

A Conceptual Approach to Officer Selection and Officer Like Qualities

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Abstract- Failure to conduct a good professional selection for officers is an unforgivable error and will lead to military incompetence. The quality of any officer selection system needs to be assessed with alacrity. One needs to know, rather than believe or hope, that the right applicants are selected and assigned to jobs for which they are best suited. This is of paramount importance to the military commanders since the quality of the officer corps is vital for the conduct of military operations which can have dramatic consequences both for the military and their country in times of war. A good officer selection system should consider the applicants as partners in the process of finding the most appropriate person for the vacancies. This is a different philosophy to the one that once prevailed in which the applicants were more treated like cattle that had to be led through an anonymous and cold selection machine. Considering the applicants as partners will be accomplished by a series of actions and attitudes and both sides need to treat each other with dignity.

Index Terms- Selection System , Military Competence, Officer Like Qualities (OLQs), Personal Qualities (PQs), Leader, Manager, Logistics and

I. INTRODUCTION

All armed forces have a requirement to enlist junior officers and that there are a number of applicants, mainly civilian, who are prepared to join. Typically, enlistees will go through an initial training phase, including both academic and military training, as a first step for a full military career. Such a setting is often thought as being very natural but in fact it is built on a series of fundamental options. For example, not all armed forces including India recruit officers from the civilian population. For instance, the Israeli Defense Force recruits its officers from among the enlisted NCO's. Other countries such as Austria recruit officers amongst draftees. In India, SCO and ACC commission is restricted to service personnel only. This form of

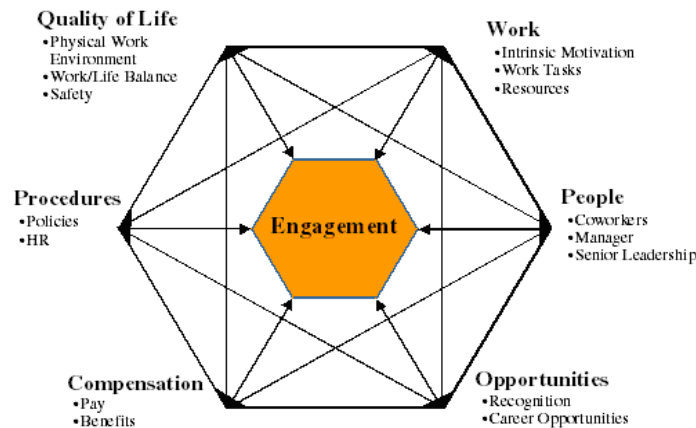
internal recruitment has the advantage that the applicants are experienced and proficient in the subordinate role and know the organization well. Moreover, such a system gives many opportunities to assess the suitability of an applicant to become an officer. Under such a system however, it is likely that a number of potential officer-applicants will refrain from joining the Forces in the junior ranks because of the less appealing job and the uncertainty that his service as private will have the intended outcome, namely of becoming an officer.

II. JOB PROFILING

Large organizations require a wide variety of people with diversified competencies. The times where persons were able to become proficient in any specialty have now passed and it is one of the main challenges to the Human Resource Management (HRM) staff to provide the organization with the right set of people, proficient in particular fields. The way in which the HRM attempts to do so can vary. Some Forces hire large numbers of officers who already have a university degree, whereas others still rely on the recruitment of high school graduates and organize in-house academic training in a limited number of specialties. Further academic training at civilian universities is then frequently needed to provide the Forces with the required specialists. New models whereby officers leave the military to gain new competencies in civilian organizations and then come back to the military also take place. These fundamental options of HRM undoubtedly influence officer selection. However, within the scope of this paper we will reduce the officer selection issue to a generic situation in which a number of unknown candidates apply for a set of diversified officer jobs.

Hewitt Associates model of employees is an excellent account of interacting forces like Quality of Life, Work, People, Opportunities, Compensation and Procedures. This is enumerated beautifully as follows:

MODEL OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT(HEWITT ASSOCIATES 2004)



Hewitt Associates(2004): Employee Engagement at Double Digit Growth Companies

III. GENERAL CONTEXT

Selection situations cannot be considered without reference to the context in which they occur. Let us review some elements that influence the selection systems.

3.1 First what is the selection ratio? How many applicants are there for each vacant position? With low selection ratios, one should take care not to reject applicants too easily whereas high selection ratios will risk imposing a major burden on the selection institution.

The overall number of applicants and vacancies is also important. When these are large, it is possible to use a stable normative population against which you can assess an individual applicant. When the numbers involved are small, this is no longer possible because of the fluctuations that are typical in small numbers. In order to assess an individual and to decide whether s/he can be enlisted, it is then necessary to compare all persons applying for the same set of jobs. This leads to batch classification.

Another important point is that of the legal dispositions and ethical guidelines which are applicable for most selection situations. For instance, there is no choice other than to comply with the existing rules and laws. One should, however, **always attempt to have legal texts modified when such changes would permit sounder selection practices.**

Societal awareness is also key. The managers of an officer selection system must recognize that the military is embedded in the broader society, as is their recruitment. This is not only relevant for marketing purposes, which are not discussed in this chapter, but also for the whole organization of the selection system. For instance, in some countries, if the applicants are mainly attending school, it is not too hard to ask them to spend a couple of days for officer selection during the week, whereas if the applicants are mostly working, you risk losing a good

proportion of them if you can't organize their selection outside their working hours. Other issues related to societal awareness can be highlighted by some questions: Are the applicants computer literate enough to use computer testing without problems? Is it necessary to pay their travel costs to be sure that they will show up? Is it necessary to provide lodging? Is the time between application and enlistment comparable to an average civilian selection system? As one can imagine, the list could go on. The fundamental point is that it probably would be counterproductive to design an officer selection system without acknowledging the fact that the applicants typically live in a civilian world which has its own, inherent set of characteristics. A good way to be aware of the expectations, beliefs and problems of the applicant group is to use surveys.

3.2. Systemic approach

It is particularly interesting to see the selection problem within a systemic context. Considering that the ultimate goal is to provide proficient persons for vacant jobs, it is useful to see both selection and training as means to achieve this goal. When analyzing the competencies required to perform a job well, or, in other words, conducting a professional occupational analysis, it becomes possible to decide whether each of the competencies has to be present either before enlistment or at the end of the training period. The specific selection methodology must then ensure that applicants meet the selection requirements and the training- methodology can guarantee that the applicants meet the training requirements.

In terms of data processing, the selection and classification issue can be described as follows: when new candidates apply, they are often totally unknown to the Forces. During a short period of time, usually just a few days, a lot of useful information about them is gathered. All selection instruments measure some aspects of the individuals on a specific scale and with a particular error. This set of data can be seen as the competency profiles of

the applicants. In order to estimate the appropriateness of the enlistment of an individual, it is necessary to compare his or her profile with the requested competency profile for particular entries.

If one of the major parts in the selection process is to measure particular qualities in order to estimate whether an individual is able to become an officer, the subsequent question is clear: What

This question is far from easy. A typical approach consists of having some experts enumerating the qualities that are believed to be important for officers. Unfortunately, such an approach invariably leads to a very long list of qualities that probably describe Alexander the Great well, but not the kind of persons we are likely to encounter in a normal applicant group. In other words, the enumeration of desired officer qualities describes the archetypal officer rather than typical people and is therefore of little help in the selection and classification process.

In theory, one should perform a job analysis to find out what qualities are important to achieve success in the officer job. Those qualities could then be assessed during selection in order to predict later success. The difficulty of the implementation of such a model is that the jobs that junior officers have to perform are quite varied. In most Forces, it is normal that junior officers are eventually promoted to more senior positions, which will generally require an additional set of qualifications and qualities. Accordingly, it is hard to define a limited set of required attributes.

To have efficient Forces it is necessary to have an officer corps composed of individuals with a broad range of competencies. A limited set of quite universal abilities is probably essential for any officer. For instance, these can include physical fitness, intelligence, emotional stability and good communication skills. Beyond these, differentiation is the key issue. The idea that an individual can be well suited to perform any function is becoming more and more anachronistic. Modern HRM systems will therefore recognize the individual competency profiles and capitalize on them through smart allocation. Yet it is surprising to see how persistent this idea of 'the universal officer' is. This is due to the fact that although it definitely leads to mediocrity, it is by far the easiest – not the best – solution for HRM.

IV. THE QUALITIES OF AN OFFICER

It is reasonable to assume that most of society regards the military officer as a leader. This chapter will provide an overview of the qualities of an officer considering both the pragmatic, hands-on opinion of the selector and trainer and also informed, scientific analysis taken from various studies over many years. In modern military organizations, the effective leader will also need sound management skills, particularly during the peacetime environment. Accordingly, leadership, in its broader sense, will also be discussed, along with the links and the differences between Leadership and Management.

Whilst the military officer will usually need to possess qualities both in leadership and in management, there will be occasions when such qualities will, to a certain extent, be rather peripheral to pre-requisite professional skills such as, for example, Legal and Medical. Specialist, professional

requirements are not 'qualities' per se and, accordingly, they will not be discussed within the scope of this chapter. Officer qualities must be differentiated from other factors assessed at selection. Broadly defined, **these personal qualities (PQs) or Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) as they are called in Indian context refer to traits, states, needs, motives, goals, attitudes, interests, determining tendencies and general dispositions towards personal/social situations.** They are different from cognitive, intellectual factors and medical factors which will also be examined in that they usually form an intrinsic part of officer selection.

4.1. Leadership

Most officers lead a complex, technical life, with many highly specialized duties to perform. These duties are his responsibilities as an individual, and as a highly-trained, responsible member of an exacting profession. In addition, he has to lead his men. An officer does not exist for his individual, personal value, but for his ability to show the way and make his men want to follow. This is indeed the core of the officer's existence and, without it no hope exists of grappling with the tasks of command. It is seen at its simplest in warlike operations, but the power to lead smoothes the way of every task in every branch of a military organization, whether in war or peace. It breathes that vitality into an organization that will take a collection of men, buildings and machines, and waken them to purposeful, effective life. How is it done? First, by force of character. Clearly, people are not all born with the same characteristics, and some from their earliest years have felt the power to show others the way, and to influence their minds. We call them born leaders, and they are just that; born with strong, independent, assertive minds just as some are born with a good natural physique. But this is not to say that the characteristics of effective leadership cannot be acquired, just as a good physique can be cultivated with suitable effort.

In all of the words spoken and written about leadership, one fundamental point continually emerges; namely that, for most, the skills of leadership are not normally acquired instantly. The training of a leader, whether it be formal or through experiences, takes many years. Appropriate experiences are necessary, both to build and develop the leader's own force of character, and also to increase his ability to influence others.

4.2 So, what is leadership? In the simplest of terms, leadership can be defined as "art of getting things done" or, perhaps, the combination of example, persuasion and compulsion that makes the military subordinate do what is wanted of him. Clearly, in a military environment, things have to be done, but leadership is not just getting things done, but getting them done in the way in which the leader wants them done, in all conditions, and with the consent of the team, however grudging that consent may be. Some, if not many, military leaders do not lead effectively. They hold a title and they are figureheads at the head of the pack. Their leadership is a facade and there is little of substance behind the mask of authority defined by the badge of rank. Clothes of authority, however, cannot in themselves generate either ability or effectiveness as a leader. Clearly also, the abilities and effectiveness of any leader are only as strong as are perceived by those who are led.

4.3 Most military organizations have a highly structured bureaucracy. Unfortunately, in peacetime, these bureaucracies are often able to develop and promote the 'Empty Suits', an appropriate Americanism which describes individuals who dress and present well, who are able to identify the right, vital progressive routes for themselves, but who have only limited raw and genuine skills of leadership, save for one essential facet, that of not putting their feet wrong. Such individuals are, in essence, light-weight 'polystyrenes'; they merely fill a place. However, they remain clean-coated and trouble free, and thus they progress, whilst those with more genuine substance depart, often out of frustration. Unfortunately, polystyrene cannot "rock a boat", it cannot step out of line, it cannot stimulate change, it does not take risks and, certainly, it cannot inspire. In times of peace, the 'polystyrene' empty suits remain the guardians of the status quo, the keepers of the book of rules and the stifles of energy and initiative. Their reliability is without question, but so is their predictability. Simply, their leadership is mundane.

4.4 A real leader must be an agent for change, an inspirer and developer who is able to show the way forward, integrate people and ideas and be prepared to instigate rapidly the most effective option. Particularly, in times of tension or war, an effective leader will have to be able to bring both colleagues and subordinates along in a way that is at once identified as pragmatic, meaningful and militarily cost-effective.

Military and naval history is full of effective leaders such as Gen KM Cariappa, Gen SHFJ Manekshaw, George Washington, Wellington, Nelson, Bonaparte, Montgomery and Rommel who rose to the top, not by preferment or substantial support from acolytes, but simply because of their abilities, both strategic and personal, which enabled them to inspire their men and, most importantly, achieve military success.

4.5 In past conflicts, battles and wars were usually lengthy. Incompetent or irrelevant leaders could be, and usually were, identified, replaced and sometimes even shot! Inspirational leaders could develop their forte and earn recognition by success. However, most recent international wars have lasted for just a few weeks, and future wars can be expected to follow this trend. NATO planners are well aware that they will have to fight with the men and materiel that they have to hand and in stock. Perhaps even more significantly though, battles will have to be directed and fought by the leaders already appointed and in place. The 'polystyrene', empty-suit commander would be found wanting and no doubt would be identified in the aftermath during the soul-searching of 'Lessons Learned' – but at what cost?

In war, a leader should not have to compromise. In war, it is unlikely that a real leader would accept compromise. Yet the 'Empty Suit', whose life and career had developed out of frequent compromise and assent, would probably find the transition to the warrior's outlook in times of conflict an impossible hurdle.

V. LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The differentiation between a good leader and an effective manager are, to many, nebulous. Simply however, managers are usually measured by their performance within set, pre-determined parameters. Leaders should be judged by higher requirements, often not pre-set and, especially in times of conflict, usually surprising. That said, it is difficult to imagine

that an effective manager would not have some skills of leadership within his persona. Similarly, it would be surprising to find an effective leader who was bereft of management skills. However, the fundamental, singular difference between Management and Leadership is that Leadership is about effective change-making and the single-minded application and enforcement of that change, however unpalatable the change may be. Military leaders, overall, must have a breadth of long-term vision, be decisive and independent, act and stand firm, be a warrior, speak openly, plainly and frankly, learn quickly from defeats and mistakes, go forward with unswerving fortitude, and know and appreciate the requirements and interests of subordinates. The qualities and skills of a leader are unlikely to be totally intrinsic and they would have to be developed over many years and with much, appropriate experience. Yet, to a great extent, there would have to be an innate and solid foundation, coupled also with flair and charisma. Sometimes the qualities of leadership would be natural, but mostly they would metamorphose by effective, early nurturing and constant, later development. Conversely, management skills can be taught and they can also be learned. That said, management is not necessarily a routine process. Management problems vary considerably and a pre-set formula for effective management would rarely work. However, management can be effective without flair or charisma; genuine leadership, particularly at higher levels, cannot. De facto, leadership has to be flexible and imaginative with positive and often urgent, effective reaction to the unexpected. **In sum**, leadership requires extraordinary attributes above and beyond those of management and the simple, efficient organization of the status quo. However, that is not to suggest or infer that management is easy and leadership is necessarily difficult. The required capabilities, however, are different and can be summed up by the following list: UNCLASSIFIED Defense Technical Information Center Compilation Part Notice ADP010368 TITLE: Officer Qualities DISTRIBUTION: Approved for public release, distribution unlimited This paper is part of the following report: TITLE: Officer Selection [la Selection des officiers] To order the complete compilation report, use: ADA387133 The component part is provided here to allow users access to individually authored sections of proceedings, annals, symposia, ect. However, the component should be considered within the context of the overall compilation report and not as a stand-alone technical report.

5.1 The qualities of an officer have been analyzed and defined countless times, over many centuries. Probably, there is no single accurate description which can encompass completely these myriad views and opinions. This presentation will be a personal view on officer qualities by a UK officer with 2 five-year experiences in selecting officer cadets and then training then during their initial officer training. Discussion will revolve around the qualities of an officer and will try to differentiate the true, effective leader from those who sometimes wear the trappings of rank without, perhaps, having many real leadership qualities. There is often confusion between Management and Leadership and so the differences between the 2 styles will be briefly analyzed. Listed also for consideration will be the leadership qualities which are regarded as important by 4 separate NATO military academies. Clearly, these lists are for

the ideal, generic officer and it is interesting to note the difference in emphasis between the various lists of the different training establishments. The paper will finally move on to Officer Selection and highlight some of the qualities, raw or potential, which can be identified and assessed during an officer selection process. What is Leadership? Most officers lead a complex, technical life, with many highly-specialized duties to perform. These duties are his responsibilities as an individual, and as a highly-trained, responsible member of an exacting profession. In addition, an officer has to lead his men. An officer does not exist for his individual, personal value, but for his ability to show the way and make his men want to follow. This is indeed the core of the officer's existence and, without it, no hope exists of grappling with the tasks of command. It is seen at its simplest in warlike operations, but the power to lead smoothes the way of every task in every branch of a military organization, whether in war or peace. It breathes that vitality into an organization that will take a collection of men, buildings and machines, and waken them to purposeful, effective life. How is this done? First, and perhaps ideally, by innate force of character. Clearly, people are not all born with the same characteristics, and some from their earliest years have felt the power to show others the way, and to influence their minds. We call them born leaders, and they are just that; born with strong, independent, assertive minds just as some individuals are born with a good, natural physique. But this is not to say that the characteristics of effective leadership cannot be taught and acquired, just as a good physique can be cultivated with suitable effort. In all of the words spoken and written about leadership, one fundamental point continually emerges; namely that, for most, the skills and qualities of leadership are not normally acquired instantly. The training of a leader, whether it be formal or through experiences, takes many years. Appropriate experiences are necessary, both to build and develop the leader's own force of character, and also to increase his ability to influence others. So, what is Leadership? In the simplest of terms, Leadership can be defined as "getting things done" or, perhaps, the combination of example, persuasion and compulsion that makes the military subordinate do what is wanted of him. Clearly, in a military environment, things have to be done, but leadership is not just getting things done, but getting them done in the way in which the leader wants them done, in all conditions, and with the consent of the team, however grudging that consent may be. Some, if not many, military leaders do not lead effectively. They hold a title and they are figureheads at the head of the pack. However, their leadership is a facade and there is little of substance behind the mask of authority defined by the badge of rank. Clothes of authority, however, cannot in themselves generate either ability or effectiveness as a leader. Clearly also, the abilities and effectiveness of any leader are only as strong as are perceived by those who are led. Paper presented at the RTO HFM Workshop on "Officer Selection", held in Monterey, USA, 9-11 November 1999, and published in RTO MP-55.

5.2 Most military organizations have a highly-structured bureaucracy. bureaucracies are often able to develop and promote the 'Empty Suits', an appropriate euphemism which describes individuals who dress and present well, who are able to identify the right, vital progressive routes for themselves, but who have very limited raw and genuine skills of leadership, save

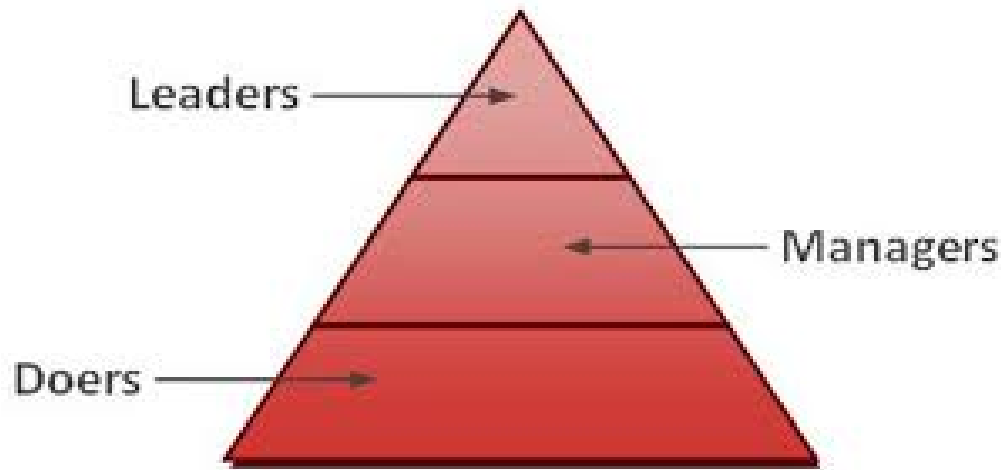
for one essential facet, that of not putting their feet wrong. Such individuals are, in essence, light-weight 'polystyrenes', they merely fill a place. However, they remain clean-coated and trouble free, and thus they progress, whilst those with more genuine substance depart, often out of frustration.

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warrior, speak openly, plainly and frankly, learn quickly from defeats and mistakes, go forward with unswerving fortitude, and know and appreciate the requirements and interests of subordinates. The qualities and skills of a leader are unlikely to be totally intrinsic and they would have to be developed over many years and with much appropriate experience. Yet, to a great extent, there would have to be an innate and solid foundation, coupled also with flair and charisma. Sometimes the qualities of leadership would be natural, but mostly they would metamorphose by effective, early nurturing and constant, later development. Conversely, management skills can be taught more easily and they can also be learned. That said, management is not necessarily a routine process. Management problems vary considerably and a pre-set formula for effective management would rarely work. However, management can be effective without flair or charisma; genuine leadership, particularly at higher levels, cannot. De facto, leadership has to be flexible and imaginative with positive and often urgent, effective reaction to the unexpected.

5.3 In **summary**, Leadership requires extraordinary attributes above and beyond those of management and the simple, efficient organization of the status quo. However, that is not to suggest or infer that management is easy and leadership is necessarily difficult. The required capabilities, however, are different and can be summed up by the following list: The Leader The Manager Inspires Thinks Motivates Initiates change Challenges Creates Probates Shapes actions Dictates Takes decisions Sets objectives Sets the pace Driving force Unmethodical Front of camera Inspires loyalty Apart from others Self sufficient Controls Does Organizes Adjusts to change Accepts current practice Administers Reacts Responds to circumstances Follows through Implements decisions Gets results Concentrates on procedure Coordinator Methodical Back stage Motivated by discipline Involved with others Depends on organization The Assessment of Leadership Qualities for Selection Over the years, every military organization concerned with leadership training and development has developed its own list of 'Leadership Qualities'. The following lists are just 4 examples from many: These lists were obtained some 5-6 years ago. It is possible that the lists have changed since and so, the sources have not been attributed. They are useful, however, in highlighting the differences of emphasis between differing armed forces and nations. A B 1. Bearing 2. Courage (Physical and Moral) 3. Decisiveness 4. Endurance 5. Initiative 6. Integrity 7. Judgment 8. Justice 9. Loyalty 10. Tact 11. Unselfishness 1. Confidence 2. Determination 3. Initiative 4. Awareness 5. Effective Intelligence 6. Decisiveness 7. Manner 8. Self-analysis C D 1. Loyalty 2. Professional Competence 3. Courage 4. Honesty 5. Common Sense 6. Good Judgment 7. Confidence 8. Initiative 9. Tact 1. Integrity 2. Knowledge 3. Courage 4. Decisiveness 5. Dependability 6. Initiative 7. Tact 8. Justice 9. Enthusiasm 10. Self Control 11. Humour 12. Personal Example 13. Energy 14. Enthusiasm 15. Perseverance 16. Decisiveness 17. Justice 10. Bearing 11. Endurance 12. Unselfishness 13. Loyalty 14. Judgment None of the lists are complete, yet none of the lists are inadequate. Opinions obviously vary as to qualities needed by a military leader and the particular emphasis placed on them. Clearly, the 'great' leader would have most of the qualities

in substantial strength, perhaps out of an amalgam from these lists. However, most leaders will be short of some of them. It can be seen that some qualities are common to nearly all lists, and they are the fundamental requirements for the military leader, to a certain extent regardless of rank. Significantly, you will note that none of the lists include flair, although initiative, perhaps in this case meaning the same, is in all of them. Similarly, none of the lists include charisma, which is sometimes difficult to define, but an easily identifiable quality seen in so many great leaders. Confidence, a vital quality in a leader, is omitted from some of the lists. Not that this is necessarily surprising or significant however, because it would be easy to argue that any leader with a substantial number of the qualities within any of the lists would, inherently, possess appropriate self-confidence. Confidence, however, has to be a vital quality and one promoted more by the leader than by anybody else. If the leader is certain of his own ability to lead, and this facet can certainly be developed and strengthened by training, and confirmed by experience, then the leader will also be able to generate confidence within the team, which also is so vital to success. In recognizing and accepting that no list of leadership qualities is likely to be complete, lists could probably be reduced without losing too much in the way of positive effect. commander in World War 2. listed the qualities he regarded as essential in a leader in the simple, following terms: Field Marshal Lord Harding, a British Absolute Fitness Complete Integrity Enduring Courage Daring Initiative Undaunted Willpower Knowledge Judgment Team Spirit Are all Officers Leaders? It would be an understandable misconception if all military officers were expected and required to be genuine leaders. Whilst true leadership, for some officers, is a paramount pre-requisite, in other officers, raw leadership skills are much less important. As the roles of the officer vary enormously, so does the preferred list of qualities required by the individual. However, the closer the officer is to the battle, with the consequent, greater risk to life, then the more dynamic and decisive the leader will need to be. Even in times of war, the rear echelons and the support staff, because of their comparatively, risk-free existence, will not usually need quite the abundance of raw qualities required by the warrior under fire. It follows therefore that, when identifying officer potential during the selection process, due regard should be given to the individual's planned future employment as an officer. For instance, the quality requirements for the potential platoon commander, fighter pilot or submariner will certainly be different to those pre-requisite qualities for the engineer or logistician. Officer Selection Whilst the differing roles of an officer will usually require a different emphasis on particular qualities most, if not all, NATO officer selection systems can aim to identify generic potential only. Later, professional training will then identify and develop the specific qualities to type. The word potential is significant. A selection system, by its very nature, has to have a programme which, at best, runs for just a few days.



LEADERS MANAGERS AND DOERS HEIRARCHY

VI. THE ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR SELECTION

Over the years, every military organization concerned with leadership training and development has developed its own list of 'Leadership Qualities'. The following lists are just 5 examples from many:

6.1 Indian Army

Factor – I

- (a) Effective Intelligence
- (b) Reasoning Ability
- (c) Organising Ability
- (d) Power of Expression

Factor – II Social Adjustment

- (e) Social Adaptability
- (f) Co-operation
- (g) Sense of Responsibility

Factor – III Social Effectiveness

- (h) Initiative
- (i) Self Confidence
- (j) Speed of Decision
- (k) Ability to Influence the Group
- (l) Liveliness

Factor – IV Dynamic

- (m) Determination
- (n) Courage
- (o) Stamina

6.2 US ARMY

- (a) Bearing
- (b) Courage (Physical and Moral)
- (c) Decisiveness
- (d) Endurance
- (e) Initiative
- (f) Integrity
- (g) Judgement
- (h) Justice
- (i) Loyalty

- (j) Tact
- (k) Unselfishness

6.3 ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE

- (a) Confidence
- (b) Determination
- (c) Initiative
- (d) Awareness
- (e) Effective Intelligence
- (f) Decisiveness
- (g) Manner
- (h) Self-analysis

6.4 CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

- (a) Professional Competence
- (b) Courage
- (c) Loyalty
- (d) Honesty
- (e) Common Sense
- (f) Good Judgement
- (g) Confidence
- (h) Initiative
- (i) Tact
- (j) Self Control
- (k) Humour
- (l) Personal Example
- (m) Energy
- (n) Enthusiasm
- (o) Perseverance
- (p) Decisiveness
- (q) Justice

6.5 US MARINE CORPS

- (a) Integrity
- (b) Knowledge
- (c) Courage
- (d) Decisiveness
- (e) Dependability
- (f) Initiative

- (g) Tact
- (h) Justice
- (i) Enthusiasm
- (k) Bearing
- (l) Endurance
- (m) Unselfishness
- (n) Loyalty
- (o) Judgment

None of the lists are complete, yet none of the lists are inadequate. Opinions vary as to qualities needed by a military leader and the particular emphasis placed on them. Clearly, the 'great' leader would have most of the qualities in substantial strength, perhaps out of an amalgam from the lists above. However, most leaders will be short of some of them. It can be seen that some qualities are common to nearly all lists, and they are the fundamental requirements for the military leader, to a certain extent regardless of rank. Significantly, none of the lists include flair, although initiative, perhaps in this case meaning the same, is in all of them. Similarly, none of the lists include charisma, sometimes difficult to define, but an easily identifiable quality seen in so many great leaders. Confidence, a vital quality in a leader, is omitted from some of the lists. Not that this is necessarily significant however, because it would be easy to argue that any leader with a substantial number of the qualities within any of the lists would, inherently, possess appropriate self-confidence. Confidence, however, has to be a vital quality and one promoted more by the leader than by anybody else. If he is certain of his own ability to lead, and this facet can certainly be developed and strengthened by training and confirmed by experience, then the leader will also be able to generate confidence within the team, which is so vital to success.

In recognizing and accepting that no list of leadership qualities is likely to be complete, lists could probably be reduced without losing too much in the way of positive effect. Field Marshal Lord Harding, a British commander in World War 2, listed the qualities he regarded as essential in a leader in the simple, following terms:

- (a) Absolute Fitness
- (b) Complete Integrity
- (c) Enduring Courage
- (d) Daring Initiative
- (e) Undaunted Willpower
- (f) Knowledge
- (g) Judgment
- (h) Team Spirit

9. In general, leadership qualities can be structured into 3 main areas: 'approach to people', 'approach to task', and 'individual orientation'. The figure below highlights this model of officers leadership structure. Each circle represents an important aspect of military officers' roles and some of the PQs that are relevant to each of those aspects. Of course, many of the PQs can be related to more than one area; this model is just a guide. It would be an understandable misconception if all military officers were expected and required to be genuine leaders. Whilst true leadership, for some officers, is a paramount pre-requisite, in

other officers, raw leadership skills are much less important. As the roles of the officer vary enormously, so does the preferred list of qualities required by the individual. However, the closer the officer is to the battle, with the consequent, greater risk to life, then the more dynamic and decisive the leader will need to be. Even in times of war, the rear echelons and the support staff, because of their comparatively, risk-free existence, will not usually need quite the abundance of raw qualities required by the warrior under fire. It follows therefore that, when identifying officer potential during the selection process, due regard should be given to the individual's planned future employment as an officer. The quality requirements for instance for the potential platoon commander, fighter pilot or submariner will probably be different to those pre-requisite qualities for the engineer or logistician. Whilst the differing roles of an officer will usually require a different emphasis on qualities most, if not all NATO officer selection systems can aim to identify generic potential only. Later, professional training will then identify and develop the specific qualities to type. The word potential is significant. A selection system, by its very nature, has to have a programme which, at best, runs for just a few days. Whilst some true qualities in a candidate may possibly emerge and be identified during the selection process, an effective assessment system has to be geared to look more for potential in a candidate than inherent attributes.

VII. OFFICER QUALITIES FOR THE GENERIC CANDIDATE

No selection process can ensure a substantial, guaranteed end-product. The period of examination will invariably be short and it will sometimes provide only a snapshot of the candidate's potential. However, past history, and the candidate's record of development, will also be a very useful initial guide. Aptitude testing can give notice of the candidate's suitability for an aptitude-dependant branch and then further assessment, by interview and additional exercises, will help to ascertain the candidate's overall profile. At interview, close examination should reveal the following qualities and traits:

a. **Appearance and Bearing.** The candidate's appearance, bearing, grooming, distinguishing features and general presentation should be readily apparent within the first impressions formed at interview.

b. **Manner and Impact.** The candidate's conduct throughout the interview, along with his courtesy, tact, confidence, force of personality, presence, poise, polish, humour and alertness will add to the overall impact.

c. **Speech and Powers of Expression.** Dialogue with the candidate will elicit his ability to communicate. The quality of grammar, vocabulary, diction, general fluency, logic, projection and animation will all indicate the overall effectiveness of expression.

d. **Activities and Interests.** The well-rounded candidate should have had a varied, interesting and fulfilling lifestyle. Whilst it is important to bear in mind the individual's background (that is, general opportunities and financial limitations) the range and extent of spare-time activities are important to indicate signs of commitment, depth of involvement, achievement, level of responsibility, spirit of adventure, determination, initiative,

enterprise and self-reliance within an overall balance of interests and pursuits.

e. **Academic Level and Potential.** Whilst minimum levels of academic qualifications will be set, the manner and ease of obtaining qualifications, together with the level of commitment, diligence and attitude towards study will all give indications of the individual's further academic potential.

f. **Breadth and Depth of Outlook.** The candidate's general awareness of military matters and current affairs should confirm a maturity of outlook and a general ability to reason, giving also some indications of general intellect.

g. **Motivation.** The candidate's determination towards his military goals should be ascertained. Sometimes the motivation will have previous substantiation. It will be important to ascertain that the candidate is clear about, and would relish, the commitment and dedication demanded of the officer corps.

These qualities are said to be carrying equal weight age in selection and are spelt out to be equal in Indian context. This is not true. With experience in Armed Forces, it is a well known fact that courage, co-operation and Sense of Responsibility coupled with Reasoning Ability and Social Adjustment are the most important factors in a war, hence, must carry more weight age than the other qualities. War diaries of units are testimony to these issues.

VIII. ORGANIZATION

In setting up an officer selection system one has to deal with a number of practical issues. This section will review and comment on a number of them.

12.1. Qualifications of personnel involved.

A professional selection system requires professional personnel. This is quite obvious yet not always realized. In particular, there is the issue of who is conducting the selection interviews. Should psychologists be used, providing that they have sufficient knowledge of the jobs they assess for, or should we use officers who would be trained as interviewers? This debate should conclude in favour of the psychologist. The only argument in favour of the officers is that of their experience in the military. The question is then how relevant that experience is. In most cases, it will be limited to a more or less specific trade and bears the risk of being completely obsolete. In such conditions, the military experience could prove to be rather counter-productive. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that a psychologist is much better trained to detect indicators of possible personality and motivational problem areas. Of course, a better solution, but an expensive one, is to **have both psychologists and officers conduct an interview** and then integrate their findings. This is **presently being practiced in India** and will not be commented upon further.

12.2. One tiered or multiple tiered selection process?

If the Forces are lucky enough to have a much larger number of applicants than is needed, the question arises of how to reduce that number in an appropriate way to prevent the selection centres being either unnecessarily large or unable to cope with their workload. Another reason to reduce that number is that it is

unethical to impose a long and intense selection program on applicants for whom it is quite obvious from the beginning that their probability of enlistment is minimal. A typical approach to counter this consists of including cheaper screening instruments such as psychometric tests in the beginning of the selection program. A cut-off score can then be set to reduce the number of applicants that would be allowed to continue the selection process. Measurement of general intelligence is usually the number one favorite to play this role. A word of caution is necessary however. The cut-off score should be set in such a way that enough applicants are allowed to continue. One should anticipate the proportion of applicants that will be rejected at each stage of selection, leaving sufficient applicants to allow a sound choice in the end. **The screening process in India needs modification since it has not been found to be reliable, valid and practical.** The reasons have been projected in the form of indicators.

12.3. Sequential or batch classification.

In general, when designing a selection system, it is necessary to choose between sequential or batch classification. Sequential classification means that the final decision on the acceptance and the assignment of an applicant is made immediately after the completion of the last selection test, generally while the applicant is still on the premises of the selection facility. Batch classification refers to the system where all applicants undergo the selection programme and only when all data are available from all applicants are the final decisions made. In the case of officer selection, one has to recognize the fact that, in most countries, officer induction is only organized once or twice a year. In such circumstances, it would be rather unwise to use sequential classification because it is known that the overall quality of the accepted applicants is better when all could be compared during the decision making process.

12.4. The tri-service issue.

Most countries have different Services for which they recruit officers. In some countries, such as India and the United States, recruiting for the different Services is organized by the Services in a rather independent way. The candidates apply to become an officer in a particular Service. In other countries, the applicants just apply to become officers and give their preferences regarding the Services they want to join. This is what is called the 'tri-service' approach, referring to the classical three Services; army, navy and air force. Both approaches have advantages and drawbacks. The advantage of what we will call the US system is that the selection system can be better tailored to the needs of the different Services. On the other hand, an applicant who fails when applying for one Service will have to start from scratch if s/he wants to apply for another Service. The tri-service approach on the other hand recognizes the fact that the selection criteria for the officers for the different Services are quite similar and that, among the applicants, many want to become officers but don't care too much in what Service they will serve. By having them taking the same selection procedure, selection data is collected that can be weighted differently for the individual Services and the system can capitalize on the whole applicant population to find the best overall solution for the Forces. In general, one should apply following rule: if there is a

significant overlap in the applicant populations for the different Services, it might be more efficient to move to a tri-service approach.

12.5. The order of the different parts in the selection process.

As the selection process includes several selection tools, the sequence in which they have to be administered must be considered. This is especially true when some tools lead to rejection of applicants who don't meet certain standards. Two rules of thumb apply. The first says that the most selective selection tools have to be put first. These are the tools that reject the largest proportion of the applicants who are examined with the tool. The second rule says that the cheapest selection tools should be first. The system designer will have to balance these rules to organize the selection program. There might however be some additional considerations that have to be taken into account. Imagine for instance that the selection program includes brain mapping or a full spine radiography and that this is a very selective part of the process. It would be clearly advisable to set the radiography at the end of the process because of the radiation risks. Brain mapping being a slow and expensive process may not be a practical solution. The selection system officers/manager might also be tempted to have different selection sequences for different applicants. This would allow him to use 'parallel-processing' of applicants. For instance, when applicants arrive in the morning at the selection centre, half of the group could be sent to the medical assessment while the other half take computerized tests. After a certain time, they would switch activities. This increases the efficiency of the selection centre but is acceptable only if the sequence in which the applicants are examined with the selection tools does not influence the measurements. Imagine for instance that some applicants take physical fitness tests before lunch while others take them just after lunch. It is likely that the group performing after lunch will have lower results. As this is not necessarily due to lower aptitude, this is not acceptable. Moreover, the organizational limitations may not permit this set up.

12.6. Selection in one or more locations?

The easiest and soundest solution for officer selection is the centralized one: all applicants are processed in the same facility. Yet there are reasons why one could consider the decentralized alternative. Among these, the obvious one is that it can be difficult and expensive to bring the applicants to a centralized selection center. Reasons not to decentralize include cost and manning related aspects and methodological concerns. Methodologically, standardization is at stake. How could it be possible to guarantee that the applicants are treated in the same way in different locations? Some aspects are relatively easy to solve. Computer testing for instance can be quite similar in one place or another. It would be harder however to standardize medical assessment, interviews or group observation tasks. In general, the difficulty in standardizing the selection tools is directly related to the proportion of interpretation and subjectivity involved in the tool. Although the instructions will be identical for the different locations, it is likely that the assessment practice will evolve independently in the different settings. It is therefore important both to monitor the score distributions from the different locations and also to implement

systems to reduce the possible lack of standardization. These can include:

- (a) Centralized training of the assessors;
- (b) Supervising personnel traveling from one location to the other to insure the consistent use of the selection tools in the different locations;
- (c) Frequent rotation or exchanges among the assessors of the locations.

In making up his/her mind and decide about the centralization issue, the officer selection system officer/manager should balance different things: The additional costs due to the organization of decentralized selection (infrastructure, additional personnel, functioning costs); The inevitable loss of standardization and the costs involved with trying to minimize the loss; The benefits for the applicants and related to that, the effect on their application behavior; The savings from reduced reimbursement of travel or lodging costs.

12.7. The image of the Military for applicants that are not selected.

In the situation where many applicants are not accepted for enlistment, the selection system manager should be aware of the role that the selection system has in conveying a positive image of the Military to the civilians. In countries where there is no compulsory military service, many civilians have only very few direct contacts with the Military. Of course, all applicants have a certain opinion about the Military, usually a positive one – otherwise they wouldn't apply – but frequently only based upon the image projected by the media or the opinions in their immediate surroundings. It is important for the corporate image – and later recruitments – that even the applicants who are not selected return home with the feeling of a positive experience. This is best achieved through the use of modern infrastructure and equipment, efficient processing, professional assessment quality, openness and communication and client-friendliness.

12.8. The role of the applicant in the selection process.

A good officer selection system should consider the applicants as partners in the process of finding the most appropriate person for the vacancies. This is a different philosophy to the one that once prevailed in which the applicants were more treated like cattle that had to be led through an anonymous and cold selection machine. Considering the applicants as partners will be accomplished by a series of actions and attitudes such as:

- (a) Consider the applicants as adults and treat them accordingly;
- (b) Call upon their sense of responsibility and make them responsible for as much as possible;
- (c) Provide enough information about the organization of the selection process and the decision making;
- (d) Give the applicant feedback on how s/he performs on the different tasks in terms that s/he understands;
- (e) Explain the applicant's options at all stages of the selection process;
- (f) Respect the applicant's choices;
- (g) Respect the confidentiality of the selection data;

(h) Offer the possibility of an in depth debriefing for applicants who fail;

12.9. Traveling, meals and lodging expenses.

The officer selection system officer/manager is very well aware of what it takes the Forces to organize the selection. S/he also should be aware of the costs to the applicants. In comprehensive officer selection systems, it is not unusual to require several days for selection. Moreover, it is often necessary to travel long distances to attend the selection center. One should also be aware of the growing tendency that many applicants consider becoming officer as just one of several career options. It is indeed increasingly frequent to see officer applicants applying for other jobs or universities simultaneously. This increases their overall 'selection-load' (as well as their selection training!). In such circumstances, applicant resource limitations can interfere with the officer selection process. If applying for officer selection these factors might be considered as overriding and therefore the potential candidate might not even apply. Whilst this might not be an issue when there are a sufficient number of applicants it is certainly a point when propensity to apply is low. What can the system manager do to reduce the burden imposed on the applicants? Here are a few tips:-

(a) If possible, reimburse travel costs;

(b) Alternatively, organize as much selection activity as possible close to where the applicants live (decentralization of the activities);

(c) If the selection procedure lasts for more than one day, plan the activities on successive days and provide free lodging (in military buildings or in nearby hotels);

(d) Use the applicant's time efficiently. It can be acceptable to have an officer selection program lasting several days but not if during these days, the applicant's main activity is waiting;

Reject applicants early if it is clear that s/he will not be accepted in the end. Put the most selective selection tools in the beginning; If possible, don't oblige the applicant to produce documents for which s/he has to pay or that take time to get. **In India, an AC III tier travel is reimbursed for first time attempters only.**

12.10. Allow enough resources for Research and Development

Selection systems require a lot of resources; infrastructure, highly specialized personnel, sophisticated equipment and functioning budgets. In periods of budget restriction and downsizing, managers are frequently under pressure to reduce costs. Managers who lack vision could probably be tempted to cut costs in the research and development (R&D) area which is often seen as of no immediate contribution to the day-to-day life of the selection business. However, this would be an unforgivable error. The reason is simple and well illustrated by selection systems that have lacked sufficient R&D capability in the past. The R&D personnel dealing with selection systems are there to insure the development or acquisition of new selection tools and to maintain the quality of existing tools. Their actions encompass the monitoring of the individual tools (score distribution, internal consistency, reliability, validity, bias, norms, utility, etc), the quality assessment of the overall selection system (set of tools in the system, decision making process,

classification, system validity and utility) and the introduction of new tools when appropriate. Officer selection systems that discarded R&D are often using old selection tools for which very little current knowledge is available along with obsolete decision-making processes. For the system manager, that means that s/he allows the use of resources to perform the selection activities without knowing whether they are useful or could sustain scrutiny. That looks very much like poor management practice indeed.

13. Issues on how to make the right decisions

Once information is gathered from the applicants, decisions have to be made whether or not the applicant will be accepted for enlistment and, if so, for what specialty. In making these decisions, two types of selection errors can occur. We can accept applicants who will not become successful performers or we can reject applicants who would. Strategies exist to set acceptance standards based upon the quantified effects of both types of errors. It is still a widespread practice that some decisions are taken before the normal completion of the selection process. These decisions usually reject applicants who fail to meet certain cut-off scores and accordingly prevent them proceeding with the subsequent parts of the selection process. This leads to three comments concerning the use of cut-off scores. The first is related to the justification of such cut-off scores or any decision in rejecting an applicant, that is only based upon a single source of information or measurement result. The question to be addressed is: "are you absolutely sure that this applicant cannot turn out to be proficient in any of the vacant positions?" Second, having the standard error of measurement in mind, and knowing that relationships between selection instruments and performance ratings are essentially probabilistic, one realizes that the choice of a cut-off score can be extremely hard and should be done with extreme caution. Third, one must be aware of the combined effects of multiple cut-offs. That effect is cumulative and this affects both the number and the quality of the applicants that are still in the running at the end of the selection process. Multiple cut-off scores guarantee that an applicant meets a series of minimal requirements but nothing more. Too many cut-offs are in favor of applicants with 'flat' competency profiles and are a risk for applicants with a much higher average competence but having a problem in a specific area.

Setting a cut-off score that eliminates a large proportion of the applicants checkmates the usefulness of the other selection-tools and distorts dramatically the intended result. The person in charge of the overall selection process must pay great attention to this. In many cases, officer selection systems feature different elements such as psychometric tests, medical exams, physical tests and academic exams that are organized in a rather independent way and for which cut-off scores are proposed by different groups of specialists. Mainly, there is a tendency to over-emphasize the importance of one's own field and therefore suggesting very severe cut-offs. It is then the responsibility of the person in charge of the overall system to assess the appropriateness of the different cut-off scores. This is not easy because of the disparity of the fields involved and the susceptibility of many specialists. Statistics can help a lot in making sound decisions.

Besides rejection of applicants through the use of cut-off scores, which from a methodological point of view really should be limited to a minimum, we have to make more complex decisions. To make these, it is useful to work with holistic competency-profiles. In order to make the appropriate decisions, it will be necessary to quantify the desirability or usefulness of accepting an applicant for a vacant position. That quantification will be referred to as the payoff-value. The computing of payoff values for each applicant-job combination is not an easy task. The major difficulties arise from the differences in scales used for the measurements during the selection process (nominal, ordinal, interval), the differences in measurement quality of the selection tools (reliability and validity), the difficulty in establishing the relative importance of data originating from disparate fields and the integration of applicant preferences.

Once payoff values are computed on comparable scales for all applicant-job combinations, it becomes possible to make the appropriate final decisions. In simple situations, where all vacant jobs are the same, a one-dimensional ranking of the applicants is sufficient to identify the applicants who will be accepted. From the moment where different kinds of jobs are vacant, the method of simple ranking is no longer the best solution. For instance, this is the case when a single ranking is done and where applicants can choose between the different jobs according to their ranking. This yields clearly sub-optimal results. More sophisticated classification methods are then required. These are available¹³ and make it possible to maximize the payoffs for the group of selected candidates.

Although models exist for that kind of complex decision-making, the use of selection boards is still widespread in officer selection. Without going into details here, it should be said that selection boards can be valuable in their role of assessing certain applicant qualities, but their use should be avoided in decision making processes involving much data and many persons within the selection process.

In India, candidates are selected based on a table of selection which has gives skewed values when applied to a candidate's main scores and conference scores. The percentage of marks allotted by the same assessor to the same candidate during the conference is manifold than the percentage of marks scored by the candidate when he has been given marks by individual assessors earlier. This anomaly needs to be set right.

IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF A SELECTION SYSTEM

The quality of any officer selection system needs to be assessed. There are two good reasons for this. Firstly, one needs to know, rather than believe or hope, that the right applicants are selected and assigned to jobs for which they are best suited. This is of paramount importance to the military commanders since the quality of the officer corps is vital for the conduct of military operations which can have dramatic consequences both for the military and their country as illustrated in Norman Dixon's book *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*. Failure to conduct

a good professional selection for officers is an unforgivable error. The second reason for the continuous evaluation of the quality of a selection system, is the increasing demand to justify selection decisions made concerning individual applicants or specific groups. In the end, such justification cannot be sustained unless there is verifiable evidence of the predictive validity of the selection system.

One critical decision concerning the quality assessment is the choice of external criteria defining who is a 'good officer' and who is performing less well. In many cases, the choice will be a trade-off between relevance, timeliness and measurement quality. Training results for instance, have the advantage of being pretty well standardized and available shortly after the selection. This ensures that feedback loops are kept short but they are usually of very little relevance because they often over-emphasize academic skills. Since the choice of the external criteria will in the end determine what kind of applicants will be accepted, it is normal that the choice of these criteria should be made by the overall personnel policy makers. It is obvious, but not always that evident, that the chosen criteria should be quantified as a sound measurement and that such data needs to be made available to the persons in charge of the selection system quality assessment.

A system should not rely on a single external criterion since none is perfect but rather it ought to consider a series of quality indicators. These should include both quality indicators independent of officer performance assessments and a representative set of indicators of the performance of the officers. Whatever the result of the quality assessment, one should always consider ways to improve the selection system. This needs to be done by trying alternatives for the different selection tools and for the use of those tools in the decision making process. In doing so, one has always to remember not to use a new tool in the decision making process before its quality has been proven.

X. THE FAIRNESS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

A recent concern related to selection in general is that of fairness for the applicants. This is especially relevant for officer selection, since the government organizes selection and the relevance of the officer corps for the general population is often questioned. Special interest is devoted to the adverse impact of elements in the selection process for females and ethnic minorities. In this area, two different situations need to be identified, one in which different groups have the same level of abilities but different scores due to biased measurement tools and the second in which different groups indeed have different levels of ability.

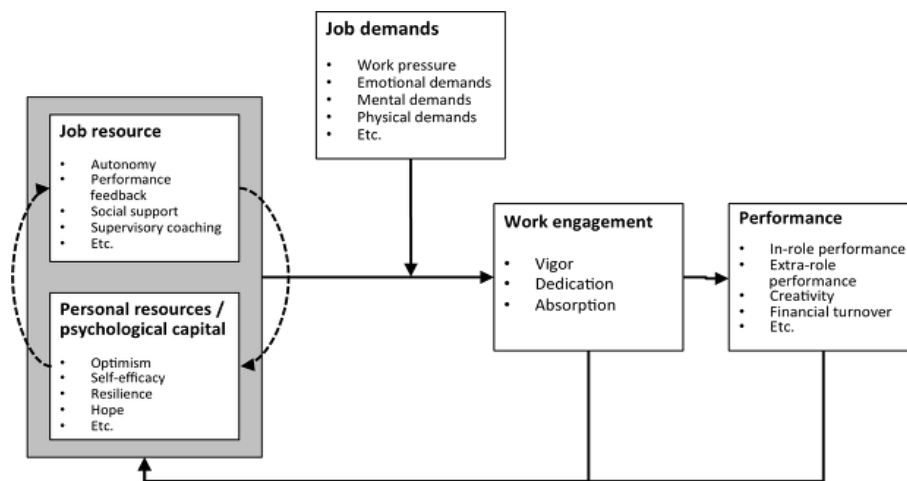
The first deals with the situation in which different groups are known, or at least supposed to have similar aptitudes or characteristics but different measurement scores, because of inadequate measurement-tool design. In such situations, better measurement tools should be designed. As a short-term solution, one could at least take group differences into account when estimating individual performance. A totally different situation occurs when different groups are known to have dissimilar aptitudes or characteristics. For instance, if the height of an individual is considered, it will be noted that the male population is, on average, taller. This is not due to inadequate measurement

tools. The scientific approach to such a situation is to start from the occupational analysis (assuming this analysis was not biased!) and select For example the Belgian Armed Forces Psychometric Model

The best fitting person independently of gender or minority membership. Another approach that often prevails against the scientific one is based on ethical, philosophical, societal or political grounds. That approach states that females, or persons belonging to certain minorities, must have fair chances of being selected The possibility of lower scores. Such policies can lead

to a specific quota for females or minority members. Although such an intention would be praiseworthy, one should realize that this is realized at the expense of optimal selection and classification. An attempt to avoid quotas without having adverse impact would be to focus on competency profiles and incorporate in them the aptitudes for which females or minority members are known to perform equally or better (such as physical agility versus strength, sustained attention, etc).

JOB DEMANDS RESOURCES MODEL OF WORK ENGAGEMENT



JD-R Model of Work Engagement (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, p. 187)

XI. COST & BENEFIT CONCERNS

Some will look at an officer selection system from a purely cost and benefits point of view. This makes some sense. Cost and benefits issues are important. Selection and classification decisions are based upon a limited set of observations and measures. It therefore can be argued that a better assessment can be done during training. Naturally, this is provided that all applicants would be allowed to start the training. In situations where the selection ratio is close to one, this might be considered: there would no selection, and all applicants would start the training and suitability would be assessed during training. This is the situation that occurs in Austria where compulsory military service exists and where officer candidates are assessed while performing their training as draftees. This system is worthy of comment. First, imagine what would happen if there is no medical screening and, for instance, there are medical problems during the physical training such as back-injuries or cardio-vascular accidents. What would be the consequences for the applicant and for the Forces? Can the Forces be sued? If that is the case, this throws a new light to the cost-benefits topic. Second, there are social aspects that need to be considered. While it is acceptable to ask an applicant to spend

a few hours to a couple of days for the officer selection process, it would be hard to require them to spend weeks or even months and maybe even quit another job before being sure that they are accepted.

In the more frequently occurring situation in which the number of vacancies is set in advance and the number of applicants is significantly larger, the cost-benefits discussion needs to be addressed. The zero-costs approach would consist of accepting the first candidates who apply until all positions are filled or, alternatively, randomly select the required number from amongst the applicants. Clearly these solutions would yield very poor results. Beyond the zero-costs approach, selection tools will be added to the procedure. The addition of each tool implies costs, additional burden on the applicants and the increased loss of applicants if the tool leads to rejection. On the benefit side, good selection tools reduce the risks of diverse problems after enlistment.

How far should one go then with adding selection tools? Let us consider an example in the medical selection area and use two well-known movies to illustrate the point. The first is 'Schindler's List'. There is a scene in which one can see the 'medical selection' of hundreds of persons in a prisoner camp in Poland. They have to undress and are quickly screened by a

person in the white outfit of a doctor. The 'doctor' decides, in a matter of seconds, whether the person is fit for labor or not. This selection is probably much better than random selection; it is very cheap but obviously not very accurate. The other extreme is shown in the movie 'The Right Stuff'. A good portion of that movie is devoted to the medical selection of the first astronauts. This selection is very sophisticated, expensive and time consuming and puts a lot of strain on the applicants. The result is that the selected astronauts are 'guaranteed' to be very healthy. When we consider officer selection, we will probably want a medical selection somewhere in between the two extremes. It is important to realize that there is an optimum balance between very unsophisticated, cheap and quick selection procedures and the highly sophisticated, expensive and time-consuming one. Moving from the cheap end to the expensive one is not linear however. For instance, a nurse who asks the applicant to read characters on a wall-chart and performs a simple color perception test can do the assessment of the visual perception. Alternatively, an ophthalmologist can perform the same assessment using a set of sophisticated tools. Here, it is quite doubtful whether the increase of assessment quality would compensate for the tremendous increase in costs when using the specialist in considering the overall purpose of officer selection. Also, the increase of selection accuracy yield by the addition of a selection tool is dependent on the other tools already present in the procedure. In technical terms, we speak of the incremental validity of a selection tool, or of the usefulness of a selection tool. As put by **Blum and Naylor**, "The utility of a selection device is the degree to which its use improves the quality of the individuals selected beyond what would have occurred had that device not been used.". Note that we took an example in the medical selection area, but the same phenomena occur in all fields of selection.

If an acceptable external criterion exists, and the statistical relations between the selection data and that criterion are known, it becomes possible to use statistical techniques to determine what selection tools are worth while adding to a selection procedure. Regression models allow the construction of a selection battery step-wise for instance, only adding a tool when it increases the multiple correlation with the external criterion. It is then up to the selection system officer/manager to evaluate whether the increased predictive validity compensates for the additional costs resulting from the use of the extra selection tool.

XII. CONCLUSIONS

Given that each officer selection system is deeply embedded in its general legal, societal, political and military context, it is unrealistic to pursue the implementation of a single, universal optimal selection system. Yet, a number of rules and methods are invariably required in order to ensure that a particular officer selection system is sound and appropriate. The respect of these rules and methods can only be guaranteed by professional specialists because of the complexity involved. In one of the first accounts of selection for the military, it was God himself who dictated the selection process. But since He doesn't appear to be involved in this area any more, a whole set of specialists have to do their best to replace Him! These include the personnel needed to assess the different competencies (nurses, medical doctors,

psychologists, sports monitors, and teachers) and the personnel involved with setting up and managing the overall system (I/O psychologists, operations research specialists, legal advisers, statisticians, computer specialists and personnel policy makers). The ultimate decisions concerning any selection system have to be made by the personnel policy makers, not by the personnel in charge of selection or training, since any selection system is only a - very powerful - tool placed at the disposal of the Human Resource Managers.

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