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What do you mean by character? How does an Army

professional demonstrate character? Is ADRP1 correct-

through decisions and actions?

Army Professionals of Character

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Introduction

The purpose of this research is to define character as it pertains to the Army professional and determine how the Army professional demonstrates character. This study will verify the definition of character per ADRP1, and will further confirm actions and decisions are the means for demonstrating character. The paper will provide insight on a way to assist Army leaders to enhance subordinate character development. Though character reflective of the Army ethic is expected of all ranks, this paper focuses on the Army leader. Army leaders can develop character implementing systems currently available to the Army such as the 5 minute shadow role model technique and mentorship methods discussed in FM 6-22.

Character is the foundation of trust, and trust, the foundation of effective leadership. Character reveals the Army professional's dedication and adherence to the Army values and ethics. Defining character varies depending on the source of the research. The Army defines character in Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22. This dated regulatory guidance states character is a person's moral and ethical qualities which helps the Soldier determine right or wrong, and motivates them to act appropriately, with little regards to the consequences[1]. ADP 6-22 summates character as who a person is, what they believe, and how they act[2]. It says Army leaders of character lead by example, achieves excellence, discipline, commitment, and empowers those he/she is leading. ADRP1 defines character in an operational context as the dedication and adherence to the Army Ethic. It includes the Army Values and says the demonstration of character is consistent and faithfully done. The publication continues to

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[1] Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1, The Army Profession (Washington, D.C: US Government Printing Office, 2015), 4-1.
[2] Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, army Leadership (Washington, D.C: US Government Printing Office, 2015), 5.

explain that character encompasses a leader's identity, sense of purpose, values, virtues, morals, and conscience; portraying his or her true nature. ADP 6-22 defines character with the human dimension in mind, and the ADP 1 defines character with regards to the operational Army. In the current operating environment the definition of character must be more inclusive of specific qualities that provoke actions and decisions reflective of good character. It is safe to consolidate the ideas from the past with the current definition and determine that character is a person's true nature reflective of their moral and ethical qualities which motivate them to maintain the Army Values and Army Ethic consistently and faithfully through decisions and actions. Given that good leaders are people of character, and character is demonstrated on a daily basis through actions and decisions, it is important to develop character within the Army ranks among subordinates.

Developing character will provide Soldiers with a moral compass in times of difficult decision making and moral dilemmas. As an institution which exercises Mission Command, which is built on trust, subordinates must be able to rely on the character of their leaders. In ADRP1 the Army professional demonstrates character through daily decision making and actions. Those same actions, implicitly or explicitly convey attitude that demonstrates character as defined by ADRP1, ADP 6-22, FM 6-22, or otherwise.

Leader Development Strategy

Since character is demonstrated through decisions and actions on a daily basis it is important for leaders to understand the importance of developing it within subordinates. The Army Leader Development Strategy includes the institutional, operational and self-development

domains. Character development nests with this strategy under the self-development domain[3].

As the institutional domain is enhanced by attending schools and increasing military education,

and the operational domain is enhanced by experiences at different duty stations, the self-

development domain is influenced by leader decisions and actions. Soldiers make choices based

on influences received not only from other Soldiers, but also from leadership. The self-

development domain is supported by peers and other developmental relationships. It is

important for Army leaders to maximize mentorship, counseling, and tools such as the 360

assessment to honestly asses, and enhance Soldier development.

Everything Soldiers do, to include the way they perform, the ideals they hold as

important, and the means for achieving those goals is influenced by a leader at some level[4].

Leaders inspire from the lowest levels requiring a high level of character from the initial training

teaching Soldiers the Soldier's Creed, and Army Values. As an institution and a learning

organization, the Army influences character, by default, and some by design from the time

recruits join. This means Soldiers are always watching and leaders have the responsibility to

make choices based on good character on a consistent basis.

Members within the organization are more likely to mimic approved and acceptable

behaviors displayed by their leaders, than to act outside of those confines[5]. Each Soldier's

character is reinforced by their leadership, the culture, and climate. Rewards and punishment

assist with establishing the culture of the environment. Individual backgrounds play an active

role in decision making. Members of an organization begin to learn the actions and behaviors

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[3] ALDS *Army Leader Development Strategy 2013*. 8.
[4] ADRP1. 2-5
[5] Appelbaum, S., Laconi, G., and Matousek, A. (2007). Positive and negative deviant workplace behaviors: causes, impacts, and solutions, Corporate Governanace: *The international journal of business in society,* (7)5. 586.

that align with their leader's character. When an action is taken that is "out of character" for that leader, it proves to be easier to reestablish the broken trust. The question that surfaces as we continue to operate exercising Mission Command, is, what happens when a character driven decision ends up as a wrong decision? Is the leader of the organization going to accept that prudent risk? Is the individual who exercised the disciplined initiative now in a position to suffer consequences of his or her actions? What happens in an environment where Mission Command is fully implemented, the members of the team understand the organization to be a learning organization, with an environment that facilitates growth, even if it happens after learning from wrong decision making…what happens when the leader in that environment is strongly encouraged to make a decision that holds the individual at fault? Has that leader broken the trust beyond restoration? Is that same organization able to continue with character development?

The reality is that subordinates are watching every decision and action made within an organization, and the reaction to the decisions. Each member of the team is influenced, and behavior is shaped based on leader decisions. A new standard is established each time an action is committed or a decision is made that does not align with those communicated in the commander's philosophy. Trust is a key element in effective leadership, in character development, and in exercising Mission Command. Therefore, the actions and decisions made must maintain the trust of the members of an organization.

Character Development

One of the major purposes of the Army Ethic is to assist in providing a framework to develop Soldier character by instilling values and virtues of the profession[6]. The strength of a

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[6] Army White Paper. (2014). *The Army Ethic.* Signed by the CSA, 11 July, 2014. 6.

Soldier's character is not only for individual and unit use, but most importantly, it is necessary when in harm's way and in areas of conflict. Character development continues throughout a lifetime as it is demonstrated in all aspects of life[7]. When organizational leaders determine the type of climate they want in place, they can begin implementing measures to achieve these ends. Every leader action is a part of character development, from the way the leader talks, whether positive connotation or negative, to the expectations transmitted and deeds encouraged. It is important for organizations to reflect on practices and programs in place to achieve successful implementation of positive climate against a recognizable standard of excellence. Institutional practices and areas leaders communicate as important dictate to members of organizations whether or not they are a part of an organization of high character, or a bureaucratic system (white paper). The decisions and actions implemented by the command and other leaders reflect the importance of character development, which in turn enhances or diminishes the organizational climate. Organizational climate can be altered quickly by changing the leadership (ADRP1).

It is impossible to discuss Soldier development without discussing ethos. Ethos refers to a spirit or bond with fellow comrades. It is displayed in extreme levels of strength of character, regained to generate and sustain ethical decision making during critical moments. Soldiers are developed through initial training and continue with education and training to gain experience, hence, developing in character. Character continues to develop along the continuum of military service. Leaders continue to demonstrate character to Soldiers every day, in every environment by simple words and deeds. Once the Army values are instilled and the Soldier's Creed is engrained, the expectation is that Soldiers will make the right decisions. Army leaders have a

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[7] ADP1. 2-5

responsibility to lead by example demonstrating the same character the Army expects of the Soldiers[8].

The Army's philosophy of Mission Command hinges on the concept of trust. Mission Command promotes a shared understanding and allows subordinates to exercise disciplined initiative in decision making. Under the auspices of Mission Command, there is an understanding that every answer may not be the correct answer. The intent is to make the best decisions, based on high moral principles and the Army ethic. Soldiers are allowed to use discretionary judgement understanding some of the decisions will have high moral implications and high consequences. Under this theory, Soldiers consider and accept prudent risks, understanding the cost associated with decision making. Army leaders have the obligation of creating an atmosphere consistent with a learning organization, empowering Soldiers to continue with the development process of all members of the team (ADRP1).

Integrating Character Development

To develop and assess character, there has to be a metric for measuring it. Attributes such as valor, integrity, chivalry, empathy, and good will to other people have proven to result in high levels of character. If these same attributes are used as a means of measuring character amongst individuals and within organizations, the amount of character development conducted, can be assessed. ADRP1 echoes that character is the true nature of a person. Conducting daily tasks presents an opportunity for Soldiers to exercise ethical decision making. To test the effectiveness of character development and allow Soldiers adequate time to train and implement lessons learned from assigned leaders, they must be allowed to exercise decision making. Leaders must

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[8] ADRP1. 5-3

find opportunities within the existing battle rhythms to provide opportunities to enhance subordinate decision making.

A role model is an existing enabler prevalent in the current operating environment that assists with character development. Role models are used to run certification programs. If certification is used as a measure for determining character, role models can also be used to develop subordinate's character. Leader actions are the most direct means of developing character.

THE 5-MINUTE SHADOW

Bring in a subordinate to observe or participate in an aspect of work that will make them a better leader. To maximize the experience—
- Communicate the situation, decision, or issue.
- Convey the importance of acting appropriately or making the right decision.
- Describe possible consequences, second- and third-order effects.
- Discuss the decision or actions and reasoning behind them.

FM 6-22 Leader Development 30 June 2015

The methodology of using the 5-minute shadow can assist in character development. This simplistic method allows a subordinate to shadow, observe, or participate with a leader for a set time frame determined by the leader and operational tempo (OPTEMPO)[9]. The idea is to communicate the situation, decision, or issue clearly to the leader, while conveying the importance of making the right decisions or actions. What leaders do or don't do in the time allotted for the 5 minute shadow can influence the process of character development. The ideal situation is that every leader operates as an enabler. Leaders must explain wrong decisions and actions to ensure Soldiers understand, and to further maximize this developmental opportunity.

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[9] FM 6-22 (Field Manual No. 6-22). *Leader Development*. (2015). Retrieved April 6, 2016, from http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/fm6_22.pdf

There is a crucial element to the 5-minute shadow that includes consequences, and the secondary and tertiary effects of making a bad or wrong decision. In this role model session, the subordinate and the leader are able to initiate a dialogue. Dialogue eliminates the Soldier's fear of decision making because it lessens the repercussions. If Army leaders develop subordinate character using these methods, it bolsters confidence in decision making and Soldiers understand what decisions are reflective of good character. During the dialogue the Soldier and leader discuss right and wrong decisions and thoughts that lead to the decisions. Other enablers to implement effective character development are seen throughout the leadership regulations. Mentorship is an enabler that maximizes operational reach. While mentorship is an effective enabler, it is normally done outside of the chain of command. The benefit of the Army is that all leaders are required to follow the Leader Requirements Model. This allows all leaders to have a common operating picture in terms of what qualifies as good character, based on the definition in Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 1. Though there are guidelines and checklists that illustrate recognizing and listing strength indicators, need indicators, underlying causes, feedback, study, and practice, the most impressionable action is that of the leader.

Hindrances in the current operating environment include organizations that don't foster growth through learning from mistakes. There is a military culture that exists in some organizations that provoke zero tolerance in making mistakes during decision making. These organizations do not meet requirements to act as enablers to market character development. These environments seldom display trust from the highest level down. There are individuals within the organization that are focused on the evaluation report and do not tolerate mistakes because it lessons percentages. These type of leaders serve as hindrances to the organizations to which they belong.

There are also instances where leaders who foster a learning environment are torn by the demands of reality and are required to meet those demands. These situations could possibly diminish the trust level that has been established. Lack of trust is the single element that can hinder character development within the force. The same way lack of trust will prevent an organization from operating under Mission Command, it will prevent subordinates from depending on leaders beyond positional power. Subordinates will learn to comply without committing because they lack trust. Relationships within organizations begin to fit a template that coincides with transactional leadership versus that of transformational leadership, which is more prevalent in cultures of trust.

Research Methodology

Research for this paper was conducted using regulatory guidance provided in ADRP1, ADRP 6-22, the Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS, and other search engines. The Center for Army Profession and Ethic, and the Center for Army Leadership were also sources of data collection. Existing data was collected and analyzed to consolidate results of this research.

Further Research Options

The definition and demonstration of character, and a method of enhancing character development have been addressed in this brief research. There are several other aspects to consider in terms of what impacts character, and how to measure effectiveness of character development. Doris (2002) posits situations dictate behavior more often than the nature of the personality[10]. Another area for consideration of further research surrounds reinforcing ethos. Is

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[10] Doris, John M. (2002). Lack of character: Personality and Moral Behavior. Cambridge University Press.

ethos necessary in each individual that is responsible to develop character? Do hypocritical leaders revert the process of character development in subordinates? These topics will strengthen Army leaders' understanding of character development and will continue to help shape the current and future force allowing us to win in a complex world.

Conclusion

Attending Officer Candidate School, there was a motto and it stated, "Standards, No Compromise." Hearing the motto would insight pride in the individuals in the course. Knowing there were leaders who expected and required a high standard that would not accept a compromise to those standards seemed like what Non Commissioned Officers and other personnel on the journey transitioning to Commissioned Officers would need as a cornerstone. The longer these newly transitioned officers served in different organizations, the more they learned that some leaders accepted compromise. Some leaders had shortcuts established as standard operating procedures. There was a new standard set and the old mentality that was drilled into the thinking of the newly commissioned officers was now overwritten and replaced with a new standard. Throughout military service, there are differences experienced with leadership. Each individual has a definition of character. Each individual has a definition of right and wrong, and some individuals only want to protect themselves. There are some individuals who serve from a transactional perspective and do not put much effort into self, unit, or organizational development. Character development has no role in their list of priorities.

It is detrimental that future leaders understand the importance of character development and make a conscious effort to implement this development within their organizations. The 5-minute shadow method discussed in this research does not add any additional training

requirement, yet it allows character develop at the individual, unit, and ultimately the

organizational level[11]. Organizations have to determine what type of character development they

desire as an end state. The commander is responsible for establishing and fostering a climate

that supports character development. The intent is to develop Soldiers who possess the ability to

judge what's right, and to do what they believe is right, even when faced with extreme pressure.

The ability to exhibit these types of actions is believed to be hinged upon personal character. The

key to character development is to accept the common operating picture of what character is

determined by ADRP 1, and to understand that leaders and Army professionals demonstrate

character on a daily basis through their actions and decisions. Someone is always watching, and

if the action or decision is not in keeping with regulatory guidance, a new standard is set. Any

Army guidance must take into account the human dimension and leader development strategies.

Army character development is conducted on a daily basis, and it is every member's

responsibility to demonstrate the appropriate actions and decisions to reinforce mutual trust

within the Army and with the American people.

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[11] FM 6-22. 3-17.

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