

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP FROM THE POINT OF MILITARY

## A CASE OF TURKISH AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Ömer Fatih Poyraz

**Abstract**— Leadership is one of the most important effects on the success of the institutions as well as in terms of the military service profession. Leaders have had vital tasks and roles in the advancement of their communities and they had their communities in front of their competitions. Humankind has always needed a good leader from the wars in which people used primitive weapons till the wars having been occurred recent years with superior technology weapons. In the field of military, winning the wars and ensuring the unity and solidarity are just possible in the management of people who are able to act like an impressive leader. This necessity has become more important as modern wars have been occurred recent years. Turkish Air Force Academy, an institution which aims to train pilot candidate officers for the Turkish Air Force, gives a great importance to leadership training. This study is based on the contributions of the leadership on the military service profession, as a sample, Turkish Air Force Academy which trains a lot of commanders for the Turkish Air Force, and its leadership applications are studied here.

**Keywords**— leadership, military, Turkish air force academy

### I. Introduction

"There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept." (Stogdill, 1974, p.259). Some of definitions are listed below:

- Leadership is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. " (Northouse, 2013, p.3)
- Leadership is "the behavior of an individual who is involved in directing group activities." (Davis, 1942, p. 128)
- Leadership is " the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives." (Yukl, 2010, p.8)

- Leadership is " an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes. " (Rost,1993, p.102 )
- Leadership is " the ability to inspire other people to work as a team, following your lead, in order to attain a common objective, whether in business, in politics, in war, or on the football field." (Krass, 1998, p. 4)
- Leadership is "the skill of influencing people to work enthusiastically toward goals identified as being for the common good." (Hunter, 1998, p.28)

Leadership is not only too important for the organizations and institutions, but also it is related to the military service profession in terms of its definition. It requires to be understood well for the development of the military service profession. In this study, there will be a literature review related to the military leadership and some evaluations. Besides, leadership trainings of Turkish Air Force Academy which trains Turkish Air Force's leaders in the future will be studied according to the military leadership qualities.

### II. Literature Review

Leadership was often used by soldiers before it was evaluated as an institutional, academic and a social reality. (Sun Tzu, B.C. 500) So, it is obvious that there is a cultural relationship between leadership and military service profession. (Kunter,2014,p.31)This cultural relationship enhances the importance of leadership in the military. Knowledge has recently become the most crucial item after the battle fields were taken to electronic area. Thus, military leaders and their followers expect a challenging and so complex war environment. Obligation to accomplish duties under these conditions gives even more importance to the military leadership concept. As a requirement of this importance, military leaders must have the following qualities to accomplish their duties best: "intelligence and strength of mind, willpower (self-control), self-confidence, courage, stability, initiative, calmness, determination, taking risks, being ethical, being charismatic, making sacrifices,

being knowledgeable, cooperative, creativity and having oratory."

An army is composed of human, doctrine, military unit, weapons and equipment according to the US FM 22-100 Military Leadership manual; however, what assembles all these and makes them work is the leadership. Military leadership is a military person's activity of influencing others to fulfill the duty. To become an adequate leader, there are some qualities that leaders should possess. These are obeying the military moral rules and having military character traits. Military moral rules can be stated as "loyalty to the country's and army's ideals, loyalty to the unit, personal responsibility and service with self-sacrifice". Military character traits, which in fact each leader should possess, are "courage, being knowledgeable, honesty, loyalty to the duty". A military leader can carry out his duty as long as he is loyal to these qualities. Every military person from the lowest rank to the highest rank in an army should possess these characteristics. This can only be achieved when military leaders have these qualities and affect their followers by being good models for them.

Commandership means someone's use of his warrants over his subordinates based on his rank, seniority, duty and position. The commander is the military person who conducts commandership. Today's battles have made the leadership more effective with the structure that accepts fewer errors and includes faster decision making, becomes more creative and flexible. Therefore, the importance of a leader for a unit at all levels has increased more and more, and so, commandership and leadership concepts are integrated. A commander must have two features. These are being a good manager and a good leader. While management is related to knowing exactly and carrying out correctly the matters necessary for the duty, leadership is about "being" and "acting". Consequently, a commander has to "know exactly" and "act correctly" because soldiers are behind their commanders who have leadership quality in terms of idea, and in front of their commanders physically (FM 6-22,2006:1-2). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic and a perfect soldier, emphasizes the importance of commandership with the statement: "A commander is the brain and pusher of a unit. A unit without a commander is not different from a headless body." [14]

Colonel David E.Price states, in his article titled "Leadership: Some Thoughts on The Military Circa 2025", that military leaders will lead not only their own countries' units within the next years but also the units consisting of more than one country's soldiers. For the military forces may have to make joint peace operations in globalizing

world. Therefore, it will be necessary for military leaders to develop their communicating skills between language and cultures. Military leaders will lead forces to obtain the latest technology by following technology closely. [10] It will be necessary for them to see the world as businessmen, not just with warrior eyes. Because the planning of long-term military investments will perhaps form the most important part of military leadership. In other words, technological knowledge in addition to the abilities of "negotiation, communication, persuasion and teamwork" and the ability of using the knowledge for planning military expenses are gaining more importance with the changing circumstances. (Canbaş,2004,p.93).

A lot more researches have been made about leadership and its relationship to the military service, pointing to its significance in the military service. These researches generally emphasize how significant the leadership is in terms of development of military service profession.

### **III. Analysis Of Leadership in Turkish Air Force Academy**

In this section, leadership trainings in the Turkish Air Force Academy (TUAFA) will be analyzed under the light of the review in the previous section.

#### **A. Leadership Trainings in TUAFA**

Turkish Air Force Academy is a military school which competes with its era by its knowledge and ability, and educates the air force officers who have the qualifications possessed by a military person. The military students studying in this school are called "cadets". Cadets' existing leadership characteristics and potentials in this subject are developed by "living, taking as a model and performing personally" during their four-year training and educating period. Military leadership qualifications, mentioned in literature review, are given to the cadets with various training and practices along their four-year training period. Applied trainings are different for each grade; what is expected from the cadets who will graduate at the end of four-year training period is graduating as real military leaders.

#### **1) Freshmen:**

First grade is the stage where cadets get accustomed to the school and they learn the rules of the school. At this stage, freshmen attend the leadership trainings just as an observer and they improve their following skills as a follower. In addition, they become conscious by determining their own strong sides and personal qualifications that need to be improved.

At first grade, cadets are taught what the leadership, military leadership and commandership mean. By explaining what kind of war condition awaits them, freshmen who get used to the harsh conditions of the combat setting improve their military leadership qualifications and military ethics by taking their commanders as a model, observing upper grades in co-operative activities with them. Freshmen aware of passing from being a follower to being a model, adapt themselves to the school and military service by mastering the rules at the end of a year.

## **2) Sophomore:**

Second grade is a class in which cadets complete their orientation for school and military service and know their rules of school. In this class, cadets are conscious of being a model for freshmen cadets and they improve their own leadership by making them good followers.

Since sophomore cadets are the closest ones to freshmen in terms of age, are always in communication with incoming freshmen. Therefore they have to contribute to the improvement of freshmen cadets being in the position of followers by internalizing the rules of military ethics and military leadership qualifications. Each sophomore cadet is given a few freshmen cadets to orientate them and made them in touch with each other to make contribution to the development of the freshmen. In this way, sophomore cadets develop their leadership skills and they don't compromise their military qualifications by being conscious of serving as a model. Besides, this implementation shortens the adaptation time of freshmen cadets who just start school and introduce military service profession.

## **3) Junior:**

Third grade is the period when the cadets master all the rules related to school and have to be models for two junior classes. In this period, junior cadets are in touch with senior cadets and take responsibilities in administrative staff of the school and they organize some activities in person. Being experienced individuals at school, junior cadets gives suggestions to senior cadets about identifying problems and solving them and they consult them. Thus, they improve themselves on human relations by enhancing communication skills and prepare themselves for military operational settings in which soldiers of many countries will take part.

The military qualifications mentioned above and which a military leader needs to possess such as self-confidence, courage, competence (knowledge), sacrifice, oratory and creativity are implemented intensely during the third grade. Because junior cadets are not only a model for freshmen and sophomore cadets but also help senior cadets administering the school with all the matters. They act as a bridge between fourth grade cadets and first and second grade cadets.

Besides, junior cadets have to be extremely careful about all their actions because they are aware that they will be wrong models when they are weak on any military ethic rules or military leadership characteristics. Junior cadets are the ones of whom freshmen and sophomores seek advice first about some issues and they have to give satisfactory information to those who consult them. Since not being able to answer on the consulted issues may humiliate the juniors in front of their subordinates, junior cadets need to have adequacy in every issue and this pushes them to improve themselves. Thus, juniors prepare themselves sophisticated combat setting in the future. Commanders of the future who will represent their country and army in the sophisticated combat settings, have an opportunity to develop self-confidence, courage, knowledge, experience and communication skills mostly in the third grade.

## **4) Senior:**

Fourth grade is the last stage before cadets start their duties.. They efficiently take part in the decisions about the school and they also have to be models for all the other cadets. As being the most experienced cadets in the school, seniors have to make decisions quickly and have to be able to create a solution for all kinds of problems immediately when they face them. In the fourth grade, cadets have an opportunity to perform their military leadership qualifications which they have gained in the first three years. Seniors who take part in all kinds of social activities at school as organizers, have to be extremely perfect in terms of their knowledge, honesty, courage and military ethics because all kinds of responsibilities are on their shoulders as organizers in these activities that the other cadets join too.

Cadets in the fourth year are in the last stage of leadership development in Turkish Air Force Academy and they make their final preparations before starting their duties by practicing the trainings that they have received up to now, For instance, a senior cadet who is a captain of a sport branch at the school, takes care of other cadets in person and becomes a model for the troops he will command in the future. He may witness all their problems and he creates reasonable solutions with the help of the education he has received up to that moment. Thus, he prepares himself for the future and he also directly helps the school system run smoothly.

As a window of Turkish Air Force Academy opening to the civilian life, senior cadets introduce the school. This application gives an opportunity for the senior cadets to demonstrate their communication skills, experiences, knowledge and self-confidence. Thus, senior cadets who think they have deficiency about these matters can eliminate these problems and start servicing confidently.

## IV. Conclusions

Briefly, military leadership is crucial for the progress of the military service profession and for the success of the people performing the profession. If the sophistication and multi-nationality of the future combat setting are taken into consideration, each soldier must have leadership characteristics and refuse to compromise them even in the most difficult conditions.

Turkish Air Force Academy, a school in which commanders of the future are trained, knows how necessary the military characteristics are to win victories while preparing its cadets for the sophisticated wars of the era of knowledge and technology. And this school trains its students in a good way in this direction. With the leadership training programs specified discretely for each grade, cadets gain all the necessary qualities about military leadership and carry out their duties which they will undertake after graduation according to the qualifications gained here.

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