

# FOLLOWERSHIP IN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS: THE CASE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

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*Kelley (1992) highlights the significance of followers in organizations for executing orders, supporting leaders, and maintaining operational effectiveness, but also warns of moral disengagement and deindividuation due to social norms and culture. This study explored the relationship between personality traits and followership in the ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP), involving 423 military personnel who completed an online questionnaire assessing demographic characteristics, followership dimensions and styles, and personality traits. The findings revealed that most military personnel are exemplary followers with "average" personality traits, with some not fitting Kelley's five followership styles, suggesting an additional four styles. A significant correlation was found between personality traits and followership dimensions, except for emotionality. It also revealed a significant relationship between personality traits and followership styles, and demographic characteristics were linked to followership dimensions and styles, emphasizing the need for continuous learning in developing more effective leaders, followers, and organizations.*

**Key words:** *followership, HEXACO, Kelley, military, personality traits.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leaders have traditionally been credited with organizational success, while followers have been seen as passive recipients of leadership influence (Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Kelley (1992) challenges the common belief that leaders solely provide power and drive achievements, citing Napoleon Bonaparte as an example of a leader

who would be ineffective without the support and contributions of his armies—his followers. With this growing recognition, followership studies have garnered increasing attention in recent years, especially in business organizations (Deale et al., 2022; Kelley, 1992), and have also expanded to education (Oyetunji, 2013; Taylor & Hill, 2017), healthcare (Leung et al., 2018; Peabody et al., 2022), and government (Blackshear,

2004). However, there is a paucity of literature on followership within the military setting. Exploring followership in this deeply hierarchical culture that prioritizes rank-based control and authority would offer a distinctive perspective.

In military organizations, followership is of particular importance. Military organizations are built on a followership ethos (Davis, 2020; United States Military Academy, 2018), and their members are expected to not only follow orders but also demonstrate initiative, adaptability, and loyalty (Halvorson, 2010; Redmond et al., 2015). However, this dynamic has its downsides since studies reveal that soldiers accept unlawful orders believing them to be legal and out of loyalty to the institution and their superiors (Osiel, 1998), making them more susceptible to moral disengagement (Johnson, 2014) and deindividuation (Berkowitz, 2014; Pina e Cunha et al., 2010), as evidenced by numerous cases of war crimes (Morrison, 2007), murders (Curaming & Aljunied, 2013; Punongbayan, 2023), and corruption (Gloria et al., 2011). The effectiveness of military operations relies heavily on the followers' ability to discern orders, execute tasks, make quick decisions in high-pressure situations, and work collaboratively within a hierarchical structure (Kalimuddin, 2017).

Moreover, previous researchers have suggested the need for additional investigation and empirical validation of the followership concept (Essa &

Alattari, 2019; Gross, 2019), along with the inclusion of diverse variables such as personal attributes, contextual factors, and organizational elements (Ivanoska et al., 2019; Mohamadzadeh et al., 2015; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). On the other hand, studies have shown that personality traits are a predictor of numerous variables even in diverse contexts (Ali, 2019; de Jong et al., 2019; Eshet & Harpaz, 2021; Oyetunji, 2013; Singh, 2009), but little is known about their impact on followership behavior.

By exploring the relationship between personality traits and followership dimensions and styles, this study aims to contribute to the emerging field of followership in military organizations. This study seeks to bridge the gap in knowledge by investigating the relationship between personality traits and followership dimensions and styles among members of the ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP). Through this exploration, we can uncover valuable insights that can inform recruitment, development, career management, and retention programs in military organizations. The findings of this study can provide a foundation for future research on followership and personality traits in the Philippine military and inform practical interventions to enhance leadership and follower dynamics within the organization.

This study is structured into four sections. Initially, we shall assess the theoretical and empirical studies on

followership and personality traits, focusing on the limited research conducted in military contexts and our research questions. Next, we proceed to outline our methodologies and present our findings. Following that, we provide descriptive and statistical data and thoroughly explain their implications. Finally, we present broad perspectives and suggest directions for further research.

**1.1. Followership and the Military Organization**

The AFP operates in a high-risk environment, requiring effective followers to carry out its functions, with even its highest-ranking military official being a follower of the

President as their Commander-in-Chief. Kelley (1992) asserted that the most effective followers are independent critical thinkers who actively participate in the process of accomplishing a common objective. This highlights that a follower's role is to pursue a common course of action with a leader to achieve organizational objectives while recognizing the authority and boundaries given to them (Schindler, 2015). Kelly (1992) stressed that the concept of followership is comprised of two dimensions: independent critical thinking (ICT) and active engagement (AE). The juxtaposition of these two dimensions constitutes the five styles of followers (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Kelley's Five Followership Styles

Followership Styles	Dimensions		Description	Distribution (in %)
	ICT	AE		
Exemplary	H	H	They are followers who think independently, are highly engaged, exude positive energy, and utilize their skills for the organization's benefit despite institutional barriers (Kelley, 1992, 2008).	0 - 35
Alienated	H	L	They are followers who think independently and critically yet are passive in their duties. They are capable but cynical, inhibit their efforts, and believe that the organization neglects them (Kelley, 1992, 2008).	15 - 25
Pragmatist	M	M	They are followers who fall in the middle of the spectrum, where they may question the authority of their leaders, but not too frequently or critically, and accomplish their jobs, but rarely exceed them (Kelley, 1992, 2008).	25 - 35
Conformist	L	L	They are followers that rely on their leaders to make decisions and constantly seek direction. In addition, they do not perform their duties with passion or commitment (Kelley, 1992, 2008).	5 - 10
Passive	L	H	They are followers who eagerly accept orders and acquiesce to the leader's authority, opinions, and judgment. They respect social order, find comfort in the hierarchy, and are always willing to obey the higher authority (Kelley, 1992, 2008).	20 - 30

*Legend.* H-High; M-Middling; L-Low; ICT-Independent Critical Thinking; AE-Active Engagement Adapted from *The Power of Followership* by R. Kelley (1992:97)

Studies have shown that the most effective followers are "exemplary followers" who can think independently, engage actively, and utilize their skills for the organization's benefit despite institutional barriers (Carsten et al., 2014; Kelley, 1992; Tahrir et al., 2020). On the other hand, Kelley (1992) and Corrothers (2009) highlight that passive followers are the least effective because they perform basic tasks and wait for instructions, whereas conformist followers are preferred by leaders because they do and say what the leader wants without question. Relatedly, Kalimuddin (2017) and Thomas and Berg (2014) argue that among the classification of followers, exemplary followers are best suited to carry out the mission command doctrine because they can deal with problems, take initiative, take risks, engage their superiors, and build connections. In addition, Chaleff (2009) emphasized that followers must possess the fortitude to act morally. However, Berg (2020) and Corrothers (2009) emphasize the importance of military personnel's ability to respectfully disagree with their leaders' flawed decisions, as they are often tasked with making crucial decisions in unpredictable situations with life-or-death consequences. Moreover, Rafae and Erritali (2023) underscored the relevance of personnel profiling in

constructing effective teams and interventions.

Uhl-Bein et al. (2014) found that enhancing followership necessitates innovative methods for understanding, collaborating with, and assessing various variables. Relatedly, expanding Kelley's followership styles can bring significant value to military profiling, the military organization, and the understanding of followership as a concept. Moreover, the AFP provides a valuable context for examining and enhancing followership within military organizations.

## **1.2. Personality Traits and the Military Organization**

Siegel (2016) asserts that most human behavior is predictable, and organizations perform more efficiently when they can predict this behavior. Personality traits have been found to significantly influence behavior and predict variables in diverse contexts, suggesting that organizations can utilize personality inventories to understand better and manage their personnel (Carsten et al., 2014; Postigo et al., 2021; Taylor & Hill, 2017). Relatedly, studies show that personality traits may be useful in military selection, classification (Nye, 2022), team development (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Mannes et al., 2022), and retention (Muchlis et al., 2022).

The HEXACO personality trait model, which Ashton and Lee developed in 2000, consisting of honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, is deemed more comprehensive than the five-factor model (FFM) of personality traits (Lee & Ashton, 2012; McGrath et al.,

2018) (Table 2). Relatedly, HEXACO's extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience are comparable to FFM personality traits, but agreeableness and emotionality in HEXACO are not equivalent to FFM's agreeableness and neuroticism (McGrath et al., 2018).

**Table 2.** HEXACO's Personality Traits and Descriptive Adjectives Observed in Cross-Cultural Lexical Studies

HEXACO Personality Traits	Personality – descriptive adjectives
Honesty-humility [H]	sincere, honest, faithful, loyal, modest, unassuming, fair-minded, ethical <i>versus</i> sly, deceitful, greedy, pretentious, hypocritical, boastful, pompous, conceited, self-centered
Emotionality [E]	emotional, oversensitive, sentimental, fearful, anxious, nervous, vulnerable, clingy <i>versus</i> tough, fearless, unemotional, independent, self-assured, unfeeling, insensitive
Extraversion [X]	outgoing, lively, extraverted, sociable, talkative, cheerful, active, vocal, confident <i>versus</i> shy, passive, withdrawn, introverted, quiet, reserved, inhibited, gloomy
Agreeableness [A]	patient, tolerant, peaceful, mild, agreeable, lenient, gentle, forgiving <i>versus</i> ill-tempered, quarrelsome, stubborn, choleric, temperamental, headstrong, blunt
Conscientiousness [C]	organized, self-disciplined, hard-working, efficient, careful, thorough, precise, perfectionist <i>versus</i> sloppy, negligent, reckless, lazy, irresponsible, absent-minded, messy
Openness to experience [O]	intellectual, creative, unconventional, imaginative, innovative, complex, deep, inquisitive, philosophical <i>versus</i> shallow, simple, unimaginative, conventional, close-minded

Adapted from *The H Factor of Personality* by K. Lee and M. C. Ashton (2012:22)

Lee and Ashton (2012) concluded that the general population exhibits personality traits that fall within the middle of the spectrum, with only a small proportion displaying significantly above or below normal values. Relatedly, limited studies using the HEXACO personality inventory show that uniformed personnel in Western countries score higher in

honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, but lower in emotionality and openness to experience compared to the general population (Andrews et al., 2023; Lee & Ashton, 2018; Semrad & Scott-Parker, 2020; Ripley, 2019).

Relatedly, certain personality traits have been connected to certain aspects of military contexts, which may be valuable for personnel

management. Studies show that extraversion is more prevalent among West Point cadets in interpersonal and dynamic work contexts, while conscientiousness is more influential in educational and administrative contexts (Bartone et al., 2009). Conscientiousness is linked to academic performance and officer-like qualities in Indian cadets (Bobdey et al., 2021), and Lithuanian cadets' conscientiousness, openness to experience, and extraversion are also linked to their military and academic performance (Bekesiene, 2023).

While several variables have been studied alongside followership, little is known about personality traits as a variable, especially in the Philippine military setting. Furthermore, Bastardo and van Vugt (2019) emphasized the importance of further research into the correlation between personality traits and followership, while other previous researchers emphasized the importance of updating followership and personality trait literature and its applicability to military settings (Essa & Alattari, 2019; Happawana, 2021). By leveraging this knowledge, organizations can optimize their operations and create an environment conducive to success.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

To address this research gap, this study aimed to explore the relationship between personality traits using the HEXACO model and followership dimensions and styles using Kelley's

model while taking into account demographic characteristics. To attain such objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the distribution among the military personnel of the AFP in terms of the following?
  - a. followership dimensions
  - b. followership styles
  - c. personality traits
2. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' personality traits and each of the following?
  - a. followership dimensions
  - b. followership styles
3. Is there a significant association between the respondents' demographic characteristics and each of the following?
  - a. followership dimensions
  - b. followership styles

Relatedly, the answers to these questions would significantly contribute to the profiling of AFP military personnel, a better understanding of the influence of personality traits on followership, particularly in the Philippine military setting, and would assist organizations in personnel management and the cultivation of the follower role.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. Participants and Procedures**

The study engaged in quantitative correlational research. The study investigated the relationship between personality traits and followership dimensions and styles among active

officers and enlisted personnel in the Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force, and Philippine Navy. The study involved 423 respondents drawn randomly from a population of 146,390 active officers and enlisted personnel using a stratified sampling method and proportional allocation. The survey was distributed to AFP military personnel using a cloud-based platform, adhering to research ethics

standards of voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. Relatedly, the study, authorized by military authorities and coordinated with their human resource departments, lasted for two weeks. The demographic profile of the participants is reported in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Respondents' Profile by Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics	f	Demographic characteristics	f
Gender		Years of Military Service	
Male	353	>5	112
Female	70	5-9	119
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>	10-14	78
Age		15-19	65
20-29	171	20-24	24
30-39	171	25-29	19
40-49	73	30-34	4
<49	8	<34	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>
Educational Attainment		Role of Unit	
High School	119	Command and Control	147
College	288	Combat	53
Masters	16	Combat Support	106
Doctorate	0	Combat Service Support	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>
Branch of Service		Job Category	
Army	301	Commanding Officer	13
Air Force	54	Staff Officer	24
Navy	68	Technical Officer	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>	Administrative	139
Rank		Specialized	93
General	3	Combat Soldier	148
Field Grade	15	<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>
Company Grade	20	Leadership Courses	
Senior NCO	11	With	155
NCO	140	Without	268
Junior EP	234	<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>	Followership Courses	
Personnel Category		With	129
Officer	38	Without	294
Enlisted Personnel	385	<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>423</b>		

## 2.2. Measures

The questionnaire, considering the existing literature, consisted of a three-part survey, including demographic characteristics, modified Kelley's Followership Questionnaire (KFQ), and the 60-item HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-60). The demographic characteristics included the respondent's gender, age, branch of service, personnel category, rank, length of active service, unit's role, job category, and level of education. Similarly, the

modified KFQ measures ICT and AE by assessing participants' frequency of behaviors on a seven-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 6 = *every time*). Responses are summed and classified as "high," "middling," or "low" for each dimension, determining the respondents' followership style (Table 1). However, juxtaposing the "middling" with "low" and "high" in ICT or AE can reveal four additional followership styles (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Four Additional Followership Styles to Kelley's Model and its Description

Followership Styles	Followership Dimensions		Description
	ICT	AE	
<b>Alienated-Exemplary</b>	H	M	These followers can think for themselves and challenge the established quo. They are not hesitant to question their leaders or to propose new ideas. Their level of effort, however, may vary based on the situation. In some settings, they may be highly motivated and involved, but not in others.
<b>Passive-Alienated</b>	M	L	They are followers who sometimes come up with new, creative ideas, but most of the time they fail to perform their duties with much energy or commitment. Also, they can be idealistic and unrealistic, and they may not always be willing to put in the hard work needed to see their plans through.
<b>Passive-Conformist</b>	L	M	They are followers who avoid making decisions or taking risks and who are reluctant to speak up or share their ideas, even if they are excellent. Because they want to please their superiors, they occasionally perform better than anticipated on the job.
<b>Conformist-Exemplary</b>	M	H	They are followers who demonstrate a willingness to execute their leader's instructions and objectives effectively. However, they are also most likely to express their own perspectives and ideas, based on the circumstances. In addition, they exhibit a willingness to assume responsibility and transcend expectations for their assigned tasks.

*Legend.* H-High; M-Middling; L-Low; ICT-Independent Critical Thinking; AE-Active Engagement

Relatedly, six experts validated the modified KFQ, resulting in an Aiken's V coefficient of 0.83-1, I-CVI coefficient of 0.83-1, SCVI/Ave value of 0.99, SCVI-UA coefficient

of 0.92, and a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.91 when piloted with 52 individuals. On the other hand, the HEXACO-60 measures six personality traits: honesty-humility,



emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) to assess respondents' agreement with each statement. Responses are summed and classified as "well-below average [WBA]," "somewhat below average [SBA]," "about average [AA]," "somewhat above average [SAA]," or "well-above average [WAA]" for each personality trait. Previous studies on the instrument show internal consistency reliabilities of 0.73 to 0.80 (Ashton & Lee, 2009; Bashiri et al., 2011) and test-retest reliability of 0.88 (Henry et al., 2022). Similarly, the HEXACO-60's developers agreed to use their instrument in the study.

### **2.3. Data Analysis**

The study used the trial version of IBM SPSS Statistics version 22.0 to analyze data on followership dimensions, followership styles, and personality traits. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the distribution of these variables. Normality tests were conducted before the choice of appropriate

statistical methods. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed a non-normal distribution of personality traits, requiring non-parametric methods for inferential analyses. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was used to examine the significant relationship between personality traits and followership dimensions and Fisher's exact test was used to assess the significant association between the demographic characteristics and followership dimensions and styles. In the attempt to determine the relationship between personality traits and followership styles, significant-difference tests were performed with the personality trait scores across the categories of followership styles. When a significant difference exists, it implies that personality trait scores are significantly associated with followership styles. In this regard, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used as the significant-difference test.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Distribution of Military Personnel of the AFP in Terms of Followership Dimensions**

**Table 5.** Median and Interquartile Ratings for the Followership Dimensions (n = 423)

Followership Dimensions								
Independent Critical Thinking [ICT]				Active Engagement [AE]				
Questions	IQR	Mdn	descr	Questions	IQR	Mdn	descr	
Q1: I think about how the things I do help my office or unit reach its objective.	1	5	U	Q3: I ensure that my personal work goals are aligned with the objectives of my office or unit.	1	5	U	
Q2: I think about how my work helps me reach the goals I have set for myself.	1	5	U	Q4: I go the extra mile to complete the tasks that have been assigned to me.	1	5	U	
Q7: I take the initiative to determine which tasks are most critical in accomplishing the office's or unit's objectives.	1	5	U	Q5: I am excited to do the tasks that have been given to me.	1	5	U	
Q13: I can easily come up with new ideas to assist the leader in completing the task.	2	5	U	Q6: I can make my workmates feel as enthusiastic as I am.	1	5	U	
Q14: I am supportive of unique suggestions that will assist the leader in accomplishing the objective.	1	5	U	Q8: I make an effort to improve my skillset so that I can be more useful to my office or unit.	1	5	U	
Q15: I make an effort to solve problems on my own rather than waiting for the leader to do so.	2	5	U	Q9: I strive to succeed in every duty assigned to me by my leader.	1	6	E	
Q18: I "play the devil's advocate" to help people think about the advantages and disadvantages of an idea or plan.	2	4	F	Q10: I can be relied upon by my leader to finish my tasks without supervision.	1	5	U	
Q21: I frequently assess my own strengths and weaknesses.	2	5	U	Q11: I am willing to perform duties outside of my job description.	2	5	U	
Q22: I am honest while evaluating my own strengths and weaknesses.	1	5	U	Q12: I give my best when working in a team even when I am not the leader.	1	6	E	
Q23: I regularly think about whether or not my leader's decision was the best option.	1	5	U	Q16: I am willing to help workmates even if they do not express gratitude.	1	5	U	
Q24: I can openly tell my leader "NO" instead of "YES" when his or her orders are against what I believe in.	3	3	S	Q17: I highlight the accomplishments of my workmates even if I do not receive recognition.	1	5	U	
Q25: I adhere to my own ethical standards rather than those of the group.	2	4	F	Q19: I take the time to comprehend the perspective of my leader.	2	5	U	
Q26: I share my views on significant issues, even if they contradict those of my leader.	2	4	F	Q20: I strive to provide my leader with the resources he or she needs to complete the task.	1	5	U	

*Legend.* IQR – interquartile rating, Mdn – median, E – every time (100% of the time), U – usually (about 90% of the time), F – frequently (about 70% of the time), S – sometimes (about 50% of the time)

McIntyre et al. (2010) suggest that a seven-point Likert scale ordinal data has reached consensus if the interquartile rating (IQR) is 0 to 1, otherwise, it indicates no consensus. Table 5 shows that respondents agree that, approximately 90% of the time, they consider the impact of their actions on their office's goals, take the initiative to identify critical tasks, support unique suggestions, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and

regularly evaluate the leader's decision. However, there is a divide on other ICT-related items, most notably in explicitly disagreeing with superiors or deviating from norms. They also agree that they aspire for excellence in all tasks assigned to them by their leader, even when not the leader.

Similarly, there is consensus that approximately 90% of the time, respondents align their personal work goals with office objectives,

complete tasks enthusiastically, improve skills, succeed in duties, and provide resources to their leader, as well as demonstrate a willingness to assist, highlight the accomplishments of coworkers, and offer assistance when required. On the other hand, respondents' views on the remaining items about AE, specifically their willingness to undertake tasks beyond their job description and understanding their leader's perspective, exhibit notable diversity.

The findings align with conventional military culture and the interactions between leaders and followers (Halvorson, 2010; Redmond et al., 2015). It suggests a shared social identity in which an individual adopts a group-associated image or behavior (National Research Council [NRC], 2014), which significantly influences their individual behavior (Charness & Chen, 2020). Freeman (1948) highlights that the “military hierarchy has an established system of stratification for power, authority, status, and privilege, denoted within its ranks” (p. 79), emphasizing strict adherence to orders and utmost respect for the chain of command, especially among followers (Blackshear, 2004; Davis, 2020; Halvorson, 2010; Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982; Peters & Haslam, 2018; Redmond et al., 2015). These norms can impact their affiliation with the military team or institution,

potentially affecting their careers and work dynamics (Collinson, 2008; NRC, 2014). Furthermore, this system prevents deviation and dissent while rewarding compliance to maintain social order, reduce individualism, enforce compliance, and eliminate non-conformity, enhancing operational effectiveness.

However, Berg (2020) and Chaleff (2008, 2009) emphasize the significance of a soldier's ability to “professionally disagree” with leaders' flawed decisions, especially in unpredictable situations with life-or-death consequences, and the courage of followers to support and improve leaders' achievements. The Centre for Army Leadership [CAL] (2023) suggests that fostering a military environment in which all individuals, regardless of rank or seniority, feel comfortable discussing their thoughts, questions, and challenges with respect and propriety (i.e., support in public, disagree in private) can improve decision-making, increase innovation, and reduce failures, giving organizations a competitive advantage. Likewise, compared to their civilian counterparts, followers of military organizations must be able to communicate their professional disagreements effectively while navigating the organization's stratification system, traditions, customs, and ultra-hierarchical structure. Nevertheless, “professional

disagreement” reinforces the AFP's inherent duty to follow legal orders and the moral duty to resist unlawful orders that may endanger fellow soldiers, the organization, stakeholders, and the nation, in exchange for potential personal gains. In addition, it strengthens the spirit and implementation of the Geneva Conventions, the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute, as well as the AFP's Articles of War, code of ethics, grievance system, and customs and traditions, particularly the traditions of duty and honor.

### 3.2. Distribution of Military Personnel of the AFP in Terms of Followership Styles

Rafae and Erritali (2023) highlight the importance of profiling in management for understanding and predicting followers' demands and behaviors. They suggest that military profiling can improve team composition, people management, and overall performance. In a military setting, knowing the followership style of each follower enables leaders to predict how various types of followers will respond to mission command, which promotes decentralized execution and subordinate decision-making consistent with the commander's intent (Kalimuddin, 2017). The distribution of the respondents according to their followership style is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** *Distribution of the Respondents According to Their Followership Style*

Followership Styles	ICT			AE			Total	
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Middling</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Middling</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Exemplary	0	0	308	0	0	308	308	72.8%
Pragmatist	0	31	0	0	31	0	31	7.3%
Passive-Conformist	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.2%
Passive-Alienated	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0.2%
Conformist-Exemplary	0	78	0	0	0	78	78	18.4%
Alienated-Exemplary	0	0	4	0	4	0	4	0.9%
Total	1	110	312	1	36	386	423	100%

*Legend.* ICT-Independent Critical Thinking; AE-Active Engagement

Table 6 shows that the majority of Philippine military personnel (72.8%) are exemplary followers. This finding corroborates previous studies indicating that an organization has over 35% exemplary followers, challenging Kelley's estimates (Essa & Alattari, 2019; Novikov, 2016; Ntiamoah,

2018; Peabody et al., 2022; Thomas, 2014; Urooj et al., 2020). The study also suggests that the Philippine military effectively attracts, develops, and retains followers who are well-suited to the complex, demanding, and unpredictable military environment, requiring critical thinking, independent action, and initiative. Relatedly, it suggests

that most Philippine military followers are committed to mission success, risking their safety and well-being to achieve it, which are hallmarks of exemplary followers. CAL (2023), Collinson (2008), Kalimuddin (2017), and Thomas and Berg (2014) highlight the significance of exemplary followers in high-performing organizations, the implementation of the military's mission command doctrine, and the success of 21st-century organizations. They argue that exemplary followers can exercise disciplined initiative, empower knowledge workers, and distribute leadership, making them crucial for effective task performance and collaboration. Kelley (1992) further emphasizes the significance of a growing number of exemplary followers. However, Crossman and Crossman (2011) emphasize that excessive critical thinking can hinder leaders' decision-making abilities. Furthermore, although most AFP military followers are categorized as exemplary due to their "high" scores in ICT and AE, a thorough analysis of these scores (Table 4) suggests that these exemplary followers struggle to professionally disagree with their superiors. The analysis also suggests that, while followers may fall into a specific followership style based on the aggregation of item scores leading to descriptive equivalents for ICT and AE, there may be particular

characteristics that correspond to said followership style that are present or missing.

The conformist-exemplary followers (18.4%) were ranked second, as it is unlikely that all followers are exemplary. These followers, while sharing similarities with exemplary followers, lack certain attributes in independent thinking, creativity, or courage. Relatedly, the findings suggest that most conformist-exemplary followers in the AFP need more courage to challenge their leaders' decisions and organizational norms. However, Chaleff (2008) emphasized the importance of professional disagreement with authority figures if they compromise the collective objective. Relatedly, conformist-exemplary followership is one of four newly defined followership styles that are all present in this study, which also includes passive-conformist, passive-alienated, and alienated-exemplary followership styles, which are less commonly observed.

On the other hand, there were a few pragmatist followers among military personnel who are capable contributors but whose actions and decisions are primarily motivated by self-preservation (CAL, 2023; Kalimuddin, 2017). This could be because the military social system's emphasis on obedience and conformity shapes individual

professional paths and relationships (Collinson, 2008; NRC, 2014). Moreover, the findings reveal that the AFP does not have passive or conformist military followers, which are ineffective followers that can promote toxic leadership and climate (CAL, 2023; Corrothers, 2009; Kalimuddin, 2017).

### 3.3. Distribution of Military Personnel of the AFP in Terms of Personality Traits

**Table 7.** Distribution of the Respondents According to Their Personality Traits (n=432)

Personality traits	High				Average				Low				Mean Score
	WAA		SAA		AA		SBA		WBA				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Honesty-Humility	27	6.4	159	37.6	216	51.1	21	5.0	0	0	34.83 (AA)		
Emotionality	0	0	17	4.0	318	75.2	82	19.4	6	1.4	30.00 (AA)		
Extraversion	6	1.4	108	25.5	300	70.9	9	2.1	0	0	33.69 (AA)		
Agreeableness	6	1.4	92	21.7	314	74.2	11	2.6	0	0	33.49 (AA)		
Conscientiousness	21	5.0	165	39.0	215	50.8	22	5.2	0	0	34.83 (AA)		
Openness to Experience	7	1.7	89	21.0	309	73.0	17	4.0	1	0.2	32.91 (AA)		

*Legend.* WBA- well below average, SBA- somewhat below average, AA- about average SAA- somewhat above average, WAA- well above average

Table 7 indicates that a substantial percentage of military personnel in the Philippines exhibit scores categorized as “average” (AA) in all the personality traits such as honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. This means that the AFP typically recruits and retains military personnel with "average" personality traits—those who are willing to work with others, motivated, emotionally stable, tolerant of physical danger, and able to deal with problems like authority, criticism, slow promotion, and limited amenities (Department of National Defense, 2014). Skoglund et al. (2023) imply that "average"

personality traits indicate an overall adaptable personality functioning that is appropriate for military settings. This corroborates with previous studies that most individuals have middle-spectrum personality traits, with a small percentage showing significantly above or below normal values (Lee & Ashton, 2012). Furthermore, military personnel outside the middle spectrum exhibit "high" honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, while being “low” in emotionality, indicating that military personnel of the AFP who fall outside the middle spectrum are more likely to be rule-abiding, self-assured, assertive, collaborative, disciplined,

innovative, and resilient in the face of adversity. This finding is consistent with earlier studies on personality traits in the military and uniformed service professions, implying that the nature and duties of the profession necessitate such a personality profile (Andrews et al., 2023; Marcus et al., 2016; Ramadan et al., 2022; Ripley, 2019; Semrad & Scott-Parker, 2020). Skoglund et al. (2023) suggest that the military can benefit from a profile that requires emotional stability, conscientiousness, and social competence to cope with security issues, confidentiality, and a complex environment. Nonetheless, such a profile may also contribute to high-risk behavior, apathy, competitive rivalry, exploitation, and indifference toward interpersonal relationships (Lee & Ashton, 2012).

However, military personnel of the AFP exhibit lower conscientiousness scores compared to the previously studied general population and among military and uniformed service professionals (Andrews et al., 2023; Lee & Ashton, 2018; Semrad & Scott-Parker, 2020; Ripley, 2019). Conscientiousness, a trait indicating organization, diligence, perfectionism, and prudence (Lee & Ashton, 2012; Piotrowski & Pękała, 2016), is expected to be higher in the military due to dangerous conditions and public servant status. However, factors like employment security,

reduced competition, limited promotion opportunities, and the demanding, unpredictable, and stressful nature of the military environment contribute to low levels of conscientiousness (Piotrowski & Pękała, 2016).

Furthermore, approximately 16% of military personnel exhibited "high" levels of both honesty-humility and agreeableness, suggesting an inclination toward cooperative behavior (Lee & Ashton, 2012). Such trait combination fosters harmony, enhances communication (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Mannes et al., 2022), and enhances retention (Muchlis et al., 2022), which is particularly beneficial in military environments where collaboration is crucial for mission success. On the other hand, approximately 5% of military personnel have "low" honesty-humility, whereas 70% have tendencies toward criminal behavior, greed, aggressive nonconformism, selfish ambition, narcissism, or manipulation (Lee & Ashton, 2012) that are detrimental to military operations and the profession's image as a noble one.

### 3.4. Significant Relationship Between Personality Traits and Followership Dimensions of Military Personnel in the AFP

**Table 8.** Establishing the Relationship Between the Respondents' Personality Traits and Followership Dimensions Using Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient

Personality traits	Independent Critical Thinking [ICT]		Active Engagement [AE]	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Honesty-Humility	<b>-0.124</b>	<b>0.011</b>	<b>0.150</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Emotionality	0.062	0.202	0.011	0.819
Extraversion	<b>0.179</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>0.295</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Agreeableness	-0.007	0.892	<b>0.234</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Conscientiousness	-0.020	0.684	<b>0.264</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Openness to Experience	0.094	0.053	<b>0.209</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

Table 8 indicates a very weak negative correlation between ICT and honesty-humility and a weak positive correlation between ICT and extraversion. There was also a very weak positive correlation between AE and honesty-humility and a weak positive correlation between AE and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. However, no significant correlation was found between emotionality and ICT or AE. The study reveals that personality traits are correlated with the followership dimensions except for emotionality. This correlation between personality traits and followership dimensions implies that certain personality traits tend to be more conducive to showing a particular followership behavior among the military personnel of the AFP.

Furthermore, the initial expectation was that honesty-

humility would have a positive correlation with ICT due to its association with moral foundations. However, the study's outcomes suggest otherwise, indicating that military personnel may be inclined to morally justify their behavior in the context of mission accomplishment. Ścigała et al. (2023) argue that honesty-humility is anchored on morality, such as individual rights and welfare, rather than loyalty and authority, which are necessary for sustaining social order and group cohesion. Relatedly, Brunk et al. (1990) assert that the military's moral rights stem from its duty to fulfill its mission and protect its troops, and when these goals become compromised, a morally neutral stance seems to take precedence. Other studies indicate that critical thinking and moral reasoning are related (Borisová & Pintes, 2022; Fasko, 1994), and moral reasoning can be used to rationalize ethical



concerns (Mudrack & Mason, 2019). However, Mulder and van Dijk (2020) warn that pursuing moral justification can lead to the continuation and worsening of previously unacceptable conduct. On the other hand, the positive correlation between ICT and extraversion suggests that individuals with high extraversion are more likely to exhibit independent critical thinking, suggesting that ICT is a cognitive and social ability that enables independent, impartial assessment of information under pressure, a skill crucial for success in various professions, including the military. The findings partially support the findings of Kudek et al. (2020) and Mushonga and Torrance (2008) using FFM and Jokić and Purić (2019) using HEXACO on the correlation between extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and ICT, with Jokić and Purić (2019) also finding a correlation between honesty-humility and ICT.

The positive correlation between AE and honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience indicates that AFP personnel with high levels of these personality traits are more likely to be involved and engaged in military activities and tasks. Similarly, findings from this research suggest that certain personality traits

can enhance military engagement. Furthermore, it suggests that military personnel in the AFP with high levels of these personality traits are more likely to be trusted by their superiors and fellow soldiers, get along with other members, settle disagreements peacefully, perform well on their tasks, and come up with new ideas and plans to help them stay ahead in combat. In addition, studies indicate that conscientious and engaged team members significantly influence self-managed teams, motivating colleagues and maintaining focus on given duties (Barrick & Mount, 1993; Costa & McCrae, 1992, as cited in Mushonga & Torrance, 2008).

The findings support previous findings on the correlation between extraversion and conscientiousness (Kim et al., 2019; Kudek et al., 2020; Machiha & Brew, 2019; Mushonga & Torrance, 2008; Sharma & Tripathi, 2023; Singh & Kaushik, 2015), and openness to experience and AE (Kudek et al., 2020; Mushonga & Torrance, 2008). Furthermore, the study shows that taking these traits into account during personnel selection could assist in identifying individuals with a greater likelihood of success in military roles, resulting in more effective recruitment and placement decisions. The study also confirms previous findings that there is no correlation between emotionality and ICT or AE (Jokić & Purić, 2019; Machiha &

Brew, 2019), suggesting that emotionality may not appear to impair the critical thinking or following behavior of military personnel of the AFP.

### 3.5. Significant Relationship Between Personality Traits and Followership Styles of Military Personnel in the AFP

**Table 9.** Respondents' Personality Trait Median Scores Across the Different Followership Styles, Including the P-Values Derived Using the Kruskal-Wallis Test

Followership Styles	Honesty-Humility (p<0.001)	Emotionality (p=0.747)	eXtraversion (p<0.001)	Agreeableness (p=0.001)	Conscientiousness (p=0.003)	Openness to Experience (p=0.031)
Exemplary	<b>35</b>	30	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>
Pragmatist	30	30	30	30	30	30
Passive-Conformist	<b>37</b>	32	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	28
Passive-Alienated	30	29	30	31	31	<b>32</b>
Conformist-Exemplary	<b>36</b>	30	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>
Alienated-Exemplary	29.5	31.5	32.5	31	31.5	30

*Note.* The bold values indicate the followership style(s) which are significantly different from the others. If there 2 or more bold values, this indicates that these 2 or more followership styles are not significantly different.

Table 9 shows that there are statistically significant differences observed in the personality traits of honesty-humility (p<0.001), extraversion (p<0.001), agreeableness (p=0.001), conscientiousness (p=0.003), and openness to experience (p=0.031) across various followership styles, but not for emotionality (p=0.747). Moreover, post hoc analysis indicates that exemplary, passive-conformist, and conformist-exemplary followers share similar attributes associated with honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, while exemplary, passive-alienated, and conformist-exemplary followers share similar attributes associated with openness to experience. The findings seem to suggest that exemplary, passive-conformist, and conformist-

exemplary followers may tend to cooperate despite potential exploitation, promote positive relationships, and implement disciplined initiatives, whereas exemplary, passive-alienated, and conformist-exemplary followers may tend to generate "out-of-the-box" approaches to problems. However, the study observed only one respondent for each passive-conformist and passive-alienated followership style, indicating a need for further investigation to substantiate the findings (Lee & Ashton, 2012). CAL (2023), Collinson (2008), Kalimuddin (2017), and Thomas and Berg (2014) argued that exemplary followers are the best-suited followers for implementing the mission command doctrine. However, the findings may seem to suggest that conformist-exemplary followers with similar

personality traits as exemplary followers might serve as the most suitable substitute.

The study suggests that personality traits may seem to influence followership styles, suggesting that the military should recruit and develop individuals with these personality traits for military success. This aligns with military organizational expectations and requirements. The study also suggests that individuals joining the AFP may already possess or develop these personality traits due to training and experiences. Understanding the relationship between personality traits and followership styles can help shape the military force, contributing to a more cohesive and effective force. Furthermore, the findings provide additional evidence that indicates a significant relationship between an individual's personality traits and their behavioral approaches (Burtäverde et al., 2017; Ching et al., 2014; de Vries, 2012, 2018; El Othman et al., 2020; Ones et al., 2005; Postigo et al., 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2013; Sarsam et al., 2021), even in diverse contexts (Ali, 2019; de Jong et al., 2019; Eshet & Harpaz, 2021; Oyetunji, 2013; Singh, 2009), highlighting the importance of understanding these relationships. In addition, the findings align with trait theory, which suggests that individuals possess inherent personality traits that differentiate

them from others, aiding in understanding people's behavior across different cultures and contexts (Church & Katigbak, 2002).

Breevaart and de Vries (2019) found that their personality traits also influence followers' preferences for leadership styles. Low honesty-humility and high extraversion and openness to experience followers prefer leaders who motivate and work for the organization's betterment, while those with low openness to experience prefer leaders who clearly define roles and prioritize task completion. In business industries, followers prefer leaders who uphold high standards, are concerned with relationships, share decision-making, and whom they can identify (Ganzemiller et al., 2021). Relatedly, generation Z appreciates leaders who take a respectful and trusting approach to leadership (Nikolic, 2022). Similarly, Gonzales (2016) and Sefidan et al. (2021) found that the same approach is favored among military followers and has an advantageous impact on performance. However, Port (2020) argues that military followers want to be led in different leadership styles depending on the situation of military operations.

### 3.6. Significant Association Between Demographic Characteristics and Followership Dimensions of Military Personnel in the AFP

**Table 10.** Establishing the Significant Association Between the Respondents' Followership Dimensions and Each of the Demographic Characteristics Using Fisher's Exact Test (n=432)

Demographic characteristics	p-value	
	Independent Critical Thinking [ICT]	Active Engagement [AE]
Gender	0.250	0.999
Age	0.732	0.108
Educational attainment	0.580	0.365
Years of military service	0.528	0.184
Branch of service	0.336	0.495
Rank	0.294	0.428
Personnel category	0.057	0.301
Role of unit	0.305	0.097
Job category	0.089	0.862
Leadership courses	<b>0.027</b>	0.140
Followership courses	0.687	0.065

Table 10 shows that only leadership course completion (p=0.027) has a significant association with ICT among the demographic characteristics. On the other hand, it also shows that no association exists between the demographic characteristics and AE. The study reveals a relationship between a military personnel's leadership course completion, confirming previous research indicating this relationship (Ricketts, 2005). On the other hand, the study partially confirms previous findings that no significant differences were found between ICT and AE and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, length of service, sub-agency, and educational attainment

(Gajdhane, 2023; Kim, 2011; Playter, 2022).

Ricketts (2005) found a significant relationship between higher levels of leadership training and increased critical thinking scores. Leadership training teaches critical thinking skills, including identifying and analyzing relevant information, evaluating options, and making sound decisions. These skills are crucial for military personnel, who need to make quick, effective decisions in unpredictable situations. Leadership training also fosters an environment of open inquiry and debate, encouraging participants to question assumptions, challenge authority, and generate their own ideas, helping participants think independently and not just follow the

lead of others. Similarly, the AFP implements a progressive professional military education that includes leadership and management modules tailored to the present and future roles of the military personnel. In addition, its content includes reflective thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, military decision-making, and scenario-based exercises, which may account for the relationship between leadership course completion and critical thinking. Instructional interventions promoting collaborative learning and real-world problem-solving also enhance critical thinking (Abrami et al., 2008, 2015, as cited in Evans, 2020). However, it is important to note that training does not necessarily change in short periods but requires repeated opportunities for development over a long period (Evans, 2020).

The lack of a relationship between ICT and other demographic characteristics in the AFP may be attributable to its selection, career management, and retention system, which routinely evaluates the critical thinking ability of military personnel throughout their service to ensure their suitability for military service (DND, 2014). Furthermore, the findings suggest that the military environment, including the AFP, may be designed to minimize individual differences and promote conformity due to its hierarchical structure and

reliance on teamwork (Davis, 2020; Freeman, 1948; Goodwin et al., 2018; Kalimuddin, 2017). However, ICT is crucial for military personnel but can be seen as a liability in situations requiring quick and decisive action (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). Similarly, the prevailing AFP culture promotes conformity and discourages dissent by emphasizing loyalty, discipline, and respect for authority (Collinson, 2008; NRC, 2014). While ICT is crucial for challenging norms and promoting innovation, it may be perceived as subversive in a culture that values obedience and authority (Freeman, 1948). Relatedly, this study partially supports Dunham's (2019) findings that there is no relationship between ICT and gender and branch of service among military personnel.

Furthermore, Goodwin et al. (2018), Kalimuddin (2017), and Voss and Ryseff (2022) highlight that the military prioritizes mission success, necessitating the full involvement and outstanding performance of all those involved through teamwork and commitment to assigned roles, which may account for the absence of an association between demographic characteristics and AE. Relatedly, Freeman (1948) highlights that the positional hierarchy and clear succession enable individuals to exercise authority without conflict, thereby encouraging everyone to

participate actively in military activities. Furthermore, Halvorson (2010) highlights that despite demographic differences, military personnel's love for the country, voluntary nature, fraternal ties, and shared life-and-death experiences enable them to remain highly engaged in performing diverse tasks.

In addition, the lack of association between the majority of demographic characteristics and either ICT or AE may be attributed to the social norms that exist and are reinforced within the AFP, such as "obey first before you complain," "learn to do without asking why," "rank has its privileges," "fault of one, fault of all," and "leave no one behind." The findings may seem to suggest that the prevailing social norms in the AFP create pressure to conform to the majority group, causing minorities to blend in and avoid standing out. This pressure can lead to uniformity in critical thinking and engagement across demographic characteristics, resulting in a

situation where everyone in the AFP thinks and behaves similarly regardless of their demographic characteristics. Halvorson (2010) and Lee (2018) explain that all military personnel are expected to observe these social norms, which could influence their critical thinking and engagement level. Relatedly, these social norms become a part of the ways they think, feel, and behave (NRC, 2014). It also suggests that military social norms may affect ICT and involvement across demographics. Recognizing these implications helps create a more inclusive and participatory military culture that encourages active engagement across all demographics.

### **3.7. Significant Association Between Demographic Characteristics and Followership Styles of Military Personnel in the AFP**

**Table 11.** Establishing the Significant Association Between the Respondents' Followership Style and Each of the Demographic Characteristics Using Fisher's Exact Test (n=432)

Demographic characteristics	Category	Followership Styles						Total	p-value
		E	P	PC	PA	CE	AE		
Gender	Male	263	26	1	1	59	3	353	0.304
	Female	45	5	0	0	19	1	70	
Age	20-29	117	13	0	1	36	4	171	0.088
	30-39	129	8	1	0	33	0	171	
	40-49	56	8	0	0	9	0	73	
	<49	6	2	0	0	0	0	8	
Educational Attainment	High School	88	12	0	0	17	2	119	0.580
	College	206	19	1	1	59	2	288	
	Masters	14	0	0	0	2	0	16	
Years of Military Service	>5	72	11	0	1	26	2	112	0.999
	5-9	88	3	0	0	26	2	119	
	10-14	59	4	0	0	15	0	78	
	15-19	51	7	1	0	6	0	65	
	20-24	19	3	0	0	2	0	24	
	25-29	14	2	0	0	3	0	19	
	30-34	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	
<34	2	0	0	0	0	0	2		
Branch of Service	Army	221	19	0	1	57	3	301	0.515
	Air Force	50	7	0	0	11	0	68	
	Navy	37	5	1	0	10	1	54	
Rank	General	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.999
	Field Grade	14	0	0	0	1	0	15	
	Company Grade	17	1	0	0	2	0	20	
	Senior NCO	8	3	0	0	0	0	11	
	NCO	105	10	1	0	24	0	140	
	Junior EP	161	17	0	1	51	4	234	
Personnel Category	Officer	34	1	0	0	3	0	38	0.278
	Enlisted Personnel	274	30	1	1	75	4	385	
Job Category	Commanding Officer	12	0	0	0	1	0	13	<0.001
	Staff Officer	21	1	0	0	2	0	24	
	Technical Officer	5	0	0	0	0	1	6	
	Administrative	95	13	0	0	31	0	139	
	Specialized	70	5	1	0	15	2	93	
	Combat Soldier	105	12	0	1	29	1	148	
Role of Unit	Command and Control	110	11	1	0	23	2	147	0.325
	Combat	34	8	0	0	10	1	53	
	Combat Support	82	5	0	0	18	1	106	
	Combat Service Support	82	7	0	1	27	0	117	
Leadership Courses	With	121	15	1	0	16	2	155	0.003
	Without	187	16	0	1	62	2	268	
Followership Courses	With	96	13	0	1	17	2	129	0.091
	Without	212	18	1	0	61	2	294	

Legend: E-Exemplary; P-Pragmatist; PC-Passive-Conformist; PA-Passive-Alienated; CE-Conformist-Exemplary; AE-Alienated-Exemplary

Table 11 shows that only job category ( $p < 0.001$ ) and leadership course completion ( $p = 0.003$ ) have a significant association with followership styles among the demographic characteristics. This finding suggests that the AFP can use job categories to identify and develop individuals suitable for followership roles. For instance, soldiers with high

discipline [conscientiousness] and confidence [extraversion] are chosen for combat roles, while those with creativity and problem-solving skills [openness to experience] are chosen for support roles (Bartone et al., 2009). This association also has implications for military training and development, as different types of training can be provided to soldiers in

different job categories to develop the necessary followership behavior.

This finding may also imply that AFP military personnel use varied followership styles dependent on their designation, emphasizing a role-based followership approach. Davis (2020), Freeman (1948), Goodwin et al. (2018), and Kalimuddin (2017) highlight that the military organization is highly structured and hierarchical, with clearly defined roles that determine the level of one's authority, power, responsibility, and accountability. The military demands soldiers to be behaviorally adaptable to perform various roles due to the complexity and unpredictable nature of their operational environment (NRC, 2008; Port, 2020). Voss and Ryseff (2022) emphasize the significance of role performance and their ability to fulfill these duties and adapt their followership styles, which may improve or impede military effectiveness. The finding supports Kim's (2011) previous findings regarding the relationship between followership style and job category among federal employees in the United States, which were attributed to responsibility, authority, organizational culture, and expectations from individuals holding the position.

On the other hand, the association between followership styles and leadership course completion may suggest that

individuals who have undergone leadership training are more likely to adopt certain followership styles and engage in leadership-focused learning experiences, possibly due to the training's emphasis on the importance of followers and positive attitudes towards them (NRC, 2008). Leadership training can aid military personnel in understanding different followership styles, enabling them to anticipate their leaders' needs and adapt their styles accordingly. This aligns with the social learning theory, which suggests that people learn new behaviors by observing and imitating others. In the military, leadership training provides soldiers with opportunities to observe and imitate effective leaders and followers, thereby developing the skills and behaviors necessary for effective followers. Furthermore, Hopton (2014) and Kelley (1988) argue that leadership training provides an opportunity to understand and appreciate followers' perspectives, augmenting positive leadership.

Furthermore, the no association between followership styles and most demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, age, educational attainment, years of military service, branch of service, rank, personnel category, role of unit, followership course) may seem to suggest that these demographic characteristics do not determine followership styles among the military personnel of the AFP. It



may also seem to suggest that the prevailing military culture in the AFP may play a role in reducing the salience of these factors. The military is a hierarchical organization emphasizing conformity and obedience (Collinson, 2008; Freeman, 1948; NRC, 2014). This may lead soldiers to suppress individual differences in favor of adhering to group norms, making these demographic characteristics less influential in the AFP compared to other settings. Furthermore, the findings imply that military training in the AFP should also emphasize the development of followership skills, as these skills are crucial for effective teamwork and collaboration in the modern military.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study explored the potential relationship between the personality traits and followership dimensions, styles, and demographic characteristics of military personnel, as well as their followership style and personality trait profiles. The study found exemplary followers to be prevalent among military personnel while acknowledging that some individuals do not fit with Kelley's five followership styles, suggesting four additional styles. Relatedly, it found that most military personnel have "average" personality traits, indicating an overall adaptable

personality functioning that is suitable for military settings. The study concluded that there is a correlation between personality traits other than emotionality in either or both followership dimensions. Similarly, it found a relationship between personality traits other than emotionality and followership styles, with exemplary and conformist-exemplary followership styles exhibiting similar personality traits. Furthermore, it was found that only leadership course completion has a relationship with ICT, whereas none of the demographic variables have a relationship with AE. Similarly, it was found that only job categories and leadership course completion have a relationship with followership styles.

This suggests that the Philippine military, like all armed forces, is based on a followership ethos, with all ranks having a duty to follow professionally to achieve shared mission goals. With over 91% of its members being exemplary or conformist-exemplary followers, the AFP is well-positioned to maintain its high-performing status and adapt to organizational challenges. The current military personnel management system allows members to be highly involved in achieving shared goals, with personalities that can adapt to complex situations. However, cultivating a culture of "professional disagreement" is

essential to minimize moral disengagement, deindividuation, and moral rationalization among military personnel. In particular, the negative correlation between honesty-humility and ICT reveals a military culture where moral rationalization is often used to justify unacceptable actions for social order, group cohesion, and mission success.

Furthermore, effective followership styles are linked to certain personality traits, enabling individuals to follow orders, collaborate, and maintain a positive mindset. Understanding these variables can optimize military performance and lead to more effective leaders, followers, and organizations, crucial for the Philippine military's success. The Philippine military must continuously learn and develop its most valuable asset - its followers, to win against enemies and thrive in future challenges.

#### **4.1. Directions for Future Research**

To further the study of followership, the researcher proposes longitudinal research to understand followership dimensions and styles over time, cross-cultural research to compare styles across cultures, and taking organizational factors into account. Empirical data is also required to validate new followership styles, and studying followership in

both the military and civilian sectors can reveal insights into followership dynamics.

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