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Martial Arts and Combative Program of the Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines: An Assessment

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***Abstract*-The young men and women of PMA CCAFP are bred to be front liners and last line of defenseduring war and times of peace as such, they must be equipped with the most practical and most effective combat ready Martial Arts and Combative skills to effectively fulfil their duty,as well as to protect and safeguard themselves to continue serving the people and their country. This study shall assessthe current Martial Arts and Combative Program of the PMA CCAFP usingdescriptive methodology by interviews and floating questionnaires. The current Martial Arts and Combative Program of the PMA CCAFP with all of the subjects involved are more sports inclined rather than combat equipped. Picking the best from each subject used in the program, this study seeks to recommend improvements or create a better Martial Arts and Combative Program that willsatisfytheobjective of producing Martial Arts combatant graduates. A goodMartial Arts and Combative Program for PMA is essential to prepare them on whatlies ahead which is unforgiving and no rules to pacify threat.**

***Keywords*- Military, Martial Arts, Combative, Combatant, Program.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Martial Arts and Combative was first developed not for physical violence but for physical wellness, ironically some call it the art of peace, while it is true that Martial Arts and Combative was developed for Self-defense it was not against others, it meant self-defense against sickness and or ailments through its physical fitness or physical wellness exercises. Martial Arts and Combative before transforming into the art of fighting was first a way of survival or the way of life, its existence was used for hunting food and for nomadic activities. Martial Arts and Combative is only used for fighting if there exist a treat against people's land, their people and their love ones.

As civilization changed the use of Martial Arts and Combative changed with it, more violent andused more in fighting battles during war either to conquer or to defend against being conquered. In the many parts of the world every Martial Arts is an output of their customs and tradition andthe evolution of their people but one thing is similar every country or continent has Martial Arts and Combative in their Military.An Armed Force's strength depends on its Military, the Military Men and Women amidst the military modernization and the high technology innovations and advancement cannot be denied to still be the most useful line of defense that should always be trained and equipped with the highly required arsenal that is a comprehensive and effective combat based MartialArts skills which will always come in handy in their field of work.

The Philippine Military Academy serves as the training institution for the brave men and women as future young officers joining the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as such, the Martial Arts program of PMA Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines should be designed to equip the cadets or the would-be officers to be combat ready through an effective Martial Arts and Combative Program.

The line of work of every graduate from PMA is faced with dangers but more than those personal dangers every graduate are somehow bestowed the responsibility to deal with dangers against their country, this is the reason why being trained under an effective Martial Arts and Combative program is essential during their stay of education and training inside the Academy.

The current Martial Arts Program of the PMA CCAFP is inclined with discipline and character building that is sought through competitions with the goal of instilling warrior ethos that prepares them for their respective careers as future military officers, but unlike sports the real world of the military knows and recognizes no rules and without mediation of referees and judges, what is at stake is not scoring points but protecting lives that could either be lost or disabled.

The United States Military Academy or West Point from whom the PMA curriculum was patterned have their own Martial Arts Program called Army West Point Martial Arts (Schoonhoven, n.d.). The United States Airforce also has their own Martial Arts and Combative Program under

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a Hybrid Martial Arts called Kajukenbo (Karate, Judo, Kenpo and Boxing) (Lasit, 2013). The United States Marine Corps has their own Martial Arts and Combative Program that is actually named Marine Corps Martial Arts Program or MCMAP (USMC, 2019). Even the famous Navy Seal has their own Martial Arts and Combative program that is a combination of four Martial Arts and Combative discipline (Jensen, 2019). These branches of US Military are considered among the elites when it comes to Military, together with other Countries like China whose Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) uses what they call Capture the Enemy Personnel (for intelligence purposes) combat system (William & Mei, 2018).

Virtually all countries around the world even those highly modernized have either created their own fighting styles for close-range, hand-to-hand combat, or have borrowed military martial arts styles from faraway lands. Part of being a well-rounded soldier is preparedness and the ability to defend a country's citizens from any threats. Thanks to the countless contributions of martial arts, soldiers are better prepared and ready to serve.

The research seeks to look into the PMA CCAFP Martial Arts and Combative Program's effectiveness and identify areas to improve and or if there is a need to create a new battle based Martial Arts and Combative Program to enhance the combative skills capability of the PMA CCAFP Graduates to get them ready to protect themselves and fulfil their sworn duty to protect the country and its people.

Further the study shall help create a Martial Arts and Combative Program that would equip the PMA CCAFP with an arsenal of effective Martial Arts andCombative skills that would make the use of weapon as a last resort or in the absence of weapon or in its infectivity necessary skill could be used to ensure higher percentage of preserving lives.

II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used survey questionnaires and interviews with interview guide questions as tools to collect the needed data to prove and support the documentary analysis assessment on the PMA CCAFP Martial Arts program and the proposition for the need of a better or improved Martial Arts and Combative Program for the PMA CCAFP. The survey tool and interview questions included the importance of Martial Arts to a Military, Military School and for the Graduates of PMA, and the assessment on the effectiveness of the current Martial Arts and Combative Program through documentary analysis on the Courses and subject offered in the program.

The survey questionnaire was floated to random cadets who are fourth class (first years), third class (second years) second class, (third years) and first class (fourth years) cadets mostly who have undergone the Martial Arts program progressively participated in the survey.
An interview question guide was also extended and conducted with the respective Faculty members of the Sports and Physical Development Unit (SPDU) of PMA who handles the Martial Arts and Combative subjects to grasp their take on the Martial Arts and Combative Program's assessment and effectiveness in relation to the career path of their cadet students further, interview were also made with officers who have relevance in the PMA CCAFPMartial Arts Program like the Athletic Director of the SPDU, to include a former SPDU Commanding Officer who was suggesting a comprehensive Martial Arts for the cadets during his time as the Commanding Officer of SPDU, two foreign graduate officers also were included in the interview to broaden the idea being cultivated by the research, officers who are deployed in the field who have experienced first-hand the application of Combat and Martial Arts skill in actual scenario also took time in answering the interview questions which was sent by the researcher through their social media and was sent back through the same medium, an experienced Martial Arts Instructor who have served as Martial Arts instructor for several military institutions Chief Instructor and Founder of the Australasian Defendo Close Quarter Combat in Australia also obliged to send his thoughts about the study, he was sent the same interview questions but made his answer in general addressing two concerns; 1. How Important is Martial Arts for the Military? And 2. What is the Best Martial Arts program for the Military?

Descriptive Qualitative research is made use in this study as it deeply studied the existing Martial Arts and Combative Program of the PMA CCAFP through the available Course Curriculum documents to assess its effectiveness by looking into the documents like the specific Martial Arts and Combative subjects offered to the PMA CCAFP.

The researcher wrote a letter asking permission to float the said survey questionnaires and conduct interviews through a Subject to Letter (STL) addressed to the Athletic Director of the SPDU for representation to higher headquarters for the said purpose, through the use of the social media the researcher was also able to conduct the surveys and interviews with officers in the field for their much needed sharing of experiences for the purpose of this study.

III. RESULTS

The purpose of this Descriptive Qualitative research is to determine the Effectiveness of the Martial Arts and Combative Program of the Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines (PMA CCAFP) via a thorough assessment of the existing Martial Arts and Combative program and gathering of data from the respondents, the respondents of the research were the

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Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines who were floated survey questionnaires, Table 1 shows the number of CCAFP respondents with a total of thirty four coming from different year level 4th class cadets being 1st years, 3rd class cadets being 2nd years, 2nd class cadets being 3rd years and 1st class cadets being the 4th years all of which with different experiences with the current martial arts and combative program.

Table 1. CCAFP Respondents from different year level.

4^{TH}CLASS CADETS	3^{RD} CLASS CADETS	2^{ND} CLASS CADETS	1^{ST} CLASS CADETS
8	5	9	12

The CCAFP respondents are all part of the current Martial Arts and Combative program who in one way or another experience it as a course, subject or as part of the Corps Squad (varsity team).

Martial Arts and Combative Faculty of the Sports and Physical Development Unit of the Philippine Military Academy (SPDU, PMA) who were floated interview questions adhering to the pandemic protocol of limiting person to person interaction, two foreign graduate officers one from Australian Defense Force Academy (ADFA) and from United States Navy Academy (USNA) respectively, the former Commanding Officer or CO, SPDU PMA changed to Athletic Director or AD, SPDU PMA, the current Athletic Director of SPDU PMA both answered the same interview questions given to the SPDU PMA Faculty and two officers assigned in the field, one of which has a direct involvement and experience in the devastating Battle of Marawi or the Siege of Marawi they were sent the same interview questions through their social media account and happily obliged to share their experiences.

Table 2 shows the respective respondents of the interview questions who are considered to be experts in the field of Martial Arts and Combative and also officers who have experienced the program when they were cadets and have had the opportunity to test it in the field.

Table 2. Interview Respondents.

Officers	Combative and Martial Arts Faculty	Combative and Martial Arts Instructor
9	6	1

The interview respondents are all credible source for this study being officers who have graduated from the academy that have undergone the program and have experienced using what they learned during their field assignments, the Combative and Martial Arts Faculty being long time practitioners of their respective Combative and Martial Arts disciplines and some have their students graduated from the academy who now holds the ranks of Generals. The Guest Martial Arts and Combative Instructor is an experienced Military Martial Arts instructor of several Military institutions who is also the Founder and the Chief Instructor of his own Martial Arts School and a Hall of Famer inductee of the Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame and the Philippine Martial Arts Hall of Fame.

The survey questionnaires floated to the PMA CCAFP consists of eleven questions mostly answerable by yes or no and an elaboration of their choice, the questions were designed to unearth the cadets' point of view and answer the questions;1.Is it important for a PMA CCAFP to be trained to become Combat ready? And 2.Is the current PMA CCAFP Martial Arts Program effective?

Table 3 presents the result of the survey questionnaire baring questions 1-7 that are all answerable with yes or no with elaborations of their respective choices.

Table 3: Survey Questionnaire floated to the CCAFP

QUESTIONS	YES	%	NO	%
Should the PMA CCAFP be trained to be combat ready?	34	100	0	0
Have you been enrolled in any of the Martial Arts or Combative subjects in the Sports and Physical Development courses?	31	9.17	3	8.82
Are you a member of any of the Martial Arts or Combative PMA Corps Squads? (equivalent to varsities in the Universities)	23	67.64	11	32.35
Is there a relevance of Martial Arts or Combative for a cadet aspiring to be officers of the AFP?	34	100	0	0
Is Martial Arts program important for PMA CCAFP?	34	100	0	0
Should the Martial Arts Program be Mandatory for the PMA CCAFP?	34	100	0	0
Is the current PMA CCAFP Martial Arts program effective for its objective?	22	64.70	12	35.29

As shown in the table 3 all or one hundred percentof the respondents answered yes on the first question agreeing

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that the PMA CCAFP should be trained to be combat ready, citing the reason that as future military officers of the AFP, cadets should be able to learn and acquire the skills that would enable them to perform missions or functions during military operations faced with combat situations, they also pointed out that as soldiers or future officers they should be honed to be combatants equipped and ready with self-defense, ironically some of the respondents also pointed out being trained under the discipline or values of Martial Arts and Combative so that they would know how to address situations in the field when faced with combat situations. "Martial arts have always been of a great importance for a versatile development for the members of the military and the police force.

Thanks to the regular and systematic practice of various martial sports, soldiers and policemen are physically and psychologically speaking more prepared for carrying out their tiresome and demanding duties." (Stainko, 2018).

The result yielded thirty one answered that they have been enrolled against three that said have not yet enrolled in any Martial Arts or Combative Subject under the Martial Arts Program, the design of the current program is that everyone will have to be enrolled in a Combative and Martial Arts Subject under the program up until they become graduating cadets, the case of the three that answered not being enrolled belonged to the group that is enrolled in a prerequisite subject gymnastics or swimming but will eventually be rotated to take up their combative subjects as pre-requisite for their next term.

Data on question number three yielded twenty three respondents that are members of a Combative or a Martial Arts Corps Squad and eleven who are not, although admitting to themselves that Combative and Martial Arts is an important part of being a cadet aspiring to be officers of the AFP many cadets still chooses not be a member of any of the Combative and or Martial Arts Corps Squad because they love other sports like basketball, volleyball etc. where they excel as players and joining more than one Corps Squad for them becomes a burden of time management which could sacrifice their performance in other activities, but there are cadets who are fond of joining every possible Corps Squad not just a member but as an active practitioner and competitor believing that what they are doing is a prelude to their would be life as military officers in the field so might as well learn to live and enjoy it.

On the premise of relevance and importance of Martial Arts or Combative for a cadets aspiring to be officers of the AFP stated in questions four and five, a hundred percent or all of the respondents answered yes, of which most of the reason is on the idea that as early as cadetship the essentials of Martial Arts and Combative should be instilled in them not just for self-defense, not just for addressing possible treats but most importantly the tenets of a true warrior embedded in Combative and Martial Arts, together the respondents implied that having the knowledge and skill in Martial Arts and Combative would prepare them on their future career and may even save their lives and the lives of others in foresight of their field assignments where threats are inevitable. Martial Arts and Combative is more than physical it is also mental and emotional; the ethos of a combatant is what makes him effective in applying what he knows and understand what he can do. "Imagine feeling confident that you can come out as the victor of an attack without a weapon. That is what mastering a martial art can give you. Whether you want to feel safe on the streets or boost your military training, you won't regret learning martial arts techniques for attack, self-defense, or just to boost your confidence." (Miller, 2020).

Undergoing the Martial Arts and Combative Program is deemed Mandatory by all of the respondents citing the imminent situation of being fielded in missions upon graduation from PMA, many pointed out that as young officers of the AFP being assigned to the field having undergone the Martial Arts and Combative Program of PMA will prepare them from the dangers that they are about to face, some even pointed out that guns run out of bullets while having the knowledge and skills in Martial Arts and Combative makes your arsenal have unlimited source of techniques that you can use in combat, one more striking idea stated by the respondents is, undergoing the Martial Arts and Combative Program is developing your culture for combat readiness one even using the quote of Franz Kafka "Better to have, and not need, than to need, and not have.", Soldiers or the Military are expected to be combat ready for the graduates of PMA each could immediately deployed to combat missions where as young as they are fresh from cadetship at PMA will have to be front liners exposed to the dangers of their missions.

On the premise of the current PMA CCAFP Martial Arts Program effectivity as perceived by the CCAFP respondents stated on question number seven, twenty two out of thirty four respondents answered yes while twelve answered No, although majority respondents answered yes all thirty four respondents answering yes or no were all suggesting the need for revision of the current program citing the need for more time of training and more focus of real situation scenario techniques, some also have expressed their idea of creating a special program that separate subjects like Arnis, Boxing, Judo, Karate, Taekwondo and Wushu but a compressed program that could be offered during their graduating year, some pointed out that with the variety of Martial Arts and Combative subjects being taught it is an advantage if with the liberty of time to grasp all of the essentials from the said Martial Arts and Combative. The sentiment of the respondents is actually valid, them being novices in Martial Arts and Combative seeing the said ordeal that

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prevents their chances of mastery is the same assessment being thrown out by the experts in this field training takes time and skills needs time to be mastered, Martial Arts and Combative is about aiming perfection in mastering a skill or a technique for it to be effective as the great Bruce Lee once said "I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times."

Cadets are duty bound, they prioritize activities that are considered or categorized to be duty like attending their Academic classes, the Martial Arts program should form part of their requirements and duty for it to be taken seriously and for it to be effective making sure that CCAFP completes the program its entirety, as elaborated by the respondents the problems with Martial Arts program are; not enough time for training, lacks real life scenario aspect, confusion due to mixes of the several Martial Arts Disciplines being taught. "There are many different forms of martial arts. You could spend years training in any of them. So, it is important to know what the best martial arts will be for you, and to understand that not every form of martial arts will help you fight off an attacker or win in combat situations." (Miller, 2020).

While the CCAFP respondents saw the importance of the PMA Martial Arts program in its physical or combat essence the Faculty and the Officers are more inclined that Martial Arts develops mental focus and resilience to deal with various threats, while physical prowess for military personnel are innate because of the routines, trainings and environment they are immersed to, Martial Arts enhances all of this with the precise skills needed to perform their duties, more importantly the values that are imbedded in Martial Arts making it both physiological and more importantly psychological. "The psychological benefits of martial arts training have come to the attention of western psychologists over the last thirty years and in particular within the last ten years due to the rise in popularity of MMA (Mixed Martial Arts)" (Mccafferty, n.d.). It is acknowledged that martial art training embodies a system of moral values (e.g. respect property, be faithful and sincere, exert oneself in the perfection of character), that together can inculcate physical and mental relaxation, control of mind and body, and an increase in self-confidence (Weiser et al, 1995).

In assessment the Faculty respondent's verdict the current PMA CCAFP Martial Arts Program to be effective but definitely needs revision or improvement according to the faculty that handles the program, Martial Arts and Combative as a subjects are not enough to produce a combat ready graduate of the academy although it sets them in that direction, the offering of several Martial Arts and Combative subjects makes it hard for them to master anything to apply but on the contrary, the Martial Arts and Combative subjects offered in the program immerse them in the values that are innate in the respective Martial Arts and Combative disciplines which is vital for a combatant and a gentleman, the Officer respondents also agreed that the PMA Martial Arts Program is effective same with that of the Faculty's perception they suggested improvements and revisions, citing the need for a more comprehensive Martial Arts program that entails more physical contact and or actual combat scenarios to test and enhance not only their skills and or techniques but also their attitude towards different situations and circumstances, as one officer pointed out competition exposure will help a lot to exhume the warrior ethos of cadets but aside from competition, the program should also create or include simulation of attacks and counter attacks on different situations like one-on-one or one against multiple opponents, this will boost their understanding of the complexity and the should be attitude in actual situations.

Master William John Johnson a Martial Arts and Combative Instructor from Australia pointed out, "the major concern is when two forces collide in close proximity ex. room clearance /extreme Close Quarter Combat (CQC), that problems arise through the F.E.A.R. principle (False Expectations Appearing Real).

Sensory overload becomes a major problem Blood/excrement–Pain yours and theirs, and the realization that your training in hand to hand combat has proven to be… totally ineffective therefore leaving you in deep water, not knowing how to swim, this induces panic, the realization that your lack of training in this close environment is totally deferent from the Martial Art classes you have attended."

"No other activity prepares a military force better for combat than combat itself. The environment in which combat is conducted one of violence, death and destruction, fear and valor, complexity and uncertainty is one of the most challenging in which any human being or human organization must operate. It is so challenging and unique that it cannot be completely replicated outside of combat itself. Thus, to be effective, military organizations must train under conditions that are as realistic as possible and come as close as possible to placing the individual, the team, the unit, and the crew in the environment and situations they will face in combat. Training realism is one of the key measures of training effectiveness." (Greer, 2018).

As this study have sought, the Martial Arts Program of the Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines (PMA CCAFP) is effective but with the findings on its weak points and areas of improvement, the Martial Arts Program of PMA CCAFP needs to be enhanced so as to cover these respective areas as commented by the CCAFP respondents most importantly by the Martial Arts and Combative Faculty and the officers who have had the chance to test the effectiveness of the program against the threats of their mission in the

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field, with all that sorted the researcher recommends for a more comprehensive Martial Arts and Combative Program for the PMA CCAFP that fuses the significance of each of the Martial Arts and Combative Disciplines being offered namely, Arnis, Boxing, Judo, Karate, Taekwondo and Wushu and come up with a Mixed Martial Arts version that would compress skills and techniques essentially needed by the CCAFP to prepare them of the rigors and unforgiving missions, much like the United States Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (US MCMAP) a combat system developed specifically for use by United States Marines and combines elements of various fighting platforms into a single discipline in which all Marines must undergo training (Hollings, 2017).

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this study is to determine Effectiveness of the Martial Arts Program of the Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines (PMA CCAFP) to include its relevance to the careers of the PMA CCAFP when they graduate from the academy, Martial Arts Combative and Military have long been intertwined, every military is not without Martial Arts and Combative in their training even with the advances in technology where wars are dictated by machines in technological warfare, biological warfare etc. the Military Personnel will always be the exclamation point who will handle important missions in the field facing threats head on against their adversaries, thus the importance of Martial Arts and Combative programs in military schools such as the Philippine Military Academy the premier military school of the Philippines that produces future men and women officers for the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Currently the Martial Arts and Combative Program of PMA is based on Martial Arts and Combative Subjects offered to the cadets under the Sports Development Courses, this study have established that the current program is effective but needs to be improved, the study also have exposed the recommendation of creating a new program that would cater to the immediate need of PMA graduates.

From the perceptions of the CCAFP respondents and the sharing and assessments of the Officers, Martial Arts and Combative Faculty and the Guest Martial Arts and Combative Instructor it was established that the Martial Arts and Combative Program of PMA is an integral part of the CCAFP's training and that the current program although effective needs a lot of improvement or a creation of a better one that would address the challenges that hinders its full potential, thus the dominant recommendation of creating a compressed but comprehensive Martial Arts and Combative program that would fuse all the essentials of all the Martial Arts and Combative Subjects offered under the PMA Sports Development Courses, much like the United States Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP)

V. CONCLUSIONS

The assessment of the Martial Arts and Combative Program of the Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines this studyestablishes the importance of the existence of the PMA Martial Arts and Combative Program as part of the cadets training, also this study has unearthed the need to create a well-developed Martial Arts and Combative Program for PMA and its graduates considering the ordeals that challenges the current program.

There is no question about the effectivityof the current PMA Martial Arts and Combative Program as part of the course offered to the CCAFP, but a creation of a compressed and comprehensive Martial Arts and Combative Program that would prepare the PMA Graduates on their immediate dance with fate would be a better approach to fill their arsenal and make them combat ready on the field or on their missions.

This study hopes to pave the way for the creation of a more compact but comprehensive Martial Arts and Combative Program that fuses the essentials of the existing Martial Arts and Combative courses offered to the CCAFP, a creation of which would harvest the best of the Martial Arts and Combative experts of PMA and could revolutionize a program that could benchmark Martial Arts and Combative Programs for every military training schools and the likes, the creation of the said program through the findings of this study could add to PMA and its graduates contribution to the society if incorporation in military training schools and law enforcement academies.

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