IRJE |Indonesian Research Journal in Education|Vol. 10| No. 1|March|Year 2026|

Reconstructing education management in the Indonesian army professionalism: *RPL* bridges academic gaps and faces digital age challenges

AGUS WURYANTO[1*], AAN KOMARIAH[2], TJUTJU YUNIARSIH[3], AND ASEP SURYANA[4]

Abstract

This study examines strategies to enhance the academic qualifications and professionalism of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) through the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In the realm of global military modernization, academic legitimacy has emerged as a critical complement to operational competence. This study employed a qualitative scoping review following the PRISMA framework. Data were collected from the Scopus database (2015–2025) using the Publish or Perish tool, yielding 200 articles; 15 met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed thematically. The findings reveal two key dimensions: (1) fundamental aspects, including civil–military integration, institutional alignment, and academic legitimacy; and (2) methodological aspects, such as the adoption of digital learning technologies, blended learning, and reflective-cognitive development. The study proposes four strategic directions: implementing RPL for credit recognition, aligning curricula with higher education standards, integrating digital technologies, and fostering a reflective academic culture. These strategies support transforming military education toward global competitiveness and professional excellence.

Keywords

Academic integration, digital transformation, military education, professional military development, recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Article History

Received 12 December 2025
Accepted 19 February 2026

How to Cite

Wuryanto, A., Komariah, A., Yuniarsih, T., & Suryana, A. (2026). Reconstructing education management in the Indonesian army professionalism: RPL bridges academic gaps and faces digital age challenges. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education |IRJE|*, *10*(1), 669-685.https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v10i1.51277

[1]Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia, Corresponding author: a.wuryanto91@upi.edu
[2,3,4] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Introduction

The Indonesian Army's (TNI AD) strategic orientation to transform into a modern, professional institution grounded in public trust goes beyond merely mastering the art of warfare (Muhtadi, 2022). In the context of security globalization, defense modernization demands a paradigm shift in the role of soldiers: from mere tactical executors on the battlefield to strategic actors with intellectual competence (Duarte et al., 2024). Soldiers are now expected not only to master military operational skills but also to develop strong academic capabilities, such as designing defense policies, managing military diplomacy, and conducting critical analysis of international geopolitical dynamics. Therefore, contemporary military professionalism is increasingly linked to intellectual authority and academic legitimacy, thereby strengthening the Indonesian Army's strategic position and enhancing the nation's competitiveness in the global arena.

Several studies emphasize the urgency of the academic dimension in military professionalism. Cancio (2018) shows that veteran involvement in education enhances civil-military adaptive capacity. Meanwhile, modern military education discourse now emphasizes mastering theory, strategic narratives, and critical reflection (Hagen, 2022). Sungkono et al. (2024) found that military discipline alone is insufficient, as strengthening intellectual capacity is also a key requirement for maintaining national security. This means that the vision of modernizing the Indonesian Army can only be realized if the development of academic qualifications is placed on par with tactical and technical renewal.

However, despite the increasingly clear need for academic legitimacy, the TNI still faces various structural obstacles. Military education in Indonesia tends to operate in a parallel system that is difficult to align with national and international higher education standards. Military education prioritizes loyalty, discipline, and technical skills, whereas civilian academic education focuses on research, theory, and critical thinking (Antrobus & West, 2022). This disparity means that military education is often not recognized as equivalent to civilian academic achievements, forcing officers to take a long path to achieve national academic legitimacy (Muradi, 2017).

Conversely, in several countries, integrating military education into the civilian education system has been more effective. Nigeria, for example, has successfully integrated military education with its national development agenda, producing military cadres with strong academic credentials (Dii, 2022). This comparison shows that the TNI still lags far behind in achieving academic equality and therefore requires strategic instruments to bridge this gap.

One instrument with enormous potential is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL provides opportunities for operational experience, training, and non-formal skills to be recognized as academic achievements. In Indonesia, RPL practices have been implemented only on a limited basis in civil higher education institutions, such as the Open University (Milwan et al., 2025), whereas in the military environment, they are not yet available. In fact, globally, RPL has become an important instrument for providing academic legitimacy to work experience, including for military personnel (Maurer, 2023). The absence of RPL in the TNI makes the academic education process repetitive and inefficient, leading to a lack of recognition for the valuable skills and knowledge gained through military service.

Adopting RPL allows for the direct conversion of military operational experience, tactical

courses, and leadership training into academic credits. This type of conversion not only accelerates the educational path but also affirms that military experience has epistemic value as a legitimate form of knowledge. Korea once implemented a similar integration after the occupation, making the transfer of military education to civilians' part of its national development strategy (Kim, 2017). Thus, RPL can be an effective instrument in bridging military education with global academic standards.

However, the TNI education system is still bound by a strict hierarchy that is focused on technical and tactical training. This pattern is effective in fostering loyalty and obedience, but it limits the space for academic reflection. This contrasts with practices in developed countries that emphasize the development of reflective officers (Supratiknya, 2023). Without academic balance, TNI officers' risk being less adaptable to the complexities of modern warfare, especially in the cyber and cognitive domains, hindering effective responses to emerging threats and the use of advanced technologies. Knox et al. (2019) even emphasize the importance of "slow education" to strengthen cognitive agility in dealing with cyber warfare. Therefore, integrating adult learning approaches that connect practical experience with theoretical reflection (Merriam & Bierema, 2013) is increasingly urgent to ensure that TNI officers can effectively navigate the challenges posed by modern warfare, particularly in the cyber and cognitive domains.

Furthermore, developments in information technology have opened opportunities for military education reform to become more adaptive. Proven methods such as e-learning, digital simulations, and narrative wargaming enhance learning effectiveness. However, the quality of e-learning in Indonesian military academies still varies, with some institutions lacking the necessary infrastructure and training to effectively implement these technologies.

The potential is enormous. Globally, the integration of educational technology has even been reinforced by the evaluation of online programs (Culkin, 2017) and the use of synthetic simulations in the classroom. Narrative-based wargaming, as studied by Hagen (2022), shows that fictional yet realistic scenarios can deepen officers' reflective capacity, a crucial skill for enhancing decision-making in complex military operations. All these innovations pave the way for the TNI to break free from the shackles of traditional hierarchy and move towards a more participatory and digitally flexible education model. Thus, improving the academic competence of TNI personnel is not merely an administrative agenda but a national security strategy. Vafadar et al. (2021) emphasize that military interprofessional education can strengthen crisis management, confirming the direct link between academic competence and field readiness. However, educational reform does not depend solely on access to formal academic pathways but also on organizational cultural transformation, intrinsic motivation, and the quality of internal training (Subiyanto, 2024). By combining academic reflection and practical orientation, the TNI can produce officers who are both resilient and globally competitive.

Unfortunately, research on military education in Indonesia remains minimal compared to global trends. The United States, Nigeria, and Korea have already integrated military education into their national development agendas (Cancio, 2018; Dii, 2022). The implementation of RPL across various countries is also more advanced (Maurer, 2023), while Indonesia is still lagging in integrating military education into its national development agenda and in addressing the unique challenges it faces. Muradi (2017) emphasizes the weak civil-military integration so that transnational strategies need to be adapted. This means that the

renewal of Indonesian military education cannot adopt foreign practices wholesale but must be contextualized with national needs. By learning from global experiences, the TNI can accelerate educational reform to align with global academic standards while preserving the nation's identity.

This study aims to reveal how various countries build ecosystems to develop the intellectual and professional capacity of military personnel, not only through technical skills development but also by strengthening academic legitimacy, fostering civil-military collaboration, and aligning with higher education standards. Military modernization relies not only on combat readiness but also on epistemic quality and academic credentials recognized nationally and internationally. With this foundation, the research aims to formulate transformative strategic recommendations for the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), ensuring that the process of improving the competence and academic qualifications of its personnel aligns with global dynamics while remaining contextually relevant to national needs. Therefore, this research focuses on two main questions: (1) how countries around the world design policies, build institutional infrastructure, and establish educational partnerships to improve the professional competence and academic qualifications of military personnel; and (2) what strategies can be formulated so that the TNI is able to integrate global academic standards with Indonesia's operational needs and socio-political characteristics.

Research Methodology

Research design

This study employs a qualitative approach using a Scoping Review (SR) design guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. This approach is appropriate for addressing the research objective, which focuses on exploring policies, institutional structures, and practices in military education across different countries as a foundation for developing strategies to enhance the competence and academic qualifications of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) (Charli et al., 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The scoping review method is particularly well-suited for this study, which is currently in its early conceptual stage. Its primary aim is to map the existing literature, identify research gaps, and synthesize global evidence on military academic recognition, civil–military integration, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Therefore, this approach provides a comprehensive basis for formulating contextually relevant strategic recommendations for the TNI. Data collection was conducted by retrieving articles from the Scopus database using Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) software. The main search keywords included *"Military Education"* and *"Civil-Military Integration."* According to Hutson et al. (2022), PoP facilitates systematic identification and comparison of academic publications. Similarly, Osunsan et al. (2022) highlight that PoP enables more comprehensive literature searches, particularly in cross-country studies.

The retrieved articles were then filtered based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria aligned with the research focus. The inclusion criteria covered: (1) studies discussing the development of military personnel competencies and academic qualifications, (2) studies addressing the integration of military education with national or international higher education

systems, and (3) studies examining RPL policies or practices in military or civilian contexts. Studies unrelated to these themes—such as those focusing solely on technical or operational military aspects (e.g., weapon systems or logistics)—were excluded. The selected data were analyzed thematically to identify global patterns, cross-country differences, and policy implications relevant to the TNI.

Systematic searching strategy

To ensure methodological rigor, the literature search process followed three structured stages: identification, screening, and eligibility (inclusion), as suggested by Mengist et al. (2020). The identification stage aimed to obtain a comprehensive dataset from the Scopus database using the selected keywords. The screening stage served as a filtering mechanism, removing studies that did not meet the conceptual and methodological criteria. Finally, the eligibility stage ensured that the remaining articles were sufficiently relevant, both empirically and theoretically, to address the research questions. These stages were not merely technical procedures but also served as a systematic strategy to ensure that only high-quality, relevant, and contextually appropriate literature was included in the analysis.

Identification and screening

The identification stage involved searching for relevant articles using predefined keywords. Following Cooke et al. (2022), studies that met the initial relevance criteria were included in the review process. A total of 200 articles were retrieved from the Scopus database using the Publish or Perish tool. During preliminary filtering, 26 articles without DOIs were excluded due to accessibility and verification issues. Additionally, 43 articles were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria (e.g., books, conference proceedings, book chapters, and review articles). As a result, 131 articles remained for screening. The screening process consisted of two steps: abstract screening and full-text review. During abstract screening, 92 articles were excluded as not directly relevant to the research focus. This resulted in 39 articles being selected for full-text evaluation.

Table 1. *Criteria inclusion and exclusion*

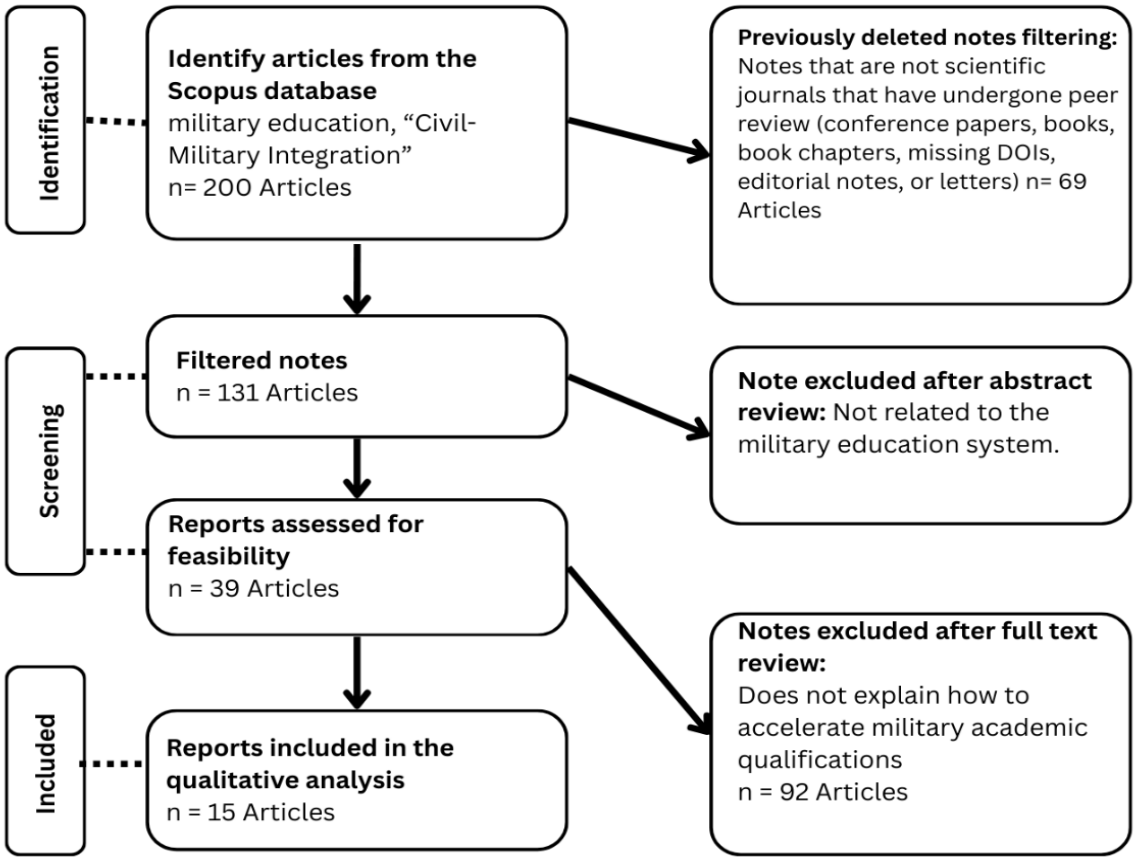
Aspect	Inclusion	Exclusion
Source type	Peer-reviewed journal article	Books, letters, notes, book chapters, articles, proceedings, review articles, and missing DOI.
Publication year	January 2015 – February 2025	Before January 2015
Language	English	Other languages (e.g., Chinese, Russian, Spanish)
Context	Military and vocational education systems and policies	Other non-military sectors
Publisher category	Indexed in Scopus	Not indexed in Scopus

Feasibility stage

At the feasibility stage, a full-text review was conducted to ensure that all selected articles met the inclusion criteria. This step was essential to confirm the relevance and depth of each study.

Of the 39 articles reviewed, 24 were excluded because they offered only general theoretical discussions, without concrete strategies or insights for improving academic qualifications or military personnel competencies. Consequently, 15 articles were deemed suitable and selected as the primary data sources for this study.

Figure 1. *Flow diagram of the study selection process*



Finally, the selected 15 articles were analyzed in depth to extract key findings, identify best practices, and generate strategic insights. These findings form the basis for the discussion and recommendations presented in this study.

Findings

Development of military competence and academic qualifications in various countries

This study analyzed 15 selected articles to explore global practices in developing military competence and academic qualifications. The metadata extracted from each article includes the authors, year of publication, research background, methodology, and focus of military education. Table 2 summarizes these studies.

Table 2. *Metadata of reviewed articles*

No	Authors (years)	Research backgrounds	Research methods	Military education discussed
1	Cole et al. (2025). The Relationship between the Military Medical Officer and Commanding Officer: Implications for Education and Training	Explores the dynamic between medical officers and commanding officers and its implications for military education and training.	Qualitative analysis through case studies and literature review.	Focus on medical officer training, command relationships, and leadership education.
2	Mujkic et al. (2019). International Military Education and Training: Promoting Democratic Values to Militaries and Countries throughout the World	Analyzes how IMET serves as U.S. soft power to promote democratic values and strengthen relations.	Survey and qualitative evaluation of foreign officer perspectives.	International Military Education and Training (IMET) program.
3	Mukherjee (2018) Educating the Professional Military: Civil–Military Relations and Professional Military Education in India	Examines civil–military relations and their influence on professional military education in India.	Primary interviews and secondary research on Indian PME.	Professional Military Education (PME) in India and global comparative insights.
4	Nguyen et al. (2020) Impact of COVID-19 on General Chemistry Education at the United States Military Academy	Discusses challenges in adapting chemistry education during COVID-19 at USMA.	Case study of course redesign and remote instruction adaptation.	Military academy undergraduate education and pedagogical adaptation.

5	Paget (2016) 'Interoperability of the Mind'	Investigates cultural interoperability in multinational military coalitions through PME.	Conceptual analysis and case studies of coalition operations.	International PME as a tool for cultural interoperability.
6	Alnaqbi and Yassin (2021) Current Status, Challenges and Strategies of Artificial Intelligence and E-learning in the UAE Military Education System	Explores AI and e-learning adoption in UAE military education.	Survey-based research on teachers and students in the Joint Command and Staff College.	AI-driven e-learning in UAE military colleges.
7	Yahupov et al. (2020) Development of Foreign Language Teachers' Diagnostic Competence in the System of Military Education	Focuses on developing teachers' diagnostic competence in military foreign language education.	Pedagogical experiment with analysis of teacher competencies.	Foreign language teacher training in military education.
8	Crecente et al. (2021) The Hidden Link between Entrepreneurship and Military Education	Examines the connection between mandatory military education and entrepreneurship development.	Quantitative study using GEM and World Military Guide data (2013–2018).	Military service as a form of entrepreneurial skill development.
9	Sonesson et al. (2018) The Potential of Blended Learning in Education and Training for Advanced Civilian and Military Trauma Care	Assesses educational challenges in trauma care training and explores blended learning solutions.	Survey, interviews, and post-course evaluations.	Blended learning in advanced military trauma care education.
10	Callado-Muñoz and Utrero-González (2019) Integration in the European Higher Education Area: the case of military education	Explores integration of military education into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the context of Bologna Process and EU defence cooperation.	Comparative institutional analysis using European Tertiary Education Register (ETER) data (2011–2015).	European Military Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs), comparison with civilian higher education institutions.

11	Salkutsan and Stolberg (2022) The Impact of War on the Ukraine Military Education System	Assesses reforms of Ukrainian military education before and during the Russian invasion, highlighting agility and adaptability in leadership training.	Policy and contextual analysis of reforms (2014–2022), drawing on defence policy documents and war outcomes.	Ukrainian Professional Military Education (PME), National Defense University, officer and NCO corps training.
12	Libel (2021) Professional Military Education as an Institution: A Short (Historical) Institutionalist Survey	Addresses the lack of conceptualization of PME and its relationship to military professionalism; explores PME evolution globally.	Historical institutionalist analysis, a conceptual/theoretical approach with a focus on path dependency and critical junctures.	Western PME institutions (17th–21st century), comparative survey of professional military academies and colleges.
13	Antrobus and West (2022) 'This Is All Very Academic': Critical Thinking in Professional Military Education	Critiques the flawed understanding of critical thinking in UK PME; examine tensions between academic critique and military practice.	Document analysis (MoD, JSCSC policies, curricula) + auto-ethnographic reflections of authors as military veterans.	UK Professional Military Education (PME), Joint Services Command and Staff Course (JSCSC).
14	Burkett and Aguirre (2020) Tiers for Education and Training in Global Health for Military Engagement	Highlights the absence of formal global health education pathways in the US military despite increasing global health engagements.	Policy analysis and conceptual framework proposing four-tiered educational structure.	US Military Global Health Education (IHS Program, Navy Global Health Specialist Program, Air Force Medical Service).
15	Garcia Estrada et al. (2024) Military Education in Extended Reality (XR): Learning Troublesome Knowledge through Immersive Experiential Application	Examines the challenge of teaching the threat-based approach to civilian protection as "troublesome knowledge" and	Mixed-method quasi-experiment with 19 NDUC master's officers; XR modules included 360° video & embodiment, dialogue with a virtual perpetrator, and collaborative map	Officer education at the Norwegian Defence University College, focusing on human security and civilian

	explores XR as a tool to foster understanding, empathy, and critical reflection.	exercises; data collected via pre–post questionnaires, physiological recordings, and reflective discussions.	protection, integrating XR for experiential learning, empathy development, and threat-analysis skills

Based on the analysis of the selected articles, the findings can be grouped into two main categories: fundamental aspects and methodological aspects of military education.

Fundamental aspects of military education

The first category highlights key structural and conceptual elements that shape military education systems across countries.

Several important issues emerge. First, the relationship between military medical officers and commanding officers is critical to the development of education and training systems, particularly in balancing professional expertise and hierarchical authority (Cole et al., 2025). Second, military education promotes democratic values and strengthens civil–military relations, especially through international training programs and institutional collaboration (Mujkic et al., 2019; Mukherjee, 2018).

Third, interoperability in multinational military operations requires an education system that supports cross-cultural understanding and cooperation (Paget, 2016). Fourth, efforts to integrate military education into broader higher education systems, such as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), aim to align military institutions with civilian academic standards (Callado-Muñoz & Utrero-González, 2019), thereby enhancing the credibility and recognition of military qualifications in the civilian job market. Finally, the development of military education is also influenced by historical and institutional factors, which shape its structure and evolution over time (Libel, 2021).

Methodological aspects of military education

The second category focuses on the strategies and approaches used in delivering military education and training. A major finding is the increasing role of educational technology. Blended learning has been shown to enhance both technical and reflective skills in trauma training contexts (Sonesson et al., 2018). Similarly, the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and e-learning platforms in the United Arab Emirates presents new opportunities and implementation challenges for modern military education (Alnaqbi & Yassin, 2021), including the need to train educators to effectively integrate these technologies into their teaching practiceswhich is crucial for enhancing the overall effectiveness of military training programmes in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced teaching practices, particularly in military academies, underscoring the need for adaptive and resilient education systems (Nguyen et al., 2020). The development of teacher competencies, such as diagnostic

skills in foreign language education, also reflects efforts to improve instructional quality within military institutions (Yahupov et al., 2020).

Other findings relate to applied educational strategies. Global health education emphasizes tiered training systems for military engagement in international contexts (Burkett & Aguirre, 2020), designed to enhance the effectiveness of military personnel across diverse operational environments and improve their responses to global health challenges. Military education systems in conflict settings, such as Ukraine, demonstrate the importance of adaptability in both peace and wartime conditions (Salkutsan & Stolberg, 2022), particularly in how they prepare personnel to respond effectively to rapidly changing environments and challenges. Furthermore, critical thinking is identified as a core competency in professional military education (Antrobus & West, 2022), which is essential for effective decision-making and problem-solving in complex and dynamic environments. Finally, military education is also linked to broader outcomes, including entrepreneurship and socio-economic contributions (Crecente et al., 2021), as it equips individuals with skills that can foster innovation and drive economic growth in their communities.

.

Discussion

The urgency of academic integration in military education

The findings indicate that military education is undergoing a significant transformation in response to global challenges. Traditional approaches that focus primarily on technical and tactical skills are no longer sufficient to address the complexities of modern warfare and international security, as they fail to equip military personnel with the critical thinking and interdisciplinary knowledge required in contemporary contexts (Antrobus & West, 2022; Knox et al., 2019). This lack of preparation can lead to ineffective decision-making in high-stakes situations, ultimately jeopardizing mission success and national security. Academic integration has therefore become increasingly important in strengthening both the intellectual and professional capacity of military personnel.

The literature demonstrates that academic competence enhances not only technical expertise but also the legitimacy and authority of military professionals. Cole et al. (2025) highlight that professional authority in military contexts is not solely determined by hierarchy, but also by recognized academic competence. In this regard, education functions as a bridge between operational capability and strategic thinking. Furthermore, stronger integration with civilian education systems enables military institutions to align with global academic standards and expand opportunities for collaboration (Callado-Muñoz & Utrero-González, 2019). This alignment contributes to improved training systems and more comprehensive professional development pathways for military personnel, ultimately enhancing their skills and adaptability in both military and civilian contexts.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) as a strategic innovation

The findings also highlight the importance of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a mechanism for bridging military and civilian education systems. RPL recognizes professional

experience, training, and non-formal learning as legitimate academic achievements (Maurer, 2023).

In practice, the absence of structured RPL systems can lead to inefficiencies, particularly when individuals are required to repeat learning processes they have already mastered through experience. This duplication not only wastes time and resources but may also reduce motivation for further academic development, particularly among those who feel their prior learning is not being recognized or valued (Milwan et al., 2025). In contrast, countries that have implemented RPL provide more flexible and efficient pathways to academic qualifications, enabling individuals to gain formal recognition for prior competencies and accelerate their educational progression.

In the Indonesian context, the adoption of RPL has strong potential to enhance the academic advancement of military personnel while acknowledging the value of their professional experience. As demonstrated in international contexts such as South Korea, integrating experiential learning into formal education systems can strengthen both individual competencies and national development strategies (Kim, 2017). Therefore, RPL can serve as a strategic tool to enhance both institutional efficiency and professional capacity within the TNI, ultimately yielding a more skilled and adaptable military force that can respond effectively to modern challenges.

Educational technology and digital transformation

Another important implication of the findings is the growing role of digital technology in military education. The integration of e-learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and simulation-based training supports more flexible, adaptive, and interactive learning environments (Alnaqbi & Yassin, 2021). However, successful implementation requires more than technological adoption. It also depends on institutional readiness, quality assurance systems, and instructor capacity. Lutfi (2022) emphasizes that inconsistencies in e-learning quality within military academies can limit their effectiveness. Without adequate support systems, the potential benefits of digital transformation may not be fully realized, particularly in terms of improving learning outcomes and enhancing the overall effectiveness of educational programs.

Global evidence indicates that blended learning methodologies can substantially improve both technical and reflective skills (Sonesson et al., 2018), especially when combined with efficient support systems and pedagogical innovations tailored to the unique requirements of military academies. In this context, pedagogical innovation should accompany digital transformation to ensure meaningful learning outcomes, such as improved student engagement and knowledge retention.

Cognitive competence and reflective skills

The findings further suggest that cognitive and reflective skills are essential components of modern military education. While traditional systems emphasize discipline and obedience, contemporary challenges require critical thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities (Antrobus & West, 2022). Developing these competencies requires significant changes in both curriculum design and instructional approaches, including the incorporation of experiential

learning opportunities and collaborative projects that foster critical thinking and adaptability. Merriam and Bierema (2013) argue that adult learning should integrate practical experience with reflective processes to foster a deeper understanding. Similarly, Yahupov et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of developing educator competencies to support effective learning environments. In addition, Volk et al. (2020) found that motivation and engagement are critical factors in military education, particularly in distance-learning contexts, as they directly influence the effectiveness of instructional methods and the overall learning outcomes for military personnel. Therefore, fostering reflective learning environments and strengthening educator capacity are essential strategies for developing cognitive competence in military personnel.

Global integration and contextual adaptation

International experiences provide valuable perspectives on reforming military education systems. For example, the integration of military education into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) demonstrates how alignment with civilian academic systems can enhance educational quality and institutional legitimacy (Callado-Muñoz & Utrero-González, 2019). Similarly, Ukraine's experience highlights the importance of adaptability in military education during both peacetime and conflict situations (Salkutsan & Stolberg, 2022). However, these practices cannot be adopted directly without considering local contexts. Muradi (2017) emphasizes that Indonesia's unique socio-political conditions, particularly in civil–military relations, require context-sensitive adaptation. Therefore, integrating global standards must be balanced with national needs, cultural values, and institutional characteristics to ensure sustainable and relevant reform, particularly considering Indonesia's unique socio-political conditions and the need for context-sensitive adaptation.

Implications for national security

Finally, the findings demonstrate that improvements in military education have direct implications for national security. Academic competence contributes to more effective decision-making, crisis management, and operational readiness (Vafadar et al., 2021). Moreover, strengthening academic qualifications enhances global competitiveness, enabling military personnel to participate more effectively in international collaborations, peacekeeping missions, and defense diplomacy. Sungkono et al. (2024) further argue that military professionalism requires a balance between discipline and intellectual capacity. Without this balance, military institutions risk lacking strategic adaptability, leading to ineffective responses to emerging global threats and challenges. In this regard, reforms in military education—particularly through RPL, digital transformation, and the development of reflective competencies—should be viewed not only as educational initiatives but also as strategic investments in national resilience and security.

Conclusion

This study highlights that implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in military

educational institutions, particularly within the Indonesian Army, represents a strategic innovation to enhance soldiers' academic qualifications while strengthening military professionalism. The findings from the scoping review indicate that several countries have successfully integrated military education into higher education systems through mechanisms such as credit recognition, curriculum alignment, and collaboration with civilian universities. These practices provide academic legitimacy and enhance the adaptability of military institutions in responding to global social, political, and technological challenges.

Furthermore, the study identifies three key pillars for successful transformation of military education: (1) the recognition of soldiers' experience and competencies as valid academic assets, (2) the integration of digital technologies—such as e-learning, blended learning, and artificial intelligence—to increase access and flexibility, and (3) the development of critical and reflective thinking to complement traditional command-based training. Together, these elements contribute to the formation of adaptive, competent, and professionally qualified military personnel.

In this context, the adoption of RPL should be viewed not only as a mechanism for improving academic qualifications but also as a pathway toward a more integrated and sustainable military–civilian education system. This transformation has important implications for strengthening institutional capacity, expanding academic collaboration, and enhancing Indonesia's global competitiveness in the defense sector. Therefore, this study recommends that the Indonesian Army develop a structured roadmap for RPL implementation, including the formulation of clear institutional policies, the establishment of pilot programs, and the reinforcement of quality assurance systems. Such efforts are essential to ensure that military education reform is implemented effectively and contributes meaningfully to military professionalism and national resilience.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

Alnaqbi, A. M. A., & Yassin, A. M. (2021). Current status, challenges and strategies of artificial intelligence and e-learning the UAE military education system. *International Journal of Sustainable Construction Engineering and Technology*, *12*(3), 352–361. https://doi.org/10.30880/ijscet.2021.12.03.034

Antrobus, S., & West, H. (2022). 'This is all very academic': Critical thinking in professional military education. *RUSI Journal*, *167*(3), 78–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2022.2112521

Burkett, E. K., & Aguirre, D. L. (2020). Tiers for education and training in global health for military engagement. *Military Medicine*, *185*(9–10), 411–413. https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usz478

Callado-Muñoz, F. J., & Utrero-González, N. (2019). Integration in the European higher education area: The case of military education. *Defence Studies*, *19*(4), 373–391. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2019.1681897

Cancio, R. (2018). Examining the effect of military service on education: The unique case of hispanic veterans. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *40*(2), 150–175. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986318761849

Charli, M. S., Eshete, S. K., & Debela, K. L. (2022). Learning how research design methods work: a review of creswell's research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. *The Qualitative Report*, *27*(12), 2956–2960. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5901

Cole, R., Crawford, K., Farrell, M., Vojta, L., Schwartz, J., & Rudinsky, S. L. (2025). The relationship between the military medical officer and commanding officer: implications for education and training. *Military Medicine*, *190*(1–2), e382–e387. https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usae337

Cooke, S., Nelson, D., Green, H., McPeake, K., Gussy, M., & Kane, R. (2022). Rapid systematic review on developing web-based interventions to support people affected by cancer. *BMJ Open*, *12*(9), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-062026

Crecente, F., Sarabia, M., & Teresa del Val, M. (2021). The hidden link between entrepreneurship and military education. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *163*(June), 120429. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120429

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

Culkin, D. T. (2017). Military design insights for online education program evaluation: A revised theoretical construct. *American Journal of Distance Education*, *31*(4), 258–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2017.1359138

Dii, C. T. (2022). Streamlining civil - military education for national development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Management Review*, *17*(1), 16–29. https://doi.org/10.4314/ijdmr.v17i1.2

Duarte, E. P., Sos, S., Purwantoro, I. S. A., Tarigan, H., Saragih, H. J. R., Hartono, U., Sumarno, I. A. P., Soebakgijo, N. H., Saptono, I. E., & Winarna, A. (2024). *Potensi dan tantangan inovasi dalam manajemen pertahanan nasional: membangun keunggulan kompetitif di era modern (Potential and challenges of innovation in national defense management: building competitive advantage in the modern era)*. Indonesia Emas Group.

Muhtadi, B. (2022). *The Indonesian military enjoys strong public trust and support: reasons and implications*. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

Garcia Estrada, J., Prasolova-Førland, E., Kjeksrud, S., Themelis, C., Lindqvist, P., Kvam, K., Midthun, O., Sverre, K., Hokstad, L. M., Mohamed, S. K., Grassini, S., & Ricci, S. (2024). Military education in extended reality (XR): Learning troublesome knowledge through immersive experiential application. *Visual Computer*, *40*(10), 7249–7278. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00371-024-03339-w

Hagen, A. M. (2022). Learning (better) from stories: Wargames, narratives, and rhetoric in military education. *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, *5*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31374/sjms.120

Hutson, J., Jeevanjee, T., Graaf, V. Vander, Lively, J., Weber, J., Weir, G., Arnone, K., Carnes, G., Vosevich, K., Plate, D., Leary, M., & Edele, S. (2022). Artificial intelligence and the disruption of higher education: Strategies for integration across disciplines. *Creative Education*, *13*(12), 3953–3980. https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2022.1312253

Kim, S. (2017). Actors and ideology for educational policy transfer: the case of education reforms in the two Koreas during the Soviet and US military occupation. *Oxford Review of Education*, *43*(1), 55–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2016.1237870

Knox, B. J., Lugo, R. G., Helkala, K., & Sütterlin, S. (2019). Slow education and cognitive agility: Improving military cyber cadet cognitive performance for better governance of cyberpower. *International Journal of Cyber Warfare and Terrorism*, *9*(1), 48–66. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCWT.2019010104

Libel, T. (2021). Professional military education as an institution: Short (historical) institutionalist survey. *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, *4*(1), 121–131. https://doi.org/10.31374/sjms.79

Maurer, M. (2023). Recognizing prior learning in vocational education and training: global ambitions and actual implementation in four countries. *Comparative Education*, *59*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2022.2132445

Mengist, W., Soromessa, T., & Legese, G. (2020). Method for conducting systematic literature review and meta-analysis for environmental science research. *MethodsX*, *7*(5), 100777. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2019.100777

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2013). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. John Wiley & Sons.

Milwan, Andini, L. A., Sunarya, A., Awinda, S. N., & Prasetyo, E. A. (2025). Model implementasi kebijakan recognisi pembelajaran lampau (studi kasus di universitas terbuka) (Policy implementation model of recognition of prior learning (a case study at the open university)). *Ganaya: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, *8*(2), 14–28. https://jayapanguspress.penerbit.org/index.php/ganaya

Mujkic, E., Asencio, H. D., & Byrne, T. (2019). International military education and training: Promoting democratic values to militaries and countries throughout the world. *Democracy and Security*, *15*(3), 271–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2018.1519802

Mukherjee, A. (2018). Educating the professional military: civil–military relations and professional military education in India. *Armed Forces and Society*, *44*(3), 476–497. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X17725863

Muradi, M. (2017). The civil-military integration and the development of education system in defense institutions: Indonesia's case. *Asian Social Science*, *13*(3), 36. https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v13n3p36

Nguyen, C. K., Deneve, D. R., Nguyen, L. T., & Limbocker, R. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on general chemistry education at the united states military academy. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *97*(9), 2922–2927. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.0c00771

Osunsan, O. K., Ijjo, A. T., Mugisha, J. F., Samuel, P., & Muhwezi, M. (2022). Publish or perish': A systematic review. *Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, *1*(September), 1–22. www.cavendish.ac.ug

Paget, S. (2016). 'Interoperability of the mind': Professional military education and the development of interoperability. *RUSI Journal*, *161*(4), 42–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2016.1224496

Salkutsan, S., & Stolberg, A. G. (2022). The impact of war on the Ukraine military education system: Moving forward in war and peace. *Connections*, *21*(3), 67–76. https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.21.3.41

Sonesson, L., Boffard, K., Lundberg, L., Rydmark, M., & Karlgren, K. (2018). The potential of blended learning in education and training for advanced civilian and military trauma care. *Injury*, *49*(1), 93–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.injury.2017.11.003

Subiyanto, D. (2024). Pengaruh budaya organisasi, pelatihan kerja dan motivasi intrinsik terhadap disiplin kerja (Studi kasus pada Yon Armed 15 Cailendra Martapura Sumatera Selatan) (The influence of organizational culture, job training, and intrinsic motivation on work discipline (A case study at Yon Armed 15 Cailendra Martapura, South Sumatra)). *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan dan Ilmu Sosial (JMPIS)*, *5*(4), 1-11.

Sungkono, S., Setyo, A., Suryokumoro, H., & Kusumaningrum, A. (2024). A review of enforcement of military discipline law to establish professionalism of the national army to strengthen national security and resilience. *Rekayasa*, *17*(1), 124–130. https://doi.org/10.21107/rekayasa.v17i1.24653

Supratiknya, A. (2023). *Sumbangan psikologi dalam pendidikan (The contribution of psychology to education)*. Sanata Dharma University Press.

Vafadar, Z., Aghaei, M. H., & Ebadi, A. (2021). Military nurses' experiences of interprofessional education in crisis management: A qualitative content analysis. *Journal of Advances in Medical Education & Professionalism*, *9*(2), 85. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30476/jamp.2021.87653.1317

Volk, F., Floyd, C. G., Shaler, L., Ferguson, L., & Gavulic, A. M. (2020). Active duty military learners and distance education: Factors of persistence and attrition. *American Journal of Distance Education*, *34*(2), 106–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2019.1708842

Yahupov, V., Zastelo, O., Svystun, V., Korchynska, N., Chorna, O., & Krykun, V. (2020). Development of foreign language teachers' diagnostic competence in the system of military education. *TEM Journal*, *9*(3), 1213–1220. https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM93-49