development. The recommended model aims to provide an accessible, accepted, comprehensive, and adaptable concept that would achieve the desired end state.

METHODOLOGY

This paper used a modified Army Design Methodology (ADM) as the broad framework for qualitative analysis. Since the Army White Paper on character development has already outlined the current state, desired end state, and the problem statement, this paper focused on developing the operational approach, or a model, to address the problem.⁵ The proposed operational approach delineated the lines of effort along education, training, and experience. In each line of effort, this study derived objectives based on the analysis from both doctrinal and non-doctrinal documents. The resulting lines of effort contributed in constructing an accessible, comprehensive, and adaptable model that would be accepted by the Army professionals.

DOCTRINAL INGREDIENTS

What do the Army doctrines say are the necessary elements of character development? ADRP 1 describes three critical tasks for the Army Profession: (1) develop expert knowledge, (2) apply military expertise, and (3) certify Army professionals and organizations.⁶ In other words, character development involves developing moral-ethical knowledge that “encompasses the legal and moral contents of the Army Ethic and their

⁵ “Figure 2-Character Development Project” outlines the problem statement and desired outcome; CAPE, *Developing the Character of Trusted Army Professionals: Forging the Way Ahead*, 5.

⁶ ADRP 1, 5-1.

application by various methods of moral reasoning and decision making.”⁷ ADRP 1 also acknowledges that in applying the Army Ethic, “honest mistakes and setbacks are inevitable and can be valuable learning experiences, contributing to our professional development.”⁸ The expert knowledge and its application, then, must be demonstrated through certification. Certification provides a measure of accomplishment in character development. Currently, the Army uses promotion and evaluation system, professional training and education within the Army schools, and centralized certifications and assignments for leadership and command positions, as certification methods.⁹

In addition to ADRP 1, ADRP 6-22 provides similar components for character development. According to ADRP 6-22, leaders of character are developed through continual study, reflection, experience, and feedback. At the same time, this leadership doctrine states that character development is a process involving ... self-development, coaching, counseling, and mentoring. This indicates that while “individuals are [primarily] responsible for their own character development,” they must be supported by leaders who are “responsible for encouraging, supporting and assessing the efforts of their people.”¹⁰ FM6-22 particularly emphasizes that it is a part of leader responsibility at every level to encourage character development of the subordinates, because “character forms over time through education, training, and experience in a continuous, iterative process.”¹¹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ ADRP 1, 5-2.

⁹ Ibid., 5-3.

¹⁰ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 3-5.

¹¹ Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leadership Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 5-4.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT MODELS

One of the models worth studying is West Point's character development models for the cadets. For individual character development, Sean T. Hannah and Patrick J. Sweeney proposed Model for the Development of Authentic Moral Leaders, consisting of "the Triad of Moral Capabilities": moral agency (Be), moral complexity (Know), and moral efficacy (Do).¹² In this model, Hannah and Sweeney suggested that moral agency is developed through self-regulation and self-reflection with regard to one's moral thoughts and actions, while moral complexity is developed by broadening moral education to achieve higher level of cognitive development. The model further stipulated that moral efficacy results from experiences, or hands-on practice of their moral leadership through incremental goal-setting.

To describe the impact of a leader's character on the development of follower's trust, Hannah and Sweeney also proposed "Interdependence Model for the Development of Trust." As figure 1 demonstrates, trust is developed through a continuous reinforcing cycle between a leader who displays desirable ethical behaviors and followers who aspire to incorporate a leader prototype in to their self-schema.¹³ According to this model, "followers will use leaders of character as exemplars . . . to learn moral-ethical behavior, learn attitudes pertaining to morals and ethics, gain ideas on how to develop needed attribute, and most importantly, form comparative standards for their development."¹⁴

¹² Sean T. Hannah and Patrick J. Sweeney, "Framework of Moral Development and the West Point Experience: Building Leaders of Character for the Army and the Nation," in *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: MA, McGraw Hill, 2007), 70.

¹³ Sean T. Hannah and Patrick J. Sweeney, "High-Impact Military Leadership: The Positive Effects," in *Forging the Warrior's Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: MA, McGraw Hill, 2007), 95.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

Therefore, the authors of this model concluded that trusted leaders will not only be effective combat leaders but also most effective character developers, which is a key concept of transformational leadership theory.

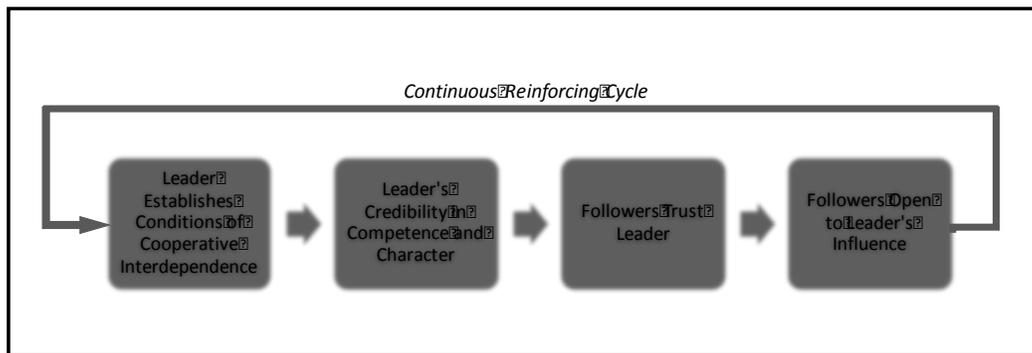


Figure 1. Interdependent Model for the Development of Trust

Source: Created by author, adopted from Patrick J. Sweeney and Sean T. Hannah, “High-Impact Military Leadership: The Positive Effects,” in *Forging the Warrior’s Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: MA, McGraw Hill, 2007), 93.

Another model worth studying is the psychological model of cognitive behavioral therapy. The proponents of cognitive behavioral therapy assert that most of human learning is cognitively mediated; thus, there is causal relationship between thoughts (or beliefs) and behaviors.¹⁵ Simply stated, what one knows, or believes, is directly manifested in how that person acts. While this model does not specifically deal with character, it is helpful to understand that assessing maladaptive beliefs and designing

¹⁵ Philip C. Kendall and Steven F. Bacon, “Cognitive Behavior Therapy,” in *Paradigms in Behavior Therapy: Present and Promise*, ed. Daniel B. Fishman, Frederick Rotgers, and Cyril M. Franks (New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, 1988), 160.

learning experiences that could counter dysfunctional beliefs can positively influence a person's behavior.

The last model for consideration is the Christian view of sanctification. Since ADRP 1 states that the Army Ethic has its origins not only in the philosophical heritage, but also “theological and cultural traditions,” it would seem beneficial to understand a theological perspective.¹⁶ The Christian view of progressive sanctification “can be described in its richest meaning as transformation into the image of Christ.”¹⁷ This process involves the increasing understanding of who Jesus is as revealed in the Scriptures and daily application of the implications of one's identification with Christ in his death and resurrection.¹⁸ As a Christian grows in the knowledge of Christ and applies that knowledge in worship, fellowship, and discipleship, he takes on the characters which belong to Christ.¹⁹

Similar to Hannah and Sweeney's model, the Christian view of sanctification also emphasizes the role of the leader (one who develops) and the progressive nature of this development. Apostle Paul states that a Christians “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”²⁰ The passive verb, “being transformed,” refers to God's action in the life of a Christian, meaning a Christian is not the one who is causing the transformation.

¹⁶ ADRP 1, 2-7.

¹⁷ John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, vol. 2, *Selected Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 310.

¹⁸ This is in reference to Philippians 3:10.

¹⁹ Murray, 311.

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:18 (English Standard Version).

Additionally, the phrase, “from one degree of glory to another,” indicates that this transformation is not instantaneous but progressive.

SYNTHESIZING MODELS

Based on various models discussed, three common ingredients seem to emerge for character development. First, every model requires a level of knowledge and understanding. Whether philosophical, psychological, or theological, there is a continual increase of knowledge that serves as presuppositional foundation for one’s belief on what is ethical and moral. Next, there is the application of one’s belief, meaning knowledge gained must be applied and practiced. Finally, there is demonstrated progressive change that is certified, or validated. In other words, character development involves learning the expectations through instruction and study, adhering to expectations through discipline and commitment, adopting a personal belief in what has been learned, and, furthermore, influencing the decisions and actions of others.²¹

These three ingredients (knowledge, application, and certification) for character development seem to line up well with the lines of effort (LOE). First, the LOE for education serves as the source for increasing knowledge. Both institutional and self education can contribute to increasing “the capacity to make logical inferences and to judge the logical consistency of ideas and behaviors.”²² Second, the LOE for training provides opportunities for soldiers to apply the ethical and moral knowledge. Training also facilitates leaders to assess soldiers’ propensity to demonstrate character traits and their capacity for making moral decisions. Third, the LOE for experience feeds into

²¹ CAPE, “Army Concept for Character Development: A Review of the Relevant Literature,” (2015), 10.

²² John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Publishing, 2008), 366.

reflection that prompts progressive change. Experience “focuses on one’s introspective awareness of things that are happening within oneself and . . . one’s environment.”²³

Proper reflection by the soldier and the leader is important because an experience can be “inadequate, misinterpreted, or misused.”²⁴

THE ARMY CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS MODEL

Addressing the West Point cadets in 1998, General Colin Powell said, “You can inscribe Duty, Honor, Country, on every granite block and it would mean nothing unless those words are engraved in your heart.”²⁵ What Powell meant is that genuine character shaping occurs in a person’s heart—a place where no one can observe. In that sense, no character development model could ever prove its real effectiveness. The only thing that models can measure is the outward behaviors and changes in behaviors. With such a limitation in mind, this study proposes the following character requirements model, (see figure 2). Since the model focuses on the observable behaviors, it could also be referred to as “the professional behavioral alignment model.”

The foundation of this model is the legal requirements. The Army professionals must abide by the legal foundations, such as the U.S. Constitution, Uniformed Code of Military Justice, and Army Regulations. As a military profession, the Army does not, and cannot, retain anyone who acts outside the legal boundaries. Even in times of war, this model would ensure that the Army does not bring in people with criminal records, who

²³ Frame, 365.

²⁴ Ibid., 366.

²⁵ Don M. Snider, “Developing Leaders of Character at West Point,” in *Forging the Warrior’s Character: Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: MA, McGraw Hill, 2007), 5.

could potentially damage the Army's role as the honorable profession and the trust of the Nation.

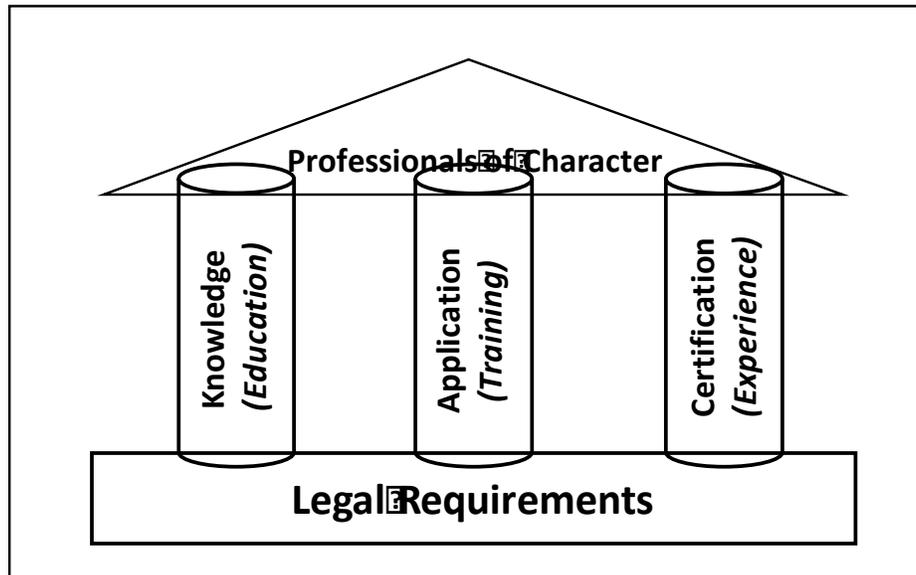


Figure 2. The Army Character Requirements Model

Source: Created by author

Above the legal requirements are three pillars (or three ingredients) for character development. The first pillar is knowledge, which supports Education LOE. If “leader development is the deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process, grounded in Army values,” then professional military education develops cognitive knowledge commensurate with rank and position from the basic training to the senior service college.²⁶ Education involves more than just academic, or intellectual, knowledge. It also involves existential knowledge (knowing one self and one’s belief), as well as relational

²⁶ Department of the Army, Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 7.

knowledge (knowing what others believe and how to relate to different beliefs). In addition, education includes how to properly integrate the Army Ethic and character assessments in the unit training.

The second pillar is application, in support of Training LOE. Character training is integrated into every aspect of military life. Raters receive periodic training on how to evaluate ethical behavior or decision making, while the rated personnel are informed to understand the criteria by which they are evaluated, from daily interactions to major training exercises.²⁷ Moreover, every After Action Review parcels out questions, such as “was it ethical,” and “did we accomplish the mission in the right way,” to highlight the ethical and moral aspects of the mission. Character training does not stop with a classroom presentation; rather, leaders energize creative and natural ways to bring the Army Ethic to life.²⁸ Most importantly, leaders foster an environment, where soldiers are free to apply and practice virtues without fear of reprisal.

The last pillar is certification in conjunction with Experience LOE. Experience capitalizes on reflection and the process of becoming a more virtuous professional. Experience, along with leader’s encouragement, provides a positive outlook where character development becomes attainable. One tool that the Army could implement is an “Individual Character Development Plan.”²⁹ During any coaching and counseling session, each soldier would have an opportunity to review not only his task oriented

²⁷ Willard D. Goldman, “In Pursuit of Character Development: Why the Military is on the Wrong Road” (paper presented to the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics XVII, Washington, DC, January 25-26, 1996), accessed May 11, 2016, <http://isme.tamu.edu/JSCOPE96/goldman96.html>.

²⁸ One creative example is West Point’s “cemetery walk,” where the cadets were assigned to locate a graduate’s headstone, meditate on the life and sacrifice of that person, and write a reflective essay.

²⁹ Paul Berghaus, “Authority and Practice in Military Ethics Education,” scheduled to be published in *The Journal of Moral Education*, 7.

development plan, but also a character trait oriented plan as well. This can serve as a visual assessment for one's own character development in alignment with the Army Ethic. Moreover, this tool can serve as a certification method that enforces a leader to embrace character development of his subordinates.

THE ARMY CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

In 2013, the Army Training and Doctrine Command, Documentation Assistance Review Team commented that “most character development literature is written in technical jargon that requires a graduate education to understand.”³⁰ Consequently, the team recommended that the Army provide accessible guidance on character development. Based on this comment, the recommended model intentionally kept the language simple and familiar. This model modifies the descriptive leadership language of BE-KNOW-DO to prescriptive KNOW-DO-BECOME. Also, this model shows the iterative process inherent in character development. (See figure 3.)

This model applies to leaders and subordinates alike. The leaders can use this model as they themselves become a leader of character (since Hannah and Sweeney indicated that a leader of character is a necessary ingredient for developing soldiers of character), and to employ in developing character in their subordinates. The subordinates, likewise, can use this model to understand their own character development. In simple terms, this model proposes that education enables a soldier to KNOW what is professionally expected and right. Having the proper knowledge, a soldier has the opportunities to apply or DO the expected virtues through training. As a result of training,

³⁰ CAPE, “Army Concept for Character Development: A Review of the Relevant Literature,” (2015), 9.

a soldier would gain an reflected experience through which he can BECOME one degree more virtuous professional. Acknowledging that character development is progressive and iterative, the three components are displayed as a continuous cycle.



Figure 3. The Army Character Development Model

Source: Created by author.

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to propose a character development model that is accessible, accepted, comprehensive, and adaptable. The Army Character Requirements Model and the Army Character Development Model provide simple yet comprehensive models that can be adapted in institutional, operational, and self-development domains, accepted by leaders and subordinates alike. The limited scope of this paper only allowed to present

models. Using these models as basic frameworks, further explication to unfold detailed approaches in each of LOEs is certainly necessary. Hopefully, these models can generate greater conscious effort in developing professionals of character and can ensure that the Army upholds the moral responsibility as an honorable profession.

FUTURE STUDIES

First of all, there is danger of assumptive language. Assumptions can be the most dangerous form of knowledge. This study recommends that the Army (and the military overall) need to conduct further studies to validate assumptions listed in the White Paper. Such an effort would gain a greater momentum behind the emphasis on character development. Furthermore, clearer exposition of the doctrine would assist in convincing the members of the profession on the importance of virtuous character.

Secondly, since the importance of character applies to the entire military service, Department of Defense (DoD) should conduct a study in “developing a joint character development initiative by forming a DoD planning group, lead by military leaders with the authority to make things happen.” Also, DoD should study the feasibility of standing up a Center for Character Development with “allied and coordinated academic, policy, and implementation centers.”³¹ These recommendations were made in 1996. Admittedly, no study has been conducted in last two decades. With the renewed momentum behind character development, this may be the best time to pursue a DoD-wide study.

Additionally, this study does not adequately address the character development for the Army Civilians. While the essential ingredients may be the same, specific

³¹ Goldman, “In Pursuit of Character Development: Why the Military is on the Wrong Road.”

application may vary for the Army Civilians. A future study should integrate Army Management Staff College (AMSC) at Fort Leavenworth, KS, for specific inputs from the Army Civilian perspective.

Lastly, the Army should consider a further study on the “cost” of character development. What are the secondary and tertiary effects of emphasizing character development? Snider and Shine commented that “Soldiers of religious faith . . . have a strong intrinsic motivation . . . to be the leader the Services need them to.”³² While religiously held convictions are absolute, ADRP 1 states that “the Army Ethic is the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs.”³³ With growing secularization of American society and the culture of Armed Services becoming more hostile to religions, how should the Army empower leaders of religious faith to remain a leader of integrity and authenticity, without compartmenting a life of faith from a life of service to the Nation? Such is challenging but necessary questions to study further in order to develop more thorough character development concept.

³² Don M Snider, and Alexander P. Shine, *A Soldier’s Morality, Religion, and Our Professional Ethic: Does The Army’s Culture Facilitate Integration, Character Development, and Trust in The Profession?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2014), 30.

³³ ADRP 1, 1-2.

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