Model for Recruiting Servicemen in the Armed Forces

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Abstract. **In the decades of transition from conscript to professional armed forces, a number of unforeseen issues arose for the armed forces. One of the unresolved, but the most important and worrisome among them, is how the armed forces can attract and retain motivated personnel from the open labour market to fill the vacancy vacuum. Based on conducted research on the motivation of military personnel, the article examines a model for attracting them in the armed forces, analysing each of the elements that make it up and the interrelationships between them. This will contribute to enriching existing knowledge about work motivation and developing strategies for attracting and retaining military personnel.**

Keywords: armed forces, motivation, recruiting, servicemen.

I.   INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, employee motivation has been an issue of increasing importance. The military is no exception to the problem, and in it, the issues related to the shortage of qualified personnel are common to organisations in the private sector.

A review of previous research [1], [2], [3] on the issues of motivating military personnel showed that problems with personnel motivation concern two main areas: the attraction of military personnel and their retention in military service. Each of these areas embodies a component of the general motivation of military personnel; thus, they should be considered interrelated. The specificity of the activities and the complexity of the factors in each of the components requires its separate consideration for a more detailed and understandable description of its constituents. Therefore, one of the components will be proposed and described in the current work – the model for attracting military personnel, and in the next one, the model for retention in the armed forces.

II.   MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the analysis of the theoretical and practical experience of the conducted researches [4], [7], [8], a model for motivating candidates to join the armed forces is proposed. The model is presented in Fig. 1 and illustrates the factors influencing the behavioural choice to enter the armed forces that can predict and influence the behaviour of job seekers.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The model is borrowed from proposals in the NATO study [13] and adapted to the specifics of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. In this model of motivation to enlist, the behavioural variable is called 'job search'. Job searching can take many forms (e.g. applying, accepting a job offer, completing initial military training, etc.), depending on the potential candidate's stage of employment. According to this model, a person's intention to act is assumed to be the immediate antecedent of his behaviour, and this intention, in turn, is predicted by the degree to which a person has a positive or negative attitude toward the search. The model also accounts for various indicators that are hypothesized to be determinants of candidate attraction. These indicators refer to people's personal characteristics (beliefs, perceptions, expectations) and are believed to influence behaviour and/or intention. The model further relies on principles from information and communication theory [9]. Applied in the context of recruitment, communication can be represented as conveying a message to a target group of (potential) candidates through a specific source or medium [5]. The content of the message refers to information about the available jobs (e.g. type of work to be performed, level of pay) and the seeking organisation (size, type, industry), which may play a crucial role in the decision-making process of the people. The message is usually conveyed

and controlled by the organisation seeking to recruit and attract new employees. In addition, people receive information about the organisation from other sources (e.g. word of mouth, general public), not all of which are under the direct management of the organisation.

Fig. 1. Model for Recruiting Servicemen in the Armed Forces

External factors at an organisational level	Intrinsic factors at a personal level	External factors at a personal level

Sources of information
Intrinsic:
- Advertising recruitment (general and specific advertisement)
- Internet page of the organisation
- Recruiters' behaviour and training
- Military career centres/Military districts
- Methods of application and selection
- Field visit
- Credibility of job information
- Military training classes in schools

External:
- Publicity in the media, the Internet, and the public
- Military rituals
- 'from mouth to mouth'

Leading personality characteristics
- Values
- Needs
- Abilities and qualities
- Education
- Aims
- Self-respect
- Self-efficiency
- Need for achievement

Preparedness of the candidate
- Compliance with the organisation
- Compliance with the job

Expectation of appointment

Candidate's expectations on the recruitment process
- attraction; - selection

Perceived opportunities

Behaviour
- To the organisation
- For job search

Job search intention

Family and family traditions

Image of the organisation
- Professional
- Institutional

Public attitudes to the job
- For reputation
- For social support

Family and school education

Level of development of civil-military relations

Job and organisation characteristics
- Pay and benefits
- Training opportunities
- Service commitment
- Career development opportunities
- Job security
- Location

Feedback

Job search
- Visiting a career centre
- Applying
- Passing a job selection exam
- Accepting a job offer
- Reporting to work on the specified date
- Doing a basic military training course
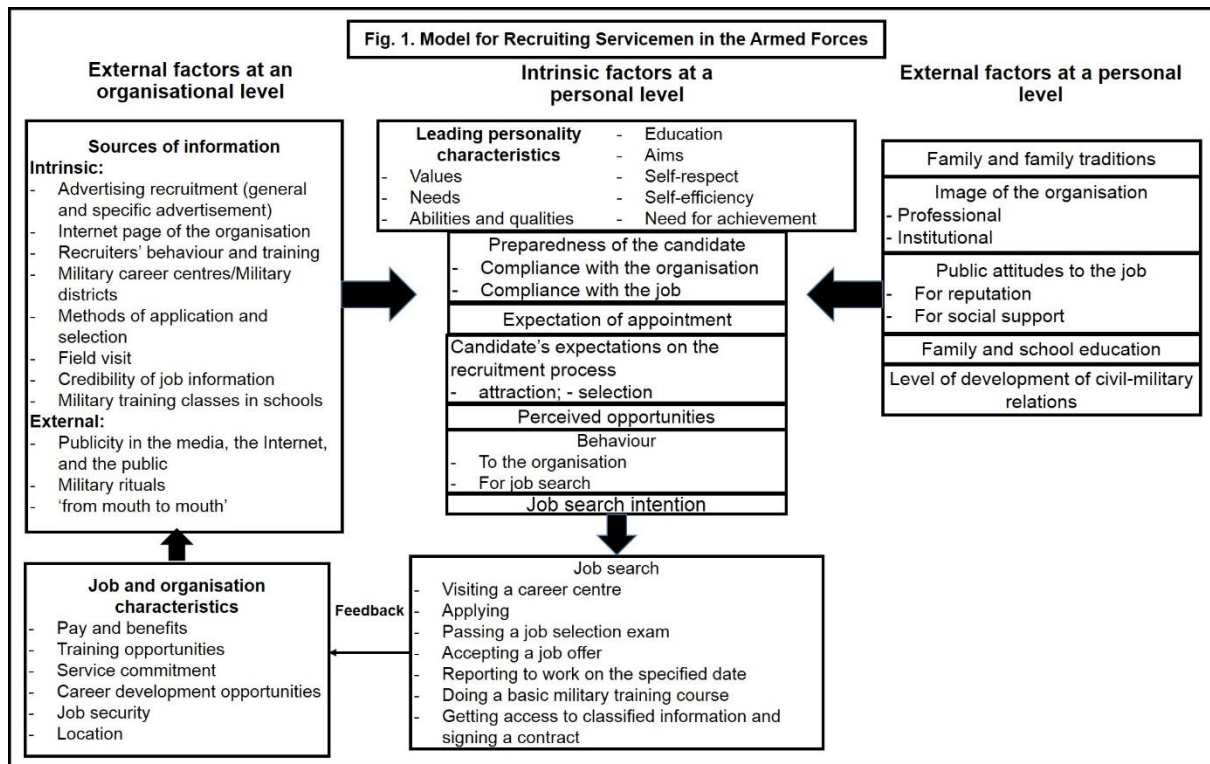- Getting access to classified information and signing a contract

Fig. 1.　　　Model for Recruiting Servicemen in the Armed Forces

The analysis of the results on this issue shows that the motivation for choosing the military profession is a complex composite of many and various interrelated factors connected with the experience of the interviewees and the specific situation in the armed forces of different countries.

Ultimately, personal choice depends on the decisive impact of the personal characteristics distinguishing individuals (values, needs, education, goals, etc.) and guiding their behaviour in the recruitment model. Each factor or group of factors in the model is described and supported by theoretical or empirical data from military or civilian sources. When describing the model, we will focus attention not only on the individual constituents, but also on the connections between them.

Components of organisational attractiveness

In general, recruitment efforts influence people's behaviour by providing them with application information, referrals to the organisation, visiting the organisation's website or on-site. In the current model, 'job search' is used to link to different possible behaviours. Some of the application behaviours occur in the initial stage of recruitment while others, such as accepting a job offer, are typical of the later stages of recruitment. When considering the military recruitment system, we identified the following stages: attraction, application, individual training, and acceptance into military service. Refracted through the prism of the considered model, these stages include: attempts to persuade potential candidates to visit military career centres (military districts, reception centres) and to apply for military personnel (attraction); attempts to retain interested candidates by encouraging them to submit application documents, participate and win a competition (application); and finally – persuading the willing candidates to accept the offered position in the military and report to work on the specified day of entry (acceptance into service). Individual training is an element that, according to the current legislation [14], is carried out after signing the contract for military service, with a clause for termination in case of unsuccessful training.

Going through this recruitment cycle, candidates acquire new information about the organisation through various sources. This emphasizes the importance of having a feedback element in the model to ensure that information about the organisation is received and updated in the recruitment process. The forms for receiving feedback are different. An option is filling out a survey in case an applicant renounces at any stage of the application process. In addition, in order to obtain up-to-date information about the entire recruitment system, a survey of the opinions of everyone who has passed through the system and entered the service is imperative. The analysis of the information obtained could be used to improve the system and maintain active feedback on the overall recruitment process.

Factors affecting the search for a military profession

In the model, predictive factors are distinguished at the organisational level and at the personal level. Organisational-level factors refer to the real environment in terms of organisational and work characteristics. Personal-level factors refer to the perceived environment, in terms of the individual's subjective interpretation of work and organisational characteristics. Most of the job search factors can be classified according to 'implicit theories' of job selection by Behling, Labovitz and Gainer [10] as: objective factors, subjective factors, and critical review of the organisation's information sources. The objective factors approach suggests that job search decisions are based on an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of objective job indicators and organisational attributes (e.g. salary, type of job, size of organisation). Objective factors are related to the real environment. The subjective factors approach suggests that job search is based on the perceived confluence between the individual (e.g. personality characteristics, needs, values, education) and the image of the organisation (professional and institutional). They refer to the subjective interpretation of the organisation based on available information. In considering the recruiting model, objective factors will be taken as equivalent to organisational-level factors, and subjective factors will be treated as equivalent to personal-level factors. A critical view of organisational information sources suggests that potential candidates often have insufficient information to make informed job choices, so they rely on early recruitment contacts to discriminate between organisations.

In recruiting, the main role is played by the characteristics of the organisation and vacant jobs. In considering these types of characteristics, we will pay particular attention to their impact on attracting candidates. It should be noted, however, that individuals make important distinctions between job attractiveness and organisational characteristics. A leading role in the candidate's behavioural choice is given to the internal personal characteristics (needs, values, abilities, qualities, education, etc.), which will be considered subsequently.

Characteristics of the organisation and work

The analysis of the results of the conducted research on the motivation for choosing a military profession convincingly showed the importance of external factors in the form of organisational characteristics, such as the amount of remuneration, early retirement, security and predictability of the workplace, etc. In addition, internal factors related to patriotic motives, value system, personality characteristics, and unsatisfied needs have a significant influence on the choice of profession. It should not be forgotten that external factors are the basis for the emergence of internal ones. Therefore, without external incentives, dissatisfaction would arise in the individual, leading to an inability to generate genuine internal motivation, which would make attracting and later retaining personnel impossible.

Many organisational characteristics are visible and discoverable to the majority of job seekers. At the beginning of the job search process, in case organisational characteristics are not visible, they can be found relatively easily through recruitment advertisements and brochures in electronic and print media as well as in the Employment Agency. Therefore, job seekers use organisational characteristics to screen their potential job opportunities within the organisation before looking at specific vacancy characteristics. This means that candidates first choose from among possible fields of activity depending on their abilities and attitudes to the respective industries, and only after choosing some of them, they start looking for vacancies in the chosen field. In other words, organisational characteristics can act as indicators of organisational values and culture and, therefore, influence a job seeker's decision by repelling or attracting him.

The specified organisational characteristics were considered in the analysis of the results of the conducted researches [7], [4]. The summarised results of these studies indicate the dominant importance of early acquisition of the right to pension, the amount of remuneration, security and predictability of the workplace, opportunities for improvement and career development, suitable (regulated) working hours, obtaining free education for cadets, and the possibility to work with armaments and military equipment. Each of the mentioned factors has a different importance for potential candidates, but their overall impact plays a significant role in the attraction process, which is why it is necessary to periodically review, improve and present them.

External factors at the personal level

Perceptions of organisational characteristics are influenced by personal and social understandings of the particular organisation. Speaking of the military organisation, the attitude of the person is tied to the level of development of civil-military relations. It is impossible that the personal image of the organisation does not have a historical institutional encumbrance related to the traditions of honouring the military in the country. The stronger the 'society-armed forces' relationship at a given moment, the better individual attitudes toward the armed forces organisation.

Organisational image comprises two main subgroups of factors: professional and institutional. The institutional ones describe the organisation itself and include service prestige, innovation, historical traditions, honour, respect, professional values, discipline, etc. The professional ones are primarily focused on the specific occupation and contain pay and security, career development opportunities, benefits and compensation upon leaving, retirement opportunities, professional training, opportunities for attractive personality expression, adventure and travel, benefits, etc. The information about the listed subgroups of factors builds the candidate's perception of the organisational image. Therefore, the more accessible and adequate it is in society, the more likely it is that more people will build an accurate image of organisational opportunities and at a certain point be motivated to apply to the organisation, in case their image coincides with the understanding of desired job.

Family and family traditions in the pursuit of a profession often occupy an important, if not leading, position among the factors determining the choice of a

profession. No one would be surprised by the news that the doctor's son is a doctor, the lawyer's son is a lawyer, or the engineer's son is an engineer. For many people, the opinion of the family is decisive in forming a decision. Affiliation with an organisation is in many cases determined through our friends and relatives working in that organisation. People feel much more empathetic and interested when they are connected to the organisation through family, relatives or friends. Practice shows that not a small part of active military personnel in Bulgaria have family burdens and, in one form or another, family members, relatives and friends connected with the military have an influence on the choice of profession.

Public attitudes towards a certain profession in many cases play a significant role in its choice. These attitudes are usually the embodiment of the organisational image in society and the organisational reputation. Image does not include an evaluative component from society and refers to a person's own beliefs about the organisation, while reputation refers to people's (general public's) evaluation of the organisation in comparison with other organisations. Therefore, reputation focuses on aspects of an organisation refracted through the prism of the social subjective component and can be both positive and negative.

Personal perceptions of organisational image are based on the experience and background an individual has in relation to the particular organisation. They represent his personal judgment about it and whether the particular organisation is famous or infamous. Public reputation of an organisation encompasses the opinion of a wide group of people about an institution, and often individual judgments are influenced by those of the general public.

Organisational reputation is built over a long period of time and should be an obligation for everyone directly involved in the organisation. Often, single actions of individual members of the organisation discredit the public trust and image of the entire organisation.

In different historical periods, the image of the organisation may be different under the influence of a number of factors. The summarised results of the conducted research indicate that the respondents consider the military profession to be prestigious in society. However, the majority of them are of the opinion that nowadays the prestige of the military profession is much lower, and not enough is being done to promote it. This brings the need for action by all involved in the organisation to reverse the trend of organisational prestige from decline to growth.

Education invariably accompanies individual development. Two main factors influence the process of personality building: individual aptitudes and surrounding environment. The first component includes the set of potential opportunities for the development of a person and mainly affects the type of temperament (related to the type of higher nervous activity) and the capacity for physical and mental development. These components of individual development are the preparation for modelling the future personality, but the tools for this modelling include the set of factors under the influence of external environment. The main place among them is family education and depending on its positive or negative direction, the other constituents of the surrounding environment can act as catalysts or inhibitors. Children are plasticine modelled in the hands of parents; therefore, the responsibility for their upbringing is huge. Some parents try to attribute some of their irresponsibility to educational institutions and the outside environment, but the truth is that without family support, certain actions or inactions have no future.

Educational institutions are a significant factor in the surrounding environment, especially in the early years of a person, and have a significant contribution to individual development. Expanding personal ideas, enriching knowledge, and education in social values are one of the main tasks of schools.

In order to familiarise the public with the activities of the armed forces and improve the public's awareness of national defence activities, with the adoption of the Law on the Reserve in 2013, the preparation of secondary school students for the defence of the country was regulated: "Citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria in the two stages for acquiring secondary education are trained to acquire knowledge and skills related to the defence of the homeland, survival actions in crises of a military nature, as well as the missions and tasks of the armed forces [15]. The training takes place within 5 study hours for the tenth grade and 5 study hours for the eleventh grade, in the classes of the class teacher, on the specific topics set by a regulation of the Council of Ministers [16]. The classes provide general information to the students about the activities of the armed forces and the other departments with regard to the defence of the fatherland, while at the same time providing a good opportunity to improve patriotic education. The limited time does not provide an opportunity to give comprehensive information, but it gives a good basis for initiating motivation to search for further information and a possible choice of the military profession.

The remaining factors forming personality upbringing depend on the specifics of the environment surrounding the particular person. Depending on their combination, the personality builds a certain affinity for the military profession and an overall image for the military institution. Subsequently, if the military itself provides sufficient up-to-date and accessible information to the individuals, it will influence to a certain extent their attitudes towards seeking employment in the military organisation.

Internal factors at the personal level

The leading personal characteristics are a set of the formed value system, active needs, qualities and abilities of the person, their education and goals. Depending on the development of these variables, the individual becomes a person with a unique individuality. On the basis of previous experience and individual development, the person builds a system of personal decision-making

criteria, which is why the importance of each of the listed variables can prevail at a certain point in time.

The development of an individual value system is directly related to family upbringing and traditions, the folk psychology of society, school education, the environment in which a person grows up, and the dominant social values of the specific historical period. Subsequently, the developed value system, in combination with the level of education and other leading factors, plays a significant role in the decision to support the intention and later – in the job search behaviour.

It is necessary to know that the degree of education possessed by the individual is of essential importance in the further development of the value system. In the evolution of motivation, there is a direct relationship between the three variables: behaviour – value system – education. The strength of the volitional response prohibits or permits a certain behaviour, but the choice of a certain behaviour is directly dependent on the previously developed value system of the individual. The value system itself is formed both by family upbringing and the surrounding environment and by the education of an individual. Therefore, the higher education an individual gets, the more his value system changes and develops, shifting the values of the different value levels.

This leads to the conclusion that the motivation for choosing a certain behaviour is directly related to the degree of education of the person.

Candidate preparedness is an important aspect of making the decision to look for a job and choosing a certain behaviour when applying. Based on the assessment of own abilities and available information about the organisation, the individual evaluates the correspondence between individual characteristics and organisational requirements and those of the specific job. The correspondence assessment includes two components – correspondence with the organisation and correspondence with the specific position. Depending on the result of the assessment, the possible options are:

- compliance with the organisation and position;
- compliance with the organisation, but non-compliance with the position;
- non-compliance with the organisation, but compliance with the position;
- non-compliance with the organisation and position.

The specified options are not unique and a combination of each of them is possible.

Seen through the interpretation of Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, it would be more acceptable to consider a certain percentage correspondence between personal characteristics and organisational-job requirements. When the percentage correspondence is in favour of individual characteristics, the likely personal decision is to proceed with applying for the desired position. Otherwise, with an increased percentage discrepancy, the likelihood of application intention and behaviour occurring is low, but not impossible. Rather, the desire to try a new venture or the impact of other subjective factors would tip the scales towards the choice to apply. In this case, however, the possibility of later

voluntary refusal is high, due to a possible discrepancy with the expectations upon entry into service.

Candidates' preparedness may be enhanced as a result of individual efforts to effect change. When it comes to improving certain physical abilities and mastering certain knowledge by a physically fit person, achieving this is a matter of personal desire and attitude. When there are inconsistencies in the requirements for physical and mental fitness and insufficient mental capacity, then achieving organisational-job requirements is almost impossible.

The expectation of appointment is a function of the personal judgment made for organisational-job compliance. According to Vroom's expectancy theory, people choose among a set of job options based on the motivational strength of each alternative. Motivational strength is a function of the product of expectancy (the individual's beliefs that he or she will be successful in obtaining the job), instrumentality (appraisal that the effort will lead to the specified reward/goal), and valence (the personal value of the reward/outcome). That is, a person is motivated to apply to the extent that he/she believes that their efforts will lead to passing the application exams (expectancy), this will lead to a reward – accepting a job (instrumentality), and the value of the job is strongly positive (valence). Therefore, according to the expectancy theory, it can be argued that positive job expectations are predicted to lead to more effort being put into finding a job.

A number of studies have been done to support the above statement. Collins and Stevens found that 'hire expectations are strongly related to applicant attraction and application intentions' [11]. Another study in 2005 found that 'hire expectations can predict job choice and are linearly related to job search attitudes.' [12] The results of these studies confirm the importance of realistic expectations and the importance from having up-to-date and accurate information about the application process and job expectations with their advantages and disadvantages.

Sources of information

A critical view of organisational information sources suggests that applicants' job pursuit decisions are based on their interpretation of various aspects of the recruitment and selection process (e.g. characteristics of the recruiting organisation, understanding of selection practices). In the absence of other information about the organisation, applicants interpret the information they receive in the application process to gain insight into the work in the organisation.

The recruitment process is a series of logically related steps of attraction, application and acceptance. Each of them has its importance, but all of them are related to the individual's decision of intention and job search. Sources of information are at the heart of informed choice and can influence candidates' job search decisions. Through information, the organisation can influence the general public, attracting or repelling job seekers. This gives reason to consider information about the organisation as one of the main tools for influencing behavioural choice.

Depending on the place relative to the organisation, we can classify information sources as internal and external. Internal sources include: recruitment advertising (general and specific advertising), organisation website, conduct and training of recruiters, military career centres/military districts, application and selection methods, site visit, reliability of job information, classes with military training in schools. External sources include: information in the media, the Internet and the public; attendance and coverage of military rituals; word-of-mouth information.

Internal sources of information are largely under the control of the organisation and are used to disseminate official recruitment information to potential candidates. External sources of information are difficult to control by the organisation and generate information available to the general public. We will briefly review some of the most important information sources.

Advertising refers to general and specific advertising. General advertising aims to create a positive attitude towards the organisation, while specific advertising is related to the specifics of the given job. Given the capabilities of the Bulgarian Armed Forces to conduct expensive information campaigns for recruitment in the media, advertising decisions come down to conducting advertising with one's own forces and means. The 'Be a soldier' campaign is traditionally carried out by the Bulgarian Armed Forces. It combines both general and specific advertising as much as possible, providing positive signals to the general public and specific information about job vacancies. This campaign takes place in the regional towns, but the study of the motivation for choosing a military profession indicates that a significant number of candidates join the army to escape unemployment in the small town. In large cities, the chances of attracting more potential candidates are greater, but there the average level of remuneration is higher, which creates conditions for increased competition from private organisations looking for personnel. This reduces the chances of campaign success, especially in large cities, where realisation in the private sector offers much better prospects.

An option to attract the young generation is the use of social networks, advertising videos on YouTube, Vbox and elsewhere. The clip produced by private Stanislav Yotovski with the name BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES 2017 – GLORY LASTS FOREVER! [17], after the NATO exercise 'Saber Guardian – 2017' in Bulgaria, gained wide popularity. There is a need to create and use more such videos and promote the activities of the armed forces to the general public.

To recruit cadets, annual candidate cadet campaigns are held in many schools in towns across the country. They confirm the authority of the Bulgarian Armed Forces as a desirable employer, but they are mainly aimed at officer candidates. It is possible to run such campaigns for soldiers outside of the 'Be a Soldier' campaign. With a little resource and greater desire, any formation commander can implement activities to promote the military profession and fill their vacant positions.

The next major source for advertising is the organisation's website. In today's digital society, almost everyone has access to a computer, smartphone, and the Internet. For the youth, it is a way of life with which they are inextricably linked. Searching for work on the Internet has been popular for a long time. Traditional print job ads have been supplanted for years by job posting sites. The favourites among them in Bulgaria are jobs.bg, zaplata.bg, rabota.bg, and the Employment Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (az.government.bg). The Ministry of Defence maintains up-to-date information for job seekers, and each competition is published not only on the website of the Ministry, but also on the website of the Employment Agency. Potential candidates can get an idea of the job requirements, but not the specifics of the job. This necessitates providing a contact for feedback and questions in order to provide quick and accurate information to potential candidates.

Another recommended requirement is that the information on the websites of the military formations be up-to-date and accessible from a smartphone. They have established themselves as the new information medium, so sites need to match their support requirements. The rest of the organisational information also needs to be up-to-date, in case the candidate wants to become familiar with the functions and structure of the future workplace. It is not an isolated case that a person comes across a non-existent organisational structure or that it is impossible to find information about employees, procedures and up-to-date regulatory documents. The organisation's website is the main source of information, which is why the application information there needs to be up-to-date and easily accessible.

The next unit of the military information system is the military districts. They serve to establish the first contact with potential candidates. Their goal is to consult and attract the required number of candidates for military service. Military districts exist in every regional city, and in the municipal centres, subordinate sectors to the regional military districts exist, usually located in the buildings of the municipal administration. The main function of military districts is to organise the keeping of the military record in peacetime and wartime as well as the distribution and assignment of mobilisation tasks. In addition, military districts carry out tasks related to popularisation of the military profession, training in higher military educational institutions, training of Bulgarian citizens in courses, and training of civilians and those serving in the reserve. The network of military districts was built at the time of the operation of the conscript army, and after its replacement by a professional one, they continued their activity. Military districts are places where interested candidates can get the necessary information about the military profession, vacancies and how to apply. In addition, at these places, assistance is provided in completing the necessary documents and sending them in due order.

Field visits are an excellent way to get a first-hand look at military discipline and to gain a general understanding of specific military formations and the military as a whole. Visits to military formations are organised on open days of military holidays, organised visits for familiarisation purposes and during military rituals of the troops. The specificity there is that only positive information is presented and what is planned to be seen. With them, it is difficult to notice some negatives of the service, unknown to the civilian citizen. For this reason, they should not be taken as the sole source of information on the basis of which a decision to enter the service is made. They are an excellent way to improve the patriotic education of the young generation. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the possibilities of visiting military formations as much as possible in order to attract many people, especially from schools and youth forums.

Military training classes in schools began after the adoption of the Law on the Reserve in 2013. The order and ways of conducting it were already considered in the analysis of upbringing as an external personal factor. As an upgrade to the lessons in the schools, practical lesson hours or showing formations should be added. This would enable students to experience first-hand the equipment and armament and combine theory and practice.

The credibility of the information offered in each of the mentioned ways is critical to the military recruitment process. Providing only positive information and saving the negative one results in an unrealistic view of the job, which seems to increase the rate of voluntary resignation due to discrepancy with expectations.

By providing up-to-date and timely information about the entire application and selection process, the future military personnel will get the complete picture of how to prepare the necessary documents and the abilities they need for the competition. This will lead to relief for applicants and a decrease in the percentage of voluntary refusals due to the inability to prepare personally and submit documents.

External sources of information

External sources of information are not under direct organisational control, which is why they are increasingly taken into account by job seekers.

Word-of-mouth sharing is in most cases more highly valued than reviewing organisational features on the organisation's page or through other official sources. Information provided through social contacts (friends, relatives, acquaintances) is perceived as positive and more reliable than the rest, and in addition, the influence of live contact on behaviour is unequivocally more influential. Driven by these findings, military leaders are increasingly using military personnel for word-of-mouth outreach. By sending military personnel to their hometowns to participate in recruitment campaigns for soldiers and candidate cadets, the effect of this approach is quite good. Getting first-hand information through a respectable-looking military person is more powerful than any other ad. When applying this method in combination with an attractive display, the effect of informing is even stronger. This requires using this approach more extensively in order to win the hearts and minds of potential candidates.

Public advertising and publications in public electronic and print media help build the organisational image, but they can also have a negative impact. The media is not under organisational control, so it needs to be approached carefully. The Bulgarian armed forces traditionally present their capabilities and participate in solemn celebrations of holidays with military rituals. In such a case, informing the media in advance of the expected actions by public relations officers is a good approach to minimise incompetent statements and comments.

The presented model for motivating applicants to join the armed forces reflects the factors affecting the process of recruiting military personnel. There are many job seekers, but each of them has individual requirements, abilities and ambitions. The armed forces' activity in the overall process is, through its tools of information and influencing human behaviour, to attract the maximum number of candidates with the necessary abilities to fill the large number of vacancies. The motivation of these candidates needs to be sustained from the time of first contact until entry into military service, with the motivation activity subsequently being taken over by the retention model.

The analysis of the various motivational models showed that the economic condition of the country is directly related to the demand for work. In days of pandemics and crises, armed forces have a real opportunity to attract more applicants, while in days of economic growth, it is very difficult. A nationwide approach is needed to promote the armed forces' reputation as a desirable employer.

CONCLUSIONS

Motivation is a voluntary mental state of the person, consciously directing individual behaviour to certain actions to achieve set goals. It is intrinsic but influenced by external influences, which must be used by military organisations to attract potential candidates to fill the growing personnel vacuum in the armed forces.

The new realities of the modern world provide immense opportunities to the new 'Z' and 'Alpha' generations; therefore, in order to attract and retain job candidates from these generations in the hectic everyday life, companies and enterprises must be aware of and adapt to the changing workforce needs [6]. This requires the Bulgarian Armed Forces to develop models for attracting and retaining military personnel that are up-to-date with the current reality and the requirements of the labour market and to update them periodically in order to maintain their relevance.

The proposed model for recruiting military personnel does not claim to be exhaustive and comprehensive but takes into account the most important factors shaping the motivational behaviour of job seekers. It should be integrated with the military retention model to maintain the motivation of already recruited candidates.

The positive experience from the considered models and approaches indicates that the motivation of military personnel is not a given. It requires investment in time, resources, and will to be achieved. The key to achieving

and maintaining military motivation is persistence in seeking and refining approaches to managing human behaviour, an activity that must be of paramount importance not only to military commanders and chiefs, but to all government leadership.

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