

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF OFFICER CADETS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEPAL AND SRI LANKA

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Abstract- Maintaining a credible military deterrence is the *raison d'être* of the armed forces of any nation. The process of getting able-bodied men to an organisation is called recruitment. Recruitment of officer corps in South Asian countries has declined to an extent where it needs a serious research attention. The factors applicable to recruitment in one part of the world is not equally applicable in other parts. Therefore, this research will be limited to the South Asian context with a special reference to Nepal and Sri Lankan armed forces. Both Nepal and Sri Lanka face unconventional security threats. Even though they need the military strength to deal with the problem, the numbers of recruitment are declining consistently. Investigating the reasons for this declining is pertinent to devise solutions. The author has referred to sources of literature in order to find the various aspects of the issues in this regard. It is evident that recruitment and selection are considered by the previous researchers as a single process. However, the author suggests that they are different functions on the ground. Armed forces are found to be effective at the selection process rather than in the recruitment. The author suggests that recruitment should generate the availability of similar candidates and subsequently the process of selection should be used to hand-pick the most suitable candidates from the similar pool. Finally, placement of the candidate should be done according to the requirement procedures and their skills. The study has further found that the decline in the number of candidates, is due to various factors. As per the literature, demography, legality, nature of occupation and marketing are the most common factors affecting the recruitment process.

Keywords- Recruitment, Demographic Factors, Legal Factors, Occupational Factors, Marketing Factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this study, various books, journals, and articles have been reviewed in order to understand the subject area. The available literatures are reviewed under sections of recruitment and selection process, impact of demographic factors on recruitment, impact of legal factors on recruitment, impact of occupational factors on recruitment and impact of marketing factors on recruitment. The objective of this study is to understand the factors affecting the recruitment process of officer cadets. This review is carried out by searching academic databases on recruitment process which expound demographic, legal, occupational and marketing factors.

II. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Barber (1998) has defined recruitment is a practice and activity carried out by organisations with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees. (Barber, 1998). Rynes and Barber (1990) suggested that recruitment encompasses all organizational practices and decisions that affect either number or types, of the individuals who are willing to apply for or to accept, a given vacancy (Rynes and Barber, 1990). Gusdorf has defined (As cited in Mondy, 2008) recruitment

as the process of attracting sufficient and qualified individuals on a timely basis for jobs which are available in organizations. (Gusdorf, 2008). Recruitment process includes three crucial features which are the possibility to attract capable people's interest to apply for a specific job, capability of fulfilling given role in an organisation and how the capability is determined by an organisation.

Recruitment is a process (Rynes and Cable, 2003, Ekwoaba et al., 2015) which involves actions in generating number of candidates and maintaining those candidates, and motivating them to join the organisations (Dineen and Soltis, 2011). As Cable and Rynes (2003) pointed out, environmental and contextual considerations like firm, vacancy and labour market affect not only to the recruitment process but also to generate viable candidates and maintain status of viable applicants. Dineen and Soltis (2011) suggest that candidates have to make two key decisions to complete three stages as brought out by Cable and Rynes (2003). Those key decisions are the candidate's decision to voluntarily enter the recruitment process and the organisation's decision to formally invite individual to join that organisation. It means the identification of the target group and relevant strategies are prerequisites to gain the candidate's interests for available job opportunities. After that candidate has to face selection processes where fairness perceptions and timeliness play a vital role. At the last stage, candidate will be able to gain the job.

There are two aspects of recruitment authorities which come under centralisation and decentralisation (Khillare and Shirsale, 2017) Centralised recruitment method is adopted by an organisation which maintains a separate and dedicated department for recruitments. It means others departments do not concern about the recruitment process at all. In the decentralised method each department has the authority to select their staff (ibid). Based on the sources of recruitment, this process can be categorised under internal and external sources. Internal sources of recruitment include transfers, promotions while external sources include press advertisements, educational institutes, placement agencies, employment exchanges, labour contractors, unsolicited applicants, employee referrals and recruitments at factory gate (Giri, 2008, Mascarenhas, Gusdorf, 2008). Waldt and Thebe (2014) have presented common sequential steps that come under the recruitment process. These steps are synergised steps which reflect a comprehensive recruitment process model.

- i. Step 1 : I identify the number of required people for existing vacancies
- ii. Step 2 : Update the job description, specification and profile.
- iii. Step 3 : Determine the key performance areas of the job/Recruitment planning.
- iv. Step 4 : Consult the recruitment policy and procedure.
- v. Step 5 : Consider the sources of recruitment (searching).
- vi. Step 6 : Adopt an appropriate recruitment method.
- vii. Step 7 : Develop strategies to recruit human resources. (advertisement/strategy development).
- viii. Step 8 : Follow a suitable communication method/Implement a decision.
- ix. Step 9 : Ensure the pool of potential qualified applications/Allow sufficient time for responses.
- x. Step 10 : Screen responses/Screening.
- xi. Step 11 : Evaluation of the Recruitment and control.

Recruitment and selection can be understood as a single process which deals with the employee's work commitments. But the selection is crucial part of the recruitment process (Barber, 1998, Armstrong, 2009). Recruitment and selection are two different terms which are often used interchangeably (Torrington et al., 2014). Torrington (2014) has stated that the selection is the process of choosing the right person for the right job. On the other hand, selection can be also problematic (Torrington et al., 2014). Selection process begins with the inputs which associate the proper identification of applicants. (Waldt and Thebe, 2014). According to Giri (2008) selection is the process of hiring people who intend to be successful in their careers (Giri, 2008). According to Bratton and Gold (2007) managers and other responsible people generally use specific instruments to select appropriate individuals from a pool of applicants by considering the management goals and legal requirements. Though some scholars have suggested that these two functions are closely connected, each requires a separate range of skills and expertise and it may be fulfilled by different staff members. It indicates

that the recruitment activity is not a sole decision taken by the responsible authorities. (Foot and Hook, 2005).

Further, Waldt and Thebe (2014) have presented a common sequential steps of selection process as follows.

- i. Step 1 : Interview (Reception and initial screening)
- ii. Step 2 : Application form
- iii. Step 3 : In-depth selection interview
- iv. Step 4 : Background and reference checking

- v. Step 5 : Medical examination and physical testing
- vi. Step 6 : Assessment centres
- vii. Step 7 : Making the decision on hiring
- viii. Step 8 : Making a fair job offer

However, combination of the recruitment and selection process generate 19 steps. These steps are not dogmas and can be changed and differ according to available requirements. In this regard, Schreurs and Syed (2009) looked at three variables which come under organisational, individual and outcome variables as shown in the figure 1.

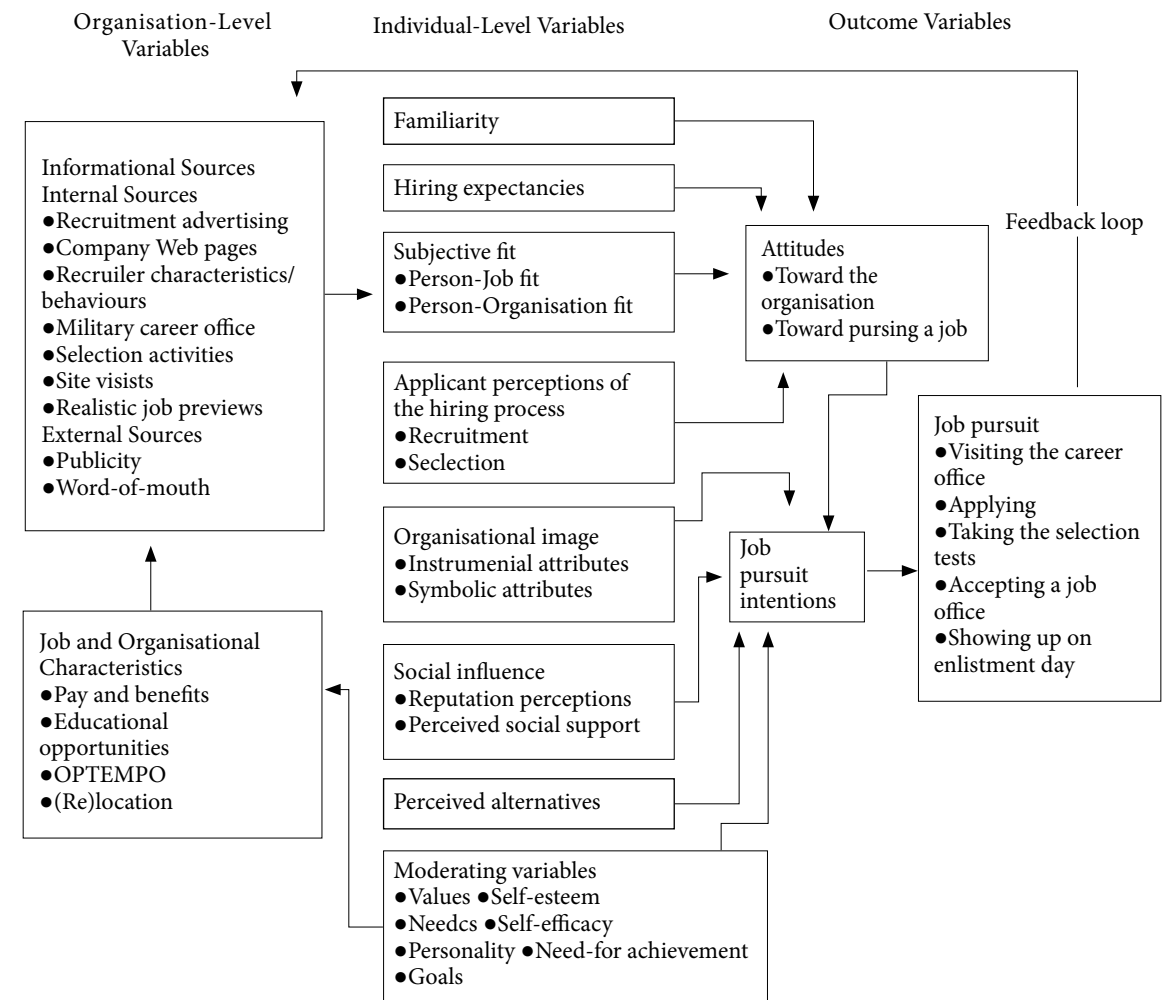


Figure 1. Proposed Model of Military Recruitment
Source: Schreurs and Syed (2009), A proposed mode of military recruitment

Organisational level variables include the environment which prevails under the control of organisation. This encompasses internal sources and external sources. Individual level variables are mostly related with candidates. Further, outcome variable includes the final steps in the joining of candidate. All these variables have impact on the recruitment and selection process.

III. IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Council et al (2003) have described two demographic variables which create impact for the recruitment process namely young adult demography and child demography. Socio-economic characteristics of parents such as their education qualifications have made an impact on the youth's aspirations and decisions to join military. This study shows that the expected recruitments will increase given a cohort of 15 to 20 people. Furthermore, study suggests that, though the qualification requirement can be met by the youngsters, the increasing problem of obesity and asthma leads to reject the most of their applications. The study has also found out that the propensity to enlist in military service has been decreasing day by day due to the perceptions of parents and particularly mothers and counsellors strongly influence on youth to make decisions with regard to fields of career and education. Quester has further suggested that due to brain drain reliance on foreign recruitments, there are reluctances available among youth to join military. Recruitment and selection is depending on the demographic variables like age, sex, income, education, interests, propensity (Council et al., 2003, Richter and Hanhart, 2012; Denis, 2015). Quester (2005) has highlighted the necessity to increase the serving age in military to motivate officer cadets.

Study also suggested that when the economy does not function well, the recruitment in military becomes easier and vice versa. It means war and demographic changes are positive driving factors which drive for recruitments. (Quester, 2005). Dennis (2015) has highlighted five trends in demographic and socio-economic changes. The rise of ageing population (It means youth has to spend much time and money take care their aged parents) have to look after obesity and lack of fitness, decline to serve (mostly based on the perceptions and changes in the education sector), the rise of cost in investing equipment and high-tech militaries which reduces personnel casualties (Denis, 2015).

Ethnicity is also another factor affects to the recruitment of military personnel (Orvis and Asch, 2001). The components like race, gender, personality and knowledge are most influential factors in the selection process. (Joshi et al., 2011). Another study suggests that the educational benefits provided by military to youth is an influential factor to increase their tendency towards military (Kleykamp, 2006). Philips (2015) has found that a child raised by absentee mothers are more likely to join military due to the obstacles faced by them during their early times. On the other hand, there are few youths who are willing to leave home because of the conflict and economic crisis available in the families. All these factors depict that the deprivation of human needs also lead to enlist them in the military (Philips, 2015).

IV. IMPACT OF LEGAL FACTORS

In most of the countries, legal provisions on the recruitment of officer cadets were changed periodically during and after World Wars (Lerwill, 1988). As an example, initially United States Army gave a vital importance to volunteer forces. Likewise, while most of the countries are focussing on volunteer force, some are still practising conscriptions which aligned with the national security predicaments (Simon and Abdel-Moneim, 2011).

Ejiogu (2007) has stressed that recruitment policy must be based on the selecting appropriate individuals to serve the tax payers. It means if the responsible authorities practise a wrong policy, country would face extreme conditions occurred in Nigeria (Ejiogu, 2011). Canadian report on the recruitment and retention highlights key areas like delays within recruitment process, file handling, duration between recruitment and selection process can be considered as the root causes for such kind of incidents (Sorenson, 2017).

V. IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL FACTORS

Type, name, brand and the size of the organisation (Cable & Graham, 2000; Chapman et al., 2005, Alnaçık, 2012, Nyce, 2012) determines individual's choice of recruitment. In this regard, propensity to join military (Woodruff et al., 2006) is influenced by the environment of the individuals (Bachman et al., 1998). On the other hand, such kind of Job satisfaction is linked with motivation, social interaction, employee characteristics, organisational

environmental characteristics, organisational perceptions and disturbing factors like frustration, conflict, job security, promotion, stress and interests (Freeman, 1977; Izvercian et al., 2016). According to Herzberg (as cited in Naz, 2015) 1966) job satisfaction is related to intrinsic factors like recognitions, responsibilities, achievements, and advancements while job dissatisfaction is related with extrinsic factors like the amount of pay, administration, company policy, relationships among colleagues, and working environment (Naz, 2015). In the case of military, hardship of military life, stress, age of military retirement can be considered as occupational factors (Quester, 2005). This perception has also assured through a study conducted on Australian Defence Forces which recognises the organisation culture is one of the reasons that reduces the recruitment of soldiers. (Brown, 2013). As an example, a study conducted among 10 companies in Zimbabwe has found that cost of advertisement, inappropriate qualifications, nepotism, favouritism and unskilled labour resources which surpasses the number of skilled labours, political interferences, brain drain, lack of qualified persons in local pool, outdated or inadequate job descriptions and the size of recruitment firm affects for the recruitment process (Zinyemba, 2014).

VI. IMPACT OF MARKETING FACTORS

As mentioned in earlier, attracting of appropriate candidates is crucial in the recruitment process. Therefore, organisations need to advertise their strengths to overcome their weaknesses by using a proper marketing strategy (Armstrong, 2009). From the perspective military, armed forces still follow conventional scripted method. Rynes & Barber (1990) have suggested that these methods needs to be changed. It means forces should pursue divergent methods in advertising their work opportunities. It shows that the cost of advertising particularly influences the recruitment (Chaudhary and Nirala, 2014). (Since the attraction is a vital factor for the recruitment process both tangible and intangible factors contributes to the recruitment process). Tangible factors are salary, allowances, career growth, education, health insurance, welfare, family life and amenities while intangible factors are social status, respect, and recognition within the society (Richter and Hanhart, 2012).

VII. CONCLUSION

The study mainly concludes that the demographic, legal, occupational factors have played a major role in the

selection process. Variables like age, income, interests, gender, education level of parents, transcendent purpose to serve in military, ethnicity of minority, investment in education by military, presence of military make strong influence on the individual's decision of individuals to join military. Moreover, the race, gender, personality, and knowledge of recruiter is also influencing the outcomes of recruitment process particularly in minority. Then the legal factors affect to the recruitment which relates to the quantity and quality and quality of armed forces to maintain. Occupational factors like the type, name, brand and size of organisation are also subjected to the motivation, social interaction, employee characteristics, organisational and environmental characteristics, organisational perceptions and disturbing factors like frustration, conflict, job security, promotion, stress and interests. Finally this paper points out that the marketing factors which relates to the advertising strengths and weakness of organisation; methods of attraction have played a significant role in the recruitment process.

VIII. REFERENCES

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