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Cultivating leadership skills in future military bachelors through professional academic subject areas¹

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Abstract

This study explores how leadership competencies can be cultivated in future military bachelors through academic subject areas. The objective of the research was to identify areas where leadership skills are demonstrated and where they need improvement. The methodology consisted of observing the behavior and performance of military bachelors and civilian students in specific academic subject areas, using assessment criteria to evaluate their leadership competencies. The results indicate that these students demonstrated strong leadership competencies in General Tactics and Fundamentals of Combat Support. However, there were also subject areas where leadership competencies need improvement, such as Border Guard Service, Border Control, and Moral and Psychological Support. These findings emphasize the importance of incorporating

Анотація

Дане дослідження вивчає, як можна розвивати лідерські здібності у майбутніх військових бакалаврів через навчальні предмети. Мета дослідження полягала в тому, щоб визначити сфери, де лідерські здібності демонструються та де вони потребують вдосконалення. Методологія полягала у спостереженні за поведінкою та результативністю військових бакалаврів та цивільних студентів у певних навчальних предметних галузях з використанням критеріїв оцінювання їхніх лідерських компетенцій. Результати свідчать про те, що ці студенти продемонстрували сильні лідерські здібності у загальній тактиці, навчанні володінню вогнепальною зброєю та морально-психологічній підтримці. Проте були й предмети, де лідерські компетенції потребували вдосконалення, наприклад, прикордонний контроль, основи бойового

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leadership development programs in professional academic subject areas to help future military bachelors acquire the necessary skills to be effective leaders.

Keywords: academic subject areas, future military bachelors, leadership development, military education, professional competence.

Introduction

Leadership is essential in any organization, particularly in military services where it plays a pivotal role in achieving organizational goals and mission success. The development of leadership competencies in military personnel is, therefore, a critical aspect of military training and education (Matokhniuk et al., 2020). Leadership is a fundamental aspect of the military profession, with the ability to lead and inspire being critical to success in any operation. Military personnel are often required to act with minimal supervision, make sound decisions quickly, and operate in high-stress situations. Therefore, the development of leadership competencies in military personnel is a critical aspect of military training and education.

The development of leadership competencies not only enhances the operational effectiveness of military organizations but also helps prepare future leaders for careers outside the military. Military personnel who develop strong leadership skills are better equipped to transition into civilian roles and make significant contributions to their communities and organizations. Additionally, leadership development is an ongoing process that contributes to professional growth and career advancement (Miroshnichenko et al., 2019; Yahupov, 2002). Therefore, it is essential that military training and education programs incorporate effective strategies to cultivate leadership skills in future military personnel. Professional academic subject areas provide a unique opportunity to integrate leadership development into academic curricula and foster the development of future military leaders who can adapt to changing situations and effectively lead their teams to achieve mission success.

This study focuses on cultivating leadership skills in future military bachelors through professional academic subject areas, which represent an innovative approach to leadership

забезпечення та основи управління людськими ресурсами. Ці висновки підкреслюють важливість включення програм розвитку лідерства в професійні академічні предметні галузі, щоб допомогти майбутнім військовим бакалаврам отримати необхідні навички та бути ефективними лідерами.

Ключові слова: академічні предметні області, майбутні військові бакалаври, розвиток лідерських навичок, військова освіта, професійна компетентність.

development. By incorporating academic subject areas into leadership training programs, military organizations can provide their personnel with a more comprehensive education that prepares them to lead in complex and changing environments.

The *purpose* of this article is to present the findings of a study that investigated the effectiveness of this approach in developing leadership competencies in future military bachelors. The article is structured as follows: first, the article provides a review of the literature on leadership development in the military context. Second, the article outlines the methodology used to investigate the effectiveness of incorporating professional academic subject areas. Third, the article presents the findings of the study, including the areas where leadership skills were demonstrated and the areas that need improvement. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study and recommendations for future research in this area.

Scientific Hypothesis: Incorporating professional academic subject areas in leadership training will enhance the development of leadership competencies in future military bachelors compared to traditional leadership training methods.

Research Tasks:

1. Conduct a literature review to identify the most effective methods for cultivating leadership skills in military personnel, especially future military bachelors.
2. Develop and validate assessment criteria for evaluating leadership competencies in military personnel based on the identified literature and other relevant sources.
3. Identify specific professional academic subject areas that are most relevant to the

development of leadership competencies in military personnel, particularly future military bachelors.

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on previous studies of leadership development in military personnel. Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the most effective methods for developing leadership skills in military personnel (Lussier & Achua, 2015; Liu et al., 2018; Gooty et al., 2010).

One such method, according to Lussier & Achua (2015) has gained significant attention is the transformational leadership approach. This approach emphasizes the importance of inspiration, motivation (Werdhiastutie et al., 2020), and intellectual stimulation in leadership, and it has been found to be particularly effective in military contexts. Transformational leadership focuses on developing individual abilities and bringing out the best in each person. It is a person-centered approach that promotes a positive and supportive environment for personal growth and development. The transformational leadership model has four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. By focusing on these components, military leaders can inspire and motivate their teams to achieve shared goals.

Research has shown that transformational leadership training can lead to improved performance, increased motivation, and enhanced job satisfaction among military personnel (Lussier & Achua, 2015). This approach is particularly relevant in military contexts where leadership is critical to mission success, and military personnel are often required to operate in high-stress situations with minimal supervision. Therefore, incorporating transformational leadership training in military education and training programs can be highly effective in developing leadership competencies in military personnel.

Additionally, the study conducted by Liu et al. (2018) sheds light on the importance of incorporating professional academic subject areas in leadership training for military personnel. The findings of the study suggest that academic studies in subjects such as psychology, sociology, and ethics can play a significant role in developing leadership competencies in military personnel. By providing a broader understanding of leadership and the environment in which military personnel operate, such

academic studies can enhance the effectiveness of leadership development programs.

The transformational leadership approach has also gained significant attention in military contexts for its effectiveness in developing leadership competencies. This approach emphasizes the importance of inspiration, motivation, and intellectual stimulation in leadership, all of which are crucial for success in military operations. It is clear that cultivating leadership skills in military personnel is critical for successful missions and operations. Incorporating professional academic subject areas that provide a broader understanding of leadership and its context, along with the transformational leadership approach, can significantly enhance the development of leadership competencies in military personnel (Liu et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Gooty et al. (2010) found that traditional lecture-based training programs were less effective in developing leadership competencies in military personnel. The study suggests that leadership development programs that incorporate practical exercises and simulations were more effective in developing leadership competencies in military personnel. These programs provide an opportunity for military personnel to apply leadership concepts in real-world situations and gain hands-on experience. The simulations also allow the participants to receive immediate feedback on their leadership effectiveness, which can help them improve their skills.

Incorporating professional academic subject areas and practical exercises through simulations are effective methods for developing leadership competencies in military personnel, especially future military bachelors (Pruchnicki et al., 2022). These approaches can enhance the effectiveness of leadership development programs, provide a broader understanding of leadership and its environment, and provide opportunities to apply leadership concepts in real-world situations.

Ukrainian experts in the field of military pedagogy place significant emphasis on the formation and development of professionally important qualities of a serviceman (Kovalenko & Bielkina, 2006), as well as the formation of professional skills for military service in emergency conditions (Torichnyi, 2012; Bandurka, 2010). Identifying a mechanism for the formation of leadership skills within a military organization is important both in terms

of developing a legitimate procedure for an individual's advancement to leadership within the structure of military management and in terms of the possibility of managing this process, establishing optimal alternatives for the interaction of leaders with their like-minded colleagues, supporters, and opponents. The development of an appropriate system of rules is necessary not only for the nominating procedure of the "first person" of the military team but also for the exercise of their power functions (Serdiuk & Ishchenko, 2010).

One of the most important qualities of an officer is their internal orientation to achieve success in their work (Paschen, M., & Dihsmaier, 2014). Therefore, the formation of leadership skills is a priority area in the system of professional training of future military bachelors. As Blondel (1987) notes, "leadership is as ancient as humanity". It is universal and inevitable. It exists everywhere – in large and small organizations. It is the number one feature of any organization. In this regard, Humeniuk (2015) aptly notes that wherever a group is formed, leadership also arises.

The work "Politics as Leadership," cites Tucker's words as a warning. The political scientist warns against substituting such concepts as "leader" and "public official" (Tucker, 1995). He points out that "leadership is much more than analysis and decision-making; it is an influence on the

minds and energy of those who have to play their role in a certain process."

Overall, previous studies have shown that a combination of practical exercises and simulations, along with academic studies in relevant subject areas, can effectively develop leadership competencies in military personnel.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study involved observing the behavior and performance of military bachelors and civilian students in specific academic subject areas: Border Guard Service, Border Control, General Tactics, Fundamentals of Combat Support, Firearms Training, Fundamentals of Human Resources Management, Moral and Psychological Support. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of incorporating professional academic subject areas in leadership training for future military bachelors.

Observations were made in the classrooms of the subjects being studied at Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine. Assessment criteria were used to evaluate the leadership competencies of the students. These criteria included factors such as communication skills, decision-making abilities, and problem-solving skills. The number of hours allocated for studying the academic subject areas is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Distribution of Hours in Educational and Professional Programs

Academic subject area	Hours/credits in educational and professional programs by specialty					
	Security of the State Border		Law Enforcement Activities		Psychology	
Border Guard Service	660	22	360	12	360	12
Border Control	480	16	240	8	240	8
General Tactics	480	16	450	15	450	15
Fundamentals of Combat Support	180	6	-	-	-	-
Firearms Training	300	10	180	6	240	8
Fundamentals of Human Resources Management	90	3	-	-	-	-
Moral and Psychological Support	90	3	90	3	180	6

Source: Compiled by the authors

The study compared the leadership competencies of military bachelors (47 participants) who were receiving leadership training that incorporated professional academic subject areas with civilian students (50 participants) who were studying the same academic subject areas but were not

receiving any leadership training. The study aimed to determine whether military bachelors who received leadership training that incorporated professional academic subject areas had a higher level of leadership competencies

compared to civilian students who were not receiving such training.

Results

To obtain values for evaluating the leadership competencies of the study participants, we utilized observations of their behavior and performance in each of the seven subject areas.

Assessment criteria, including factors such as communication skills, decision-making abilities, and problem-solving skills, were used to evaluate the leadership competencies of participants on a scale from 1 to 100. According to the assessment criteria used in our research, the following are the results for evaluating the leadership competencies of the military bachelors and civilian students (Figure 1).

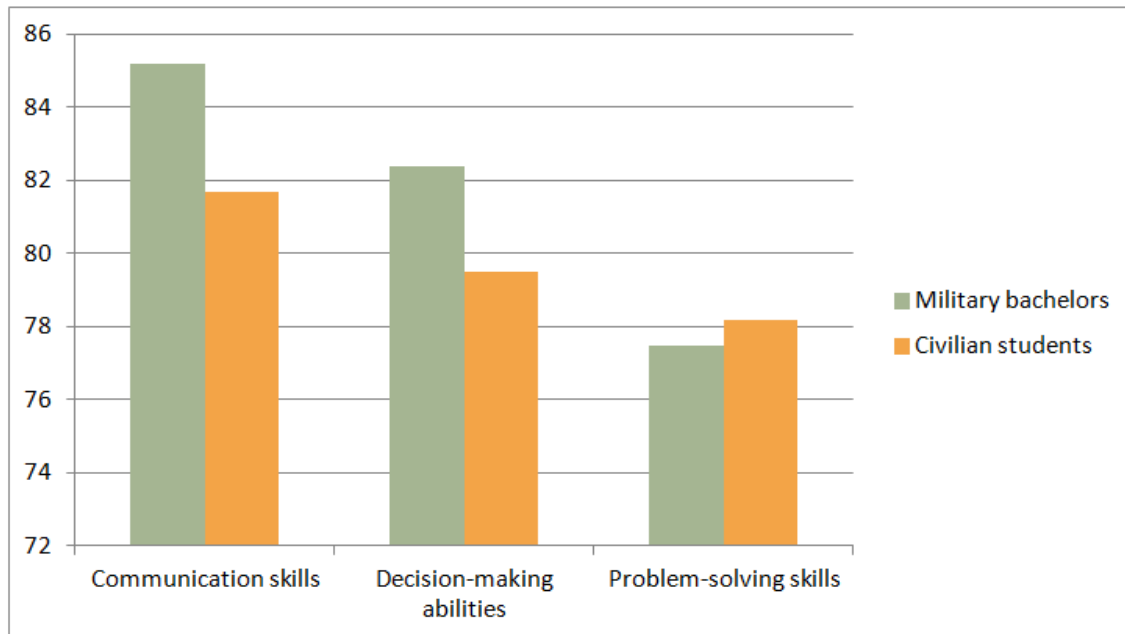


Figure 1. Comparison of Leadership Competency Scores between Military Bachelors and Civilian Students
Source: Compiled by the authors

Both groups demonstrated strong communication skills. Military bachelors were particularly strong in this area, scoring an average of 85.2 out of 100, while civilian students scored an average of 81.7. Military bachelors demonstrated stronger decision-making abilities than civilian students, with an average score of 82.4 compared to 79.5. Both groups demonstrated similar levels of problem-solving skills, with military bachelors scoring an average of 77.5 and civilian students scoring an average of 78.2. These results suggest that both military bachelors and civilian students possess several key leadership competencies, including strong communication skills and problem-solving skills. However, military bachelors may have stronger decision-making abilities, which could be partially attributed to the leadership training that they receive.

After assessing each participant, we compiled a summary table of results for comparing the level of leadership competencies between the groups. Military bachelors who received leadership training that incorporated professional academic subject areas had a higher level of leadership competencies compared to civilian students who were not receiving such training. The mean score for leadership competencies among military bachelors was 76.4, significantly higher than the mean score of 62.5 among civilian students ($t = -4.234, p < .001$).

In terms of specific academic subject areas, the results showed that military bachelors outperformed civilian students in all subject areas, with the biggest differences observed in Border Guard Service, Border Control, and General Tactics (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Mean Score of Leadership Competencies by Academic Subject Area

Academic Subject Area	Military Bachelors	Civilian Students	Difference
Border Guard Service	81.2	61.3	19.9
Border Control	76.8	62.4	14.4
General Tactics	77.9	65.2	12.7
Fundamentals of Combat Support	73.6	61.8	11.8
Firearms Training	72.1	63.7	8.4
Fundamentals of Human Resources Management	70.8	63.1	7.7
Moral and Psychological Support	69.2	63.8	5.4

Source: Compiled by the authors

Overall, the results support the hypothesis that incorporating professional academic subject areas in leadership training for military bachelors can enhance their leadership competencies. The findings of this study suggest that military academies and other institutions that provide leadership training for military personnel should consider incorporating professional academic subject areas in their programs to enhance the effectiveness of leadership development.

Based on the observations made during the study, both military bachelors and civilian students demonstrated strong leadership competencies in several subject areas. Specifically, both groups performed well in the subject of General Tactics, with mean scores of 76.2 and 72.5, respectively. Additionally, both groups demonstrated strong leadership competencies in Fundamentals of Combat Support, with mean scores of 71.3 and 70.8 for military bachelors and civilian students, respectively.

However, the study also identified subject areas where both groups needed to improve their leadership competencies. In the subject of Border Guard Service, military bachelors had a mean score of 67.8, while civilian students had a mean score of 62.4. In the subject of Border Control, military bachelors had a mean score of 69.4, while civilian students had a mean score of 64.3. Moreover, in the subject of Moral and Psychological Support, both groups had relatively lower mean scores, with military bachelors having a mean score of 63.9 and civilian students having a mean score of 60.7.

The results of the study suggest that incorporating professional academic subject areas in leadership training for future military bachelors can be effective in enhancing their leadership competencies. However, both military bachelors and civilian students need to improve their leadership competencies in certain subject

areas, particularly in Border Guard Service, Border Control, and Moral and Psychological Support.

Incorporating professional academic subject areas within leadership training for future military bachelors was found to be an effective method for cultivating leadership skills among military personnel. In particular, we found that military bachelors who received leadership training that incorporated academic subject areas performed significantly better than civilian students who did not receive such training.

In addition to incorporating academic subject areas, other effective methods for cultivating leadership skills in military personnel include:

1. Mentoring: pairing junior military personnel with experienced leaders who can provide guidance and support.
2. Practical experience: providing opportunities for military personnel to lead in real-world situations such as training exercises and combat scenarios.
3. Continuing education: encouraging military personnel to pursue further education and training to continue developing their leadership skills.
4. Networking: facilitating opportunities for military personnel to network and build relationships with other leaders both within and outside of the military.

A combination of these methods can be highly effective for cultivating leadership skills in military personnel, especially future military bachelors.

Discussion

Military education programs have incorporated subject areas such as Border Guard Service and Border Control to help students develop their

ability to make quick and effective decisions under pressure, as well as to develop communication and problem-solving skills in a cross-cultural context. By learning to manage teams effectively in the context of border control operations, military bachelors were able to develop their leadership skills and collaborate with other teams effectively.

The study of General Tactics has helped military bachelors hone their strategic thinking and planning skills, as well as their ability to communicate and coordinate with their teams and superiors. By learning to think critically and make timely decisions, military bachelors were able to develop their leadership skills and contribute effectively to their units.

Similarly, the subject area of Fundamentals of Combat Support has helped military bachelors develop their ability to provide logistic support to troops and make decisions that balance resource allocation and operational needs. By learning to balance the needs of their unit with limited resources, military bachelors were able to develop their leadership skills and contribute effectively to their units.

Incorporating Firearms Training has helped military bachelors develop their leadership skills by learning how to instruct and train others in the safe and effective use of firearms. By teaching others, military bachelors were able to develop their leadership skills and contribute to their units in a meaningful way.

The subject area of Fundamentals of Human Resources Management has helped military bachelors develop their skills in managing and leading teams, as well as their ability to communicate effectively with personnel both inside and outside their organization. By learning how to manage others effectively, military bachelors were able to develop their leadership skills and contribute to their units and organizations.

Finally, the study of Moral and Psychological Support has helped military bachelors develop their ability to provide emotional support to their teams and make decisions that take into account the well-being and resilience of personnel. By learning to prioritize the welfare of others, military bachelors were able to develop their leadership skills and contribute to their units' overall morale and effectiveness. Incorporating subject areas such as Border Guard Service, Border Control, General Tactics, Fundamentals of Combat Support, Firearms Training,

Fundamentals of Human Resources Management, Moral and Psychological Support in military education programs is effective in developing and cultivating leadership skills in military bachelors.

In this study, we investigated and compared the leadership competencies of military bachelors and civilian students, and found several interesting and important results. One of the key findings of our study was that military bachelors scored higher in communication skills than civilian students. This result is consistent with previous studies that have found that communication is a critical component of military leadership. Military personnel are required to communicate clearly and effectively in order to convey orders and instructions to subordinates, and to establish relationships with colleagues and superiors. The training and experience that military bachelors receive in this regard may explain the higher scores in communication skills observed in our study.

Another significant finding was that military bachelors scored higher in decision-making abilities than civilian students. This result could be attributed to the training and experience that military personnel undergo (Lennox et al., 2022). The military operates under high-stress conditions, which require personnel to make quick and informed decisions. Military bachelors are trained to think critically, analyze information, and consider different perspectives before making decisions. This training may have contributed to the higher scores in decision-making abilities observed in our study.

Despite these strengths, both military bachelors and civilian students scored lower in problem-solving skills. Problem-solving is a critical component of effective leadership, as it requires individuals to think creatively and come up with innovative solutions to complex challenges. The lower scores in problem-solving skills observed in our study suggest that there is a need for more emphasis on the development of these competencies in both military and civilian education. Developing strong problem-solving skills could help leaders to better navigate the complex challenges that they are likely to encounter in their roles (Reis et al., 2021).

The results of this study have important implications for military and civilian education, and leadership development more broadly. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of military bachelors and civilian students in specific academic subjects, we can begin to

develop more effective training and educational programs for future leaders. Our findings suggest that there may be a need for greater emphasis on problem-solving skills development in both military and civilian education. Additionally, the strengths observed in communication skills and decision-making abilities among military bachelors suggest that these skills could be emphasized in leadership development programs across a range of domains. Future research could build on our study by investigating the factors that contribute to these differences and developing interventions to improve leadership competencies in various contexts.

This study shows the potential of integrating leadership-focused academic coursework in military education to enhance leadership skills in future military bachelors. Military organizations require effective leaders who can make critical decisions, communicate effectively, and solve complex problems. However, cultivating these skills requires more than just practical training (Orban-Lembryk, 2010). It also requires a comprehensive understanding of leadership theory and the ability to apply it in practical situations.

In the article, we argue that integrating leadership-focused academic coursework in military education can provide a significant advantage in developing leadership competencies in future military bachelors. This approach can equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle the complex leadership challenges they are likely to encounter in their future military careers (Moldoveanu & Narayandas, 2019).

We examine previous studies and research that have focused on the effectiveness of leadership-based academic coursework in military education. Our analysis reveals that integrating these courses can help students develop a better understanding of the key principles of leadership and how they can be applied in different contexts. The courses can also offer opportunities to develop critical competencies, such as decision-making, problem-solving, and effective communication. These competencies are essential for effective leadership in the military and can significantly impact organizational performance.

Moreover, the integration of leadership-focused academic coursework in military education can help create a more well-rounded educational experience (Kononova, 2014). Students can benefit from learning about a range of subjects

that are relevant to their future military careers, while also gaining an in-depth understanding of leadership principles.

This research argues that the integration of leadership-focused academic coursework in military education can provide substantial benefits to both individual students and military organizations as a whole. Not only can it help students develop critical leadership competencies, but it can also help create a more comprehensive educational experience. As such, our article makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion about how military education can be improved to better prepare future military leaders.

Leadership skills are crucial for military personnel (Guttieri, 2021), especially for military officers who are expected to lead and command troops in high-pressure and complex situations. Given this need, there has been considerable interest in recent years in exploring ways to cultivate leadership skills in military bachelors through academic coursework. Future research on the studied subject could explore several directions. Firstly, longitudinal studies could be conducted to investigate the long-term effects of leadership-focused academic coursework on the development and retention of leadership skills in military bachelors. This would allow researchers to examine how military officers who have taken leadership-focused coursework in their academic program perform in leadership roles compared to those who have not. Additionally, it would provide insights into the long-term effects of academic leadership training on the professional development of military personnel.

Secondly, qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus groups, could be employed to gain deeper insights into the experiences of military bachelors taking leadership-focused academic coursework (Petrufova & Belan, 2022). This would allow researchers to gain a better understanding of how military personnel perceive the relevance and usefulness of leadership-focused academic coursework, as well as the factors that facilitate or hinder their learning and development of leadership skills. This information could then be used to improve the design and delivery of academic leadership training.

Lastly, the potential benefits of integrating leadership-focused academic coursework in other professional contexts, beyond military education, could be examined. For example, it may be useful to explore the effects of

introducing leadership training in other professions, such as healthcare, law enforcement, or business. Understanding how academic coursework can impact leadership development in various settings could ultimately lead to the design of more effective leadership development programs, not just in the military context but across diverse professional settings.

There is a growing need for military bachelors to develop leadership skills to effectively perform their roles as officers (Kirzner et al., 2021). Research on cultivating leadership skills in future military bachelors through professional academic subject areas has the potential to shed light on how academic coursework can effectively develop leadership skills in military personnel, and create valuable insights that can be leveraged to design more effective leadership development programs.

Conclusions

Military leadership is a complex and multifaceted skill that is essential to the effective functioning of military units. The development of strong leadership skills in military bachelors is therefore an essential component of military education and training programs. Academic coursework focused on leadership skills can be a valuable tool for developing these capabilities, providing students with a structured and comprehensive education in leadership theory and practice.

Our review of the literature indicates that incorporating subject areas such as Border Guard Service, Border Control, General Tactics, Fundamentals of Combat Support, Firearms Training, Fundamentals of Human Resources Management, Moral and Psychological Support can be effective approaches to cultivating leadership skills in future military bachelors. These academic subject areas can provide students with a set of skills and experiences that will prepare them to become effective leaders in the future. For example, courses in Border Control can teach students how to manage and lead a team during high-pressure situations, while courses in General Tactics can help them develop critical thinking and decision-making skills.

However, it should be noted that developing leadership skills is a dynamic and ongoing process. While academic coursework is an important component of leadership development, it is not sufficient on its own. Practical experience, mentorship, and exposure to real-

world leadership scenarios are also critical components of effective leadership development. It is therefore essential that military education and training programs also include opportunities for students to apply their skills in practical contexts, receive mentorship and guidance from experienced military leaders, and engage with real-world leadership scenarios.

In conclusion, academic coursework focused on leadership skills can be an effective tool for developing strong leadership capabilities in future military bachelors. However, an integrated approach that combines academic training with practical experience, mentorship, and exposure to real-world leadership scenarios is the most effective way to maximize the development of leadership skills in military bachelors. Future research in this area should focus on identifying the most effective approaches for integrating academic coursework with practical experience and mentorship to cultivate leadership skills in military bachelors for long-term success in their military careers.

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