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The education system development strategy: How to accelerate the improvement of academic qualification for the Indonesian national army?

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Abstract

This research proposes strategic recommendations to address the issues arising in improving the academic qualifications of the Indonesian National Army - in Indonesia. The scoping review method is used to see how other countries handle similar issues. The Scopus database retrieved relevant articles published from 2015 to 2025 with the help of Harzing Publish or Perish. Initially, 199 articles were obtained. Three selection stages based on inclusion criteria determined that 14 articles were selected for an in-depth review. The results are 1) 5 fundamental aspects and eight methodological aspects related to developing military education systems to enhance military personnel's competencies and academic qualifications in various countries. 2) 4 recommendations promoted: 1) Creation of Prior Learning Recognition, 2) Empowerment of Civilian Roles in Military Academy Curriculum, 3) Military Education Based on International Collaboration, and 4) Utilization of Renewable Technology in Military Education. The results of this research are highly valuable, as they can serve as strategic recommendations for developing the military education system in Indonesia.

Keywords

Education policy, education system, military education, scoping review

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Introduction

The vision of the Indonesian National Army (TNI-AD) is to become a solid, professional, resilient, modern, nationally aware, and beloved army (Sungkono et al., 2024). Along with the increasingly complex global dynamics, the Indonesian Army is faced with various challenges that demand strategic adaptation, including improving the academic qualifications of its personnel. The development of military technology, geopolitical dynamics, and changes in the paradigm of modern warfare demands human resources (HR) for military personnel who are not only excellent in combat skills but also possess competent academic qualifications (Cancio, 2018; Culkin, 2017; Hagen, 2022; Knox et al., 2021). Therefore, enhancing academic qualifications for the Indonesian National Army has become necessary to ensure their readiness to face multidimensional challenges in the contemporary era.

However, the Indonesian National Army still faces various obstacles to improving academic qualifications. The education system at the National Army Education Institute has been striving to meet the need to improve its personnel's academic qualifications. However, challenges arise when integrating military experience and training with academic standards recognized nationally and internationally (Blaauw-Hara, 2017; Dii, 2022). Meanwhile, reliance on conventional education systems often fails to accommodate the unique experiences and learning obtained in a military context, which encompasses various aspects such as leadership, crisis management, and strategic decision-making (Owens et al., 2024) that have been empirically acquired (Bijlsma, 2019).

In the literature review, discussions about similar challenges are often associated with the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program. This program acknowledges experiences and competencies acquired outside formal education pathways, accelerating the academic process without compromising educational quality standards (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The absence of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in the Indonesian National Army education environment forces armies to follow conventional academic paths, which do not always align with their duties and responsibilities. As a result, improving academic qualifications becomes inefficient and can hinder the optimization of armies' careers and professionalism (Renitasari et al., 2024).

In addition, the educational structure within the Indonesian National Army environment is still dominated by a hierarchical approach that is more oriented towards technical and tactical training compared to strengthening academic-based sciences. This has implications for another challenge in the effort to improve the academic qualifications of armies, namely the limited access of armies to relevant and quality higher education institutions, and the lack of integration between the academic world and the military world in the learning process.

The management of an education system that is adaptive and responsive to the development of information technology, such as e-learning, has proven to improve the quality of educational services in the military environment (Lufti, 2021). On the other hand, Milwan et al. (2025) showed that implementing the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy can enhance the accessibility and flexibility of education for military personnel, as applied at Universitas Terbuka.

Lufti (2021) and Milwan et al. (2025) indicated that the urgency of improving the competence and academic qualifications of the Indonesian National Army must be accompanied by the development of a military education system that is adaptive to personnel needs so that the improvement of competence and academic qualifications in military personnel can be more accelerated. The development of the military education system will not only enhance the quality of Indonesian National Army resources but also strengthen the competitiveness of national defense institutions in facing the ever-evolving global challenges (Maurer, 2023; Vafadar et al., 2021).

However, studies on the development of military education systems have not been extensively conducted in Indonesia (Muradi, 2017). At the same time, the development of the academic qualifications of military personnel in various countries shows faster growth (e.g., Bricknell, 2016; Garcia Estrada et al., 2024; Kim, 2017; Libel, 2021). Lufti (2021) emphasized the significance of e-learning, and Milwan et al. (2025) promoted the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program. In that case, it is highly likely that various countries still use their other effective strategies to enhance their military personnel's academic qualifications and capacities. These strategies must be thoroughly examined, adopted, or adapted with a transnational paradigm.

From that background, this research is associated. A study that can review how other countries around the world address the issue of improving the competencies and academic qualifications of military personnel is important to conduct. The results enable the creation of strategic recommendation proposals to improve the competencies and academic qualifications of the Indonesian National Army in Indonesia.

Based on this purpose, the research questions are formulated into 2 points: 1) How do countries worldwide develop the competencies and academic qualifications of their military personnel? Then, considering the answer to the first research question along with strict adaptation and contextualization, the second research question is 2) What are the proposed strategies to improve the competence and academic qualifications of the Indonesian National Armed Forces?

Methodology

This qualitative research used the Scoping Review (SR) model utilizing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) protocol (Alotaibi & Alshehri, 2023; Kamioka, 2019). The selection of this method is based on the nature of the research question (Charli et al., 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which aims to investigate how other countries around the world have developed military academic qualifications based on relevant research reports that have been published.

Special consideration in the use of the scoping review model is the initial stage of research that aims to identify answers to research questions from previous literature (Duong et al., 2023; Scholtz & Spies, 2023). Article data mining was conducted from the Scopus database with the help of Harzing's Publish, Perish, or PoP (Hutson et al., 2022), using the keyword "Military Education". Osunsan et al. (2022) noted that the PoP can support the discovery of previous articles that can be compared with the research to be conducted.

Systematic searching strategy

Mengist et al. (2020) explained that three stages are used in the systematic search process: identification, screening, and feasibility or inclusion. The three stages were set to ensure that the articles obtained from the Scopus database contained relevant data and were suitable for answering the second research question.

Identification and screening

The identification stage aims to find research data through the keywords developed. Considering that relevant research articles will be included in the review stage (Cooke et al., 2022). After searching article data from the Scopus database with the help of Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP), 199 published research articles were successfully extracted.

The primary purpose of the screening stage is to ensure that the extracted and compiled articles have a high level of relevance to the research topic. Screening was done through two stages: abstract screening and screening of all parts of the article. Of the 199 articles successfully extracted in the previous stage, one article was detected as missing DOI, making accessibility difficult, and 70 other articles did not meet the inclusion criteria because they were proceeding articles, books, book chapters, and review articles. Therefore, 71 articles were excluded before the screening began. After screening the abstracts, 75 articles were excluded because they discussed the military education system. As a result, 53 articles were left to be considered for the second stage of screening treatment, i.e., eligibility assessment through a thorough content review. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of the articles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *The criteria of inclusion and exclusion*

Aspects	Inclusion	Exclusion
Source type	Peer-reviewed journal article	Books, letters, note, book chapter, article proceedings, review article, missing DOI.
Publication year	Journal articles published from January 2015 – February 2025	Journal articles published before January 2015
Language	English	Other languages (e.g. Chinese, Russian, Spanish)
Context	Educational system and policy in military education & vocational education	Educational system and policy in other sectors
Publisher category	Publisher indexed by Scopus	Publisher that Scopus do not index

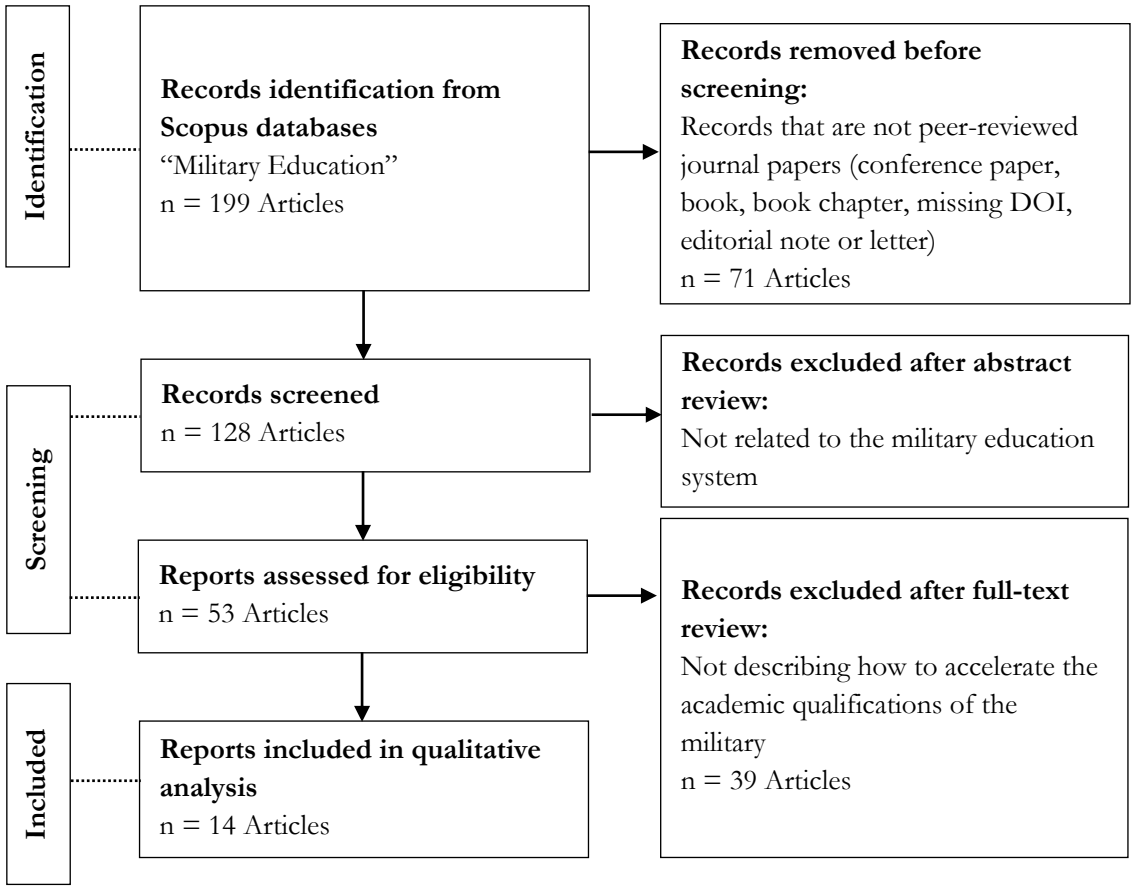
Source: Modified from Tan et al. (2022)

Eligibility

In this second screening stage, the article's eligibility is assessed by reviewing all parts of the article in full. This stage is critical to ensure that the inclusion criteria are met further. After

reviewing all the articles, 38 only provided explanations covering theories in general without providing explicit information on strategies or treatment to improve the academic qualification or skills of military personnel. Therefore, these 39 articles were excluded. Finally, 14 articles met the inclusion criteria and were selected as the primary data sources. The entire systematic search process, encompassing three stages, is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Flow diagram of the proposed search study*



Findings and Discussion

Development of military competence and academic qualifications in various countries

The author conducted an in-depth analysis of 14 selected articles, and the report in the table includes the number, author and publication year, research background, method, and military education. The results of the metadata extraction of these articles are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Metadata articles reviewed*

No	Authors (years)	Research backgrounds	Research methods	Military education discussed
1	Aghaei et al. (2020) *The Effectiveness of Crisis Management Education Based on Inter-Professional Approach on Military Nurses' Ability to Confront with Crisis*	The effectiveness of crisis management education is based on an interprofessional approach in enhancing military nurses' ability to handle crises.	A quasi-experimental study with three groups (interprofessional education, unprofessional education, and control group)	The crisis management training program for military nurses at military hospitals includes theory and practice sessions based on crisis scenario simulations.
2	Paget (2016) *Interoperability of the Mind*	How professional military education (PME) can enhance cultural interoperability in multinational operations.	Conceptual study with a literature review related to cross-country military education.	International military education that supports inter-country cooperation in military operations.
3	Knox et al. (2021) *Slow Education and Cognitive Agility: Improving Military Cyber Cadet Cognitive Performance*	How education based on the "Slow Education" approach can improve the cognitive performance of military cyber cadets.	An experimental study was conducted using the "Slow Education" method on cyber cadets for three years.	Military cyber education focuses on enhancing cognitive intelligence in cyber force management.
4	Wortmeyer & Branco (2016) *Institutional Guidance of Affective Bonding: Moral Values Development in Brazilian Military Education*	How military education in Brazil develops moral values in the formation of combat officers.	Qualitative analysis based on a cultural and social psychology approach.	Brazilian military education shapes the moral values of officers through an affective-semiotic system.
5	Will & Malave (2019) *Military Physicians Are Not Just Physicians in the Military*	The role of a military doctor is not only as medical personnel but also	Case study based on the experience of a military doctor in operational leadership.	Military medical education focuses on leadership training in combat

		as a leader in their unit.		and clinical situations.
6	Mukherjee (2018) *Educating the Professional Military: Civil–Military Relations and Professional Military Education in India*	How civil-military relations affect military professional education in India.	Historical analysis and military education policy in India.	Professional military education in India focuses on the civilian role in the military academy curriculum.
7	Duda et al. (2020) *The Manufacturing of 3D Printed Models for the Neurotraumatological Education of Military Surgeons*	The use of 3D printing technology in military surgical education to enhance skills in neurotrauma operations.	An experimental study with the creation of 3D printed anatomy models and evaluation of their effectiveness.	The military surgical training program uses 3D printing technology to enhance the competencies of military surgeons.
8	Balushka et al. (2020) *Application of Wrestling Strength and Speed Exercises During the Physical Education of Military Students*	The effectiveness of wrestling training in improving the strength and speed of military cadets.	Pedagogical experiment with control and experimental groups.	Military physical education program focuses on wrestling training to enhance strength and speed.
9	Sonesson et al. (2017) *The Challenges of Military Medical Education and Training for Physicians and Nurses in the Nordic Countries*	Challenges of military medical education and training in Nordic countries, including implementing e-learning.	Interview study with military educators from various Nordic countries.	The military medical education system in Nordic countries focuses on e-learning and distance learning.
10	Volk et al. (2020) *Active Duty Military Learners and Distance Education: Factors of Persistence and Attrition*	Factors affecting the sustainability of distance education for active military personnel.	Analysis of data from 2,246 military students in a distance education program.	Distance education for military personnel and factors affecting academic retention.
11	Rifenburg & Forester (2018) *First-Year Cadets' Conceptions of General Education Writing at a Senior Military College*	The understanding of first-year cadets about general education in academic writing at a military college.	Mixed methods study (survey and semi-structured interviews).	Military academic education in writing and communication skills for first-year cadets.

12	Sookermany (2017) *Military Education Reconsidered: A Postmodern Update*	The relevance of postmodern educational approaches in the military education system to face modern operational challenges.	Philosophical analysis of the concept of military education based on postmodern theory.	The military education model is based on a postmodern approach emphasising on six pedagogical strategies: emancipation, deconstruction, vocabulary, dialogue, diversity, and aesthetics.
13	Borgman et al. (2016) *Military Graduate Medical Education Research: Challenges and Opportunities*	Challenges and opportunities in military medical postgraduate education, including military medical research.	Literature review and analysis of military medical postgraduate education policy.	Military medical postgraduate education focuses on medical research and innovation.
14	Maurer (2023) *Recognizing prior learning in vocational education and training: Global ambitions and actual implementation in four countries*	The implementation of RPL is fraught with challenges, resulting in the number of individuals whose prior learning is recognized as being much lower than expected.	Tracking the global diffusion of RPL and analyzing the formulation of RPL policies and the design and implementation of RPL schemes in four case study countries (Bangladesh, North Macedonia, Sweden, Switzerland).	Design and implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme in vocational education and training (VET), including military education.

Based on the review results shown in Table 2, the author categorized the articles. Two categories were obtained from the 14 articles. The first category is the fundamental aspects related to the development of the military education system. Five issues arise in that category: 1) Military education in shaping the moral values of officers through an affective-semiotic system (Wortmeyer & Branco, 2016). 2) Empowerment of civilian roles in military academy curricula (Mukherjee, 2018). 3) International military education that supports cooperation between countries in international military operations (Paget, 2016). 4) Military education model based on a postmodern approach emphasizing six pedagogical strategies: emancipation, deconstruction, vocabulary, dialogue, diversity, and aesthetics (Sookermany, 2017). Then 5) Design and implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme in vocational education and training (VET), including in the Military sector, that depends on the status of VET qualifications in the related education system and labor market demands (Maurer, 2023).

Second, the category of methodological aspects related to the models and strategies used in military education and training. There are eight issues found here, 5 of which focus on the utilization of technology: 1) The military medical education system in Nordic countries focuses on e-learning and distance learning (Sonesson et al., 2017) that can reduce academic retention (Volk et al., 2020). 2) Military surgical training programs using 3D printing technology to enhance the competencies of military surgeons (Duda et al., 2020). 3) Military cyber education focuses on enhancing cognitive intelligence in cyber force management (Knox et al., 2021). 4) Military academic education in writing and communication skills for first-year cadets (Rifenburg & Forester, 2018). 5) Military medical postgraduate education focusing on medical research and innovation (Borgman et al., 2016).

Then, three other education and training strategies focus on situational conditioning: 1) Military physical education programs focus on wrestling exercises to enhance physical strength and speed (Balushka et al., 2020). 2) Crisis management training programs for military nurses in military hospitals, including theory and practice sessions based on crisis scenario simulations (Aghaei et al., 2020). Lastly, 3) Military medical education focuses on leadership training in combat and clinical situations (Will & Malave, 2019).

Strategy to improve the academic qualifications of the Indonesian national army

Based on the transnational paradigm, after delving into how the development of competencies and academic qualifications of armies in various countries through relevant and strong literature, the author highlights several strategies that can be adapted into the military education system in Indonesia to accelerate the improvement of the academic qualifications of Indonesian National Army personnel in Indonesia. This idea, of course, is balanced by careful selectivity, considering the connectivity between strategies used by various countries and the objective conditions and relevance of resources in the military sector in Indonesia.

Creation of prior learning recognition

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (Maurer, 2023) can recognize the experiences and competencies that a person has acquired outside the formal education pathway, thereby accelerating the academic process without compromising educational quality standards (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). With the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Indonesian National Army Lemdiklat system, the abilities and skills of military personnel acquired through task experience can be assessed for formal recognition, thereby allowing the academic qualifications of armies to improve more efficiently. Therefore, armies no longer need to 'repeat' development for skills and abilities they already possess by following conventional academic paths. This recommendation is relevant to one of the pedagogical approaches in military education in the postmodern era promoted by Sookermany (2017), namely that military education in the postmodern era needs to accommodate the diversity of military personnel's competencies.

Empowerment of civilian roles in the military academy curriculum

Empowerment of Civilian Roles in Military Academy Curriculum (Mukherjee, 2018) is intended to involve curriculum development experts engaged in developing the military academy education curriculum. Although these experts are part of civil society entities—not military personnel, their specialized expertise in curriculum development will help develop military education curricula more effectively and efficiently. They can provide dynamic theoretical recommendations combined with experienced instructors in military operations. With this recommendation, the mobility of active military personnel to pursue formal education at less relevant colleges can be further reduced so that the curriculum and implementation for developing competencies and academic qualifications of military personnel can still be carried out at military bases or training facilities.

International collaboration-based military education

International collaboration-based military education in cooperation among military personnel from different countries (Paget, 2016) can not only prepare for international military operations. However, it can also encourage operational readiness in foreign environments (Pirnay et al., 2020) for the Indonesian military, promote cultural transmission, and facilitate transnational studies. Several of these significances enable military education and training models from various developed countries to be replicated and adapted by military education units in Indonesia.

Utilization of renewable technology in military education

The utilization of renewable technology in military education is believed to enhance the quality of the educational process and outcomes in line with the challenges of the post-modern era. For example, in theory-based and simulation-based education to strengthen cognitive intelligence (Knox et al., 2021), e-learning and distance learning (Sonesson et al., 2017) can reduce retention (Volk et al., 2020) of military personnel, making it suitable for use in Indonesia considering the vast territorial area and diverse geographical characteristics with an archipelagic structure. Another example is the military surgical training program using 3D printing technology, which has proven effective in enhancing the competencies of military surgeons (Duda et al., 2020).

Although several technological gaps in various sectors in Indonesia, the military education system must continue focusing on medical research and innovation (Borgman et al., 2016). Including in the utilization of technology. Like the Norwegian Defence University College (NDUC), which developed a military education program based on Extended Reality (XR) that combines immersive experiences and pedagogical approaches, including 360° videos integrated with embodiment, dialogue with virtual humans, and collaborative Virtual Reality (VR) landscapes to encourage immersive peer-to-peer learning and successfully develop threat response capabilities, and stimulate critical discussions (Garcia Estrada et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This research identifies five fundamental and eight methodological aspects of developing military education systems to enhance military personnel's competence and academic qualification in various countries. Using the transnational research paradigm, based on those findings, several strategies that can be adapted into the military education system in Indonesia to accelerate the improvement of the academic qualifications of Indonesian National Army personnel in Indonesia have been formulated through careful selectivity, taking into account the connectivity between strategies used by various countries and the objective conditions and resource relevance in the military sector in Indonesia.

As a result, four recommendations were promoted: 1) Creation of Prior Learning Recognition, 2) Empowerment of Civilian Roles in Military Academy Curriculum, 3) Military Education Based on International Collaboration, and 4) Utilization of Renewable Technology in Military Education. The results of this research are highly valuable as they can serve as strategic recommendations for developing the military education system in Indonesia. Further research with a quasi-experimental approach to serve as a pilot project for the proposed recommendations is highly recommended.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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