

Evaluation of Recruiter Performance Measures and Policy

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Manpower and Personnel Policy Research Group
Manpower and Personnel Research Laboratory



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FOREWORD

The evaluation of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command's (USAREC) recruiter performance measures and policy is being conducted under the direction of the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) and will provide valuable information about predictors of recruiter success presently available to USAREC policy makers and planners. In particular, the results of this evaluation of USAREC policy and determination of data sources available by which to evaluate the policy will be used to direct the later analysis phase that will investigate previously developed recruiter selection scales.

ARI's participation in this cooperative effort is part of an on-going research program designed to enhance the quality of Army personnel. This work is an essential part of the mission of ARI's Manpower and Personnel Policy Research Group (MPPRG) to conduct research to improve the Army's capability to effectively and efficiently recruit its personnel. This research was undertaken in 1987 under a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Army Recruiting Command and ARI (31 July 1987), with project completion set for fall 1988. Results reported here were briefed to the Commander of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command on 12 April 1988.



EDGAR M. JOHNSON
Technical Director

EVALUATION OF RECRUITER PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Requirement:

To define the nature of successful recruiter performance in order to develop criterion measures that can be used to examine the usefulness of the Recruiter Selection Battery-Experimental (RSB-X) as a predictor of recruiter success and to determine and document the data necessary to conduct analyses of the RSB-X.

Procedure:

Effective selection of recruiters is essential to the success of the recruitment function. To meet this objective, the RSB-X was developed. The RSB-X, along with other measures of recruiter characteristics, was administered to a sample of over 400 recruiters entering the Army Recruiting Course. To evaluate the RSB-X, a determination of the measures of effective performance and the policy by which success is judged was conducted.

Interviews were obtained with key USAREC personnel at Fort Sheridan to (1) obtain a consensus on the definition of recruiter success, (2) determine what measures of success would be appropriate and obtainable from Army records, and (3) begin the collection of relevant data. In addition, analyses of the RSB-X dataset were undertaken to identify and document its elements.

Findings:

A clear consensus was indicated on the definition of success that focused on consistently making individual mission requirements. Further, implicit in the definition of successful performance was the importance of integrity, making mission within USAREC rules and regulations. Additionally, a number of ways of operationalizing recruiter performance were identified. Three major categories of performance data are production/mission data, awards, and relief information. Data are now being collected for each category. Finally, the data elements of the RSB-X have been documented and analyses of these elements are progressing.

Utilization of Findings:

The data necessary for successfully evaluating the ability of the RSB-X and other recruiter characteristics to predict success will provide a source of information to analysts about the productivity of a sample of recruiters followed from entry into the Army Recruiting Course to the present. This full data set, including performance information, RSB-X data, and other personal characteristics (race, sex, education level, and TABE and CAST scores) will be available for future analyses.

EVALUATION OF RECRUITER PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND POLICY

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EVALUATION OF RECRUITER PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The performance of recruiters has always been essential to meeting the manpower requirements of the Army. However, with the termination of the draft, the role of the recruiter has become particularly important. Essential to the success of the recruitment function are effective selection, training and motivation of recruiters.

To meet the objective of effective selection, an experimental selection battery, the Recruiter Selection Battery - Experimental (RSB-X), was developed as a potential aid in the identification of Army personnel with those characteristics predictive of effective recruiting performance. This battery, along with other measures of recruiter characteristics, was administered to a group of 417 recruiters who entered the Army Recruiter Course (ARC) during the months of May and June, 1985. The overall objective of the current project is to assess the effectiveness of using data elements from the RSB-X database to predict recruiter performance. This report describes the results of the first phase of the project that had the following objectives:

1. Define the nature of successful recruiter performance in order to develop appropriate criterion measures.
2. Determine and document the data necessary to conduct analyses of the RSB-X database elements.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Research on the ability to predict recruiter success in the Armed Forces has a long history. Since reviews are already available (Russell and Borman, 1986) we will not report that research here. However, the history of the development of the RSB-X will be described and, to provide a context for this research, studies of attempts to predict recruiter success using instruments similar to what is contained in the RSB-X will also be described.

The RSB-X is a comprehensive collection of pencil and paper measures that includes a variety of personality indices and a biographical questionnaire. The effectiveness of batteries similar to the RSB-X has been researched before. For example, Massey and Mullins (1966) constructed a set of tests for Air Force recruiters. Their Recruiter-Salesman Selection Test (R-SST) measured such qualities as empathy and sociability (that they called "surgency"). These researchers also collected

background data for each individual. A few of the personality measures showed significant (if not impressive) predictions of success in the recruiter training school (multiple $R = .213$). However, none of these predictors was related to performance in the field. The background data was even more equivocal, as it was unrelated to both field and classroom performance. An important aspect of the discussion of their findings was the problems associated with measuring recruiter performance and they concluded that no valid selection technique is likely to be discovered until the criterion problem is resolved. The reader should further note that although the R-SST used different scales than the RSB-X, the personality and biographical data are of the same basic type.

Other efforts have been made to examine personality and background data. For example, Vincent (1974) attempted to assess the worth of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI). Based on the fact that the CPI could not distinguish between a sample of Army recruiters and nonrecruiters, he concluded that the test was not useful for selecting recruiters. However, Vincent's design was inappropriate in that it lacked performance measures.

Another attempt to examine personality and background data was made by Brown, Wood, and Harris (1978). Their results were the opposite of those found by Massey and Mullins (1966). Specifically, personality dimensions such as sociability, achievement motivation, and empathy demonstrated no predictive ability, although some of the background data did reliably discriminate between good and poor recruiters. However, since these items were not cross-validated, Brown, et al. urge caution in their interpretation.

Elig, Gade and their colleagues (Gade, Elig, Kass, & Zbikowski, 1980; Elig, Gade, & Johnson, 1983) have explored some reasons why background data has produced conflicting results. They suggest that the effectiveness of certain recruiter demographics is moderated by the characteristics of the recruit. For example, recruiters tend to have an easier time enlisting members of their own race. Similarly, older recruiters enlist more males than do their younger counterparts. These authors explore a variety of moderators that they claim make it difficult to predict success without taking into account recruit characteristics.

The RSB-X includes a self description inventory. The history of this type of index is a bit more favorable. Maier (1971) administered the Recruiter Self Description Blank (R-SDB) to a group of recruiter trainees. He found the measure correlated significantly (about .20) with various pencil and paper measures of performance.

The battery being examined in this project is a direct

outgrowth of work done on measuring and predicting Navy recruiter performance by Borman, Dunnette, and Hough (1976) and Borman and Abrahams (1978). They devised a battery of selection devices that purported to assess the qualities deemed necessary for successful recruiter performance (Borman & Abrahams, 1978). The battery included items from traditional personality tests, a Sales-Effectiveness Scale, and an assortment of biographical data questions.

The battery was validated using Navy and Marine Corps recruiters with ratings constructed by Borman, Hough and Dunnette (1976) as criteria. Results were mixed but promising. For the Navy sample overall, cross-validated multiple correlation coefficients for the personality traits ranged between .16 and .29 for different aspects of rated performance. The personality composite showed a cross validity index of .21 with overall performance rating. Marine Corps results were comparable. Based on these results, a Selection Assignment Battery (SAB) designed for selecting Navy recruiters was developed. However, it should be pointed out that this research used a concurrent validity design and had no objective performance measures.

In 1985 the Army Research Institute was asked to investigate the possibility of predicting recruiter success. Based on the success of the SAB for predicting Navy recruiter performance, a modified version of the SAB was developed. This modified version, the Recruiter Selection Battery-Experimental (RSB-X), was administered in May and June of 1985 to 417 new recruiters entering the Army Recruiter Course (ARC) at Fort Benjamin Harrison. These recruiters also completed the vocabulary portion of the Tests For Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the Computerized Adaptive Screening Test (CAST). These latter two instruments provide skill/intelligence scores to complement the personality and background characteristics assessed in the RSB-X. The current project was requested by the U.S. Army Recruiting Command to examine the ability of these instruments to predict recruiter performance.

RECRUITER SUCCESS

Defining Recruiter Success

The history of attempts to predict recruiter success have highlighted the necessity for good theoretical and operational definitions of success. Consequently, a first step in assessing the predictive ability of the RSB-X was to develop a working definition of recruiter success and to determine what data were available to measure performance.

Toward this end, meetings were held with numerous Army personnel at Fort Sheridan and at the Recruiting and Retention

school at Fort Benjamin Harrison. More specifically, discussions were held with the USAREC Chief of Staff; Director of Recruiting Operations; Director of Program Analysis; Director of the Recruiting and Retention School; Director of Enlistment Standards; Chief, Personnel Management Division and; selected USAREC Staff members.

Based on these discussions it was rather clear that a consensus existed regarding an acceptable definition of recruiter success and this consensus centers on making mission as the essential element of success. When asked to define recruiter success, almost all of the above mentioned experts began their discussion by referring to the mission box and stated that the successful recruiter was the one who could consistently make mission goals. Most did not see any reason to define success in terms of exceptional performance (performance at some level above mission). Exceptional performance is valued, the Awards system is designed as an incentive to encourage exceptional performance. However, at a macro level, the management of both the numbers and quality of recruits is accomplished through a rigorously determined, hierarchically arranged set of mission statements. Consequently, the recruiter who is able to consistently make the mission assignment is a valuable resource.

Although all discussions of recruiter performance emphasized making mission, the concept of doing so with integrity was always implicit in this emphasis. No one interviewed would accept mission success at the expense of adherence to explicit rules and regulations. All felt that too much was at stake in terms of the quality of soldiers and the image of the Armed Forces. Therefore based on our discussions with these key individuals the following working definition of recruiter success is offered:

" Making mission with integrity."

As a result of these discussions it is apparent that any attempt to examine the ability of the RSB-X to predict recruiter success must begin with its ability to predict the consistency with which recruiters make their assigned mission.

Supplemental Measures of Performance

Although discussions with key USAREC personnel have emphasized the importance of making mission, and therefore made the assessment of the extent to which a recruiter makes mission the essential component of the measurement of recruiter performance, these discussions have also identified a number of other aspects of recruiter performance the prediction of which would benefit the effective management of the recruitment function.

Zero Rollers. The Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation estimated that approximately 24% of recruiters are "zero rollers", recruiters that consistently fail to enlist any recruits. Although these individuals may eventually be released for their nonperformance, their presence for any period of time presents a particular strain for the system. As the COL Cox has stated, "A failure is not only a failure to himself, he impacts on the whole company." To the extent that "zero rollers" is, in fact, an identifiable performance category, it would clearly be advantageous to predict membership in this category.

Awards. As just suggested, zero rollers may represent a useful and predictable category of nonperformance. Alternately, it may also be useful to measure and try to predict exceptional performance. As previously indicated, recruiter awards are intended as both recognition and incentive for exceptional performance. The receipt of these awards within a specified period of time is both a measurable and potentially predictable index of success.

DEP Loss. The discussion of assessing recruiter performance has so far focused on the number of recruits signed by recruiters, either in absolute numbers or against mission. However, some assessment of the quality of the performance would be advisable. Unfortunately, for this project it will be impossible to gain access to the actual performance of recruits after entry into the Army. In addition, even if such an assessment would be possible, it would be inappropriate to gauge recruiter performance on this basis. Recruiters are not required or expected to evaluate potential recruits beyond standard fitness qualifications and mission box categories. However, it does seem appropriate to try and gauge the extent to which recruiters enlist recruits who ultimately do not end up entering the Army. High levels of DEP loss reduce the manageability of the DEP pool. It is possible that through variations in recruiting practices some recruiters may have higher DEP losses than others. This should be and will be examined in this project. If there are consistent recruiter differences in DEP losses it may also be true that these losses are predictable from recruiter characteristics like those measured by the RSB-X.

Relief. The final measurable aspect of performance suggested by key USAREC personnel was relief from recruiting (and particularly the reasons for such relief). Three broad relief categories are identifiable: ineffective, unqualified, and unsuitable. The last category, having to do with improper recruiting practices, is a particularly useful additional assessment of performance as it is the only assessment that touches on the issue of integrity.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Criterion Data

Based on investigation and discussions with USAREC personnel, a number of measures of recruiter performance are available and will be collected for analysis in this project. The following is a description of this criterion data base. It is not an endorsement of the quality of the data or the usefulness of any or all of the elements as eventual criteria. These evaluations will be forthcoming as the data is collected and analyzed.

BOARDS Generated Performance Data. Production data are available on the BOARDS System for each of the 417 recruiters in the sample on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis since October, 1986. For those recruiters still in the command, production data are available up to the present time. For those individuals no longer in the command, production data are available up to the point of release. The data base provides the monthly and quarterly mission statement for the recruiter (number of SMA, GSMA, etc.) as well as the performance of the recruiter against each mission category. It also provides information about DEP losses for each month and quarter by mission category. From this data set, the following measures of recruiter performance can be derived and will be analyzed for the purpose of serving as criterion indices to assess the predictive ability of the RSB-X and other recruiter characteristics.

Mission Performance. As stated previously, whether or not a recruiter makes his or her mission is the primary definition of recruiter success. Fortunately, this basic criterion can be assessed from the available data. More specifically, performance against mission can be assessed on a monthly or quarterly basis. Additionally, performance against priority mission categories (e.g., SMA, GMA) can also be assessed. One question that will need to be addressed is whether the performance against mission must be adjusted for differential opportunity. It is well known that "sales" performance is contaminated by opportunity biases like territory. It is also well known that recruiter performance, assessed in terms of the simple number of enlistees generated, is likewise influenced by territory, local economic conditions, etc. (Brown, Wood and Harris, 1978). Consequently, it may be necessary to adjust performance to take these differential opportunities into account. That being said, it is also important to note that the mission is itself adjusted for economic conditions, opportunity biases, etc. operationalized by a combination of econometric analyses and management judgment. It has been suggested by USAREC personnel that a measure of performance against mission (does or does not make mission) will be a relatively pure index, as free of biases as is likely to be achieved with statistical adjustments using available data sets.

Previous studies of predictions of recruiter performance that used or advocated territorial adjustments did not have the benefit of individual recruiter mission statements.

Overall Productivity. Although the making or not making of mission is of primary concern, it is also possible from the BOARDS data to assess the total number of enlistees on a monthly or quarterly basis. These assessments will also be made and correlated with components of the RSB-X.

DEP Loss. The data base provides a monthly and quarterly assessment of DEP losses. As a result, both total DEP losses and quality DEP losses (losses in high priority categories) will be measured.

Zero Rollers. Zero Rollers, recruiters who consistently fail to make mission or who consistently fail to enlist recruits can be identified. Since data are available on a monthly basis, various operationalizations of the Zero Roller concept can be examined (e.g., number of months without enlistees, etc.).

Relief Data. Through the cooperation of USAREC staff, we have been able to trace the current status of each of the 417 recruiters in the sample. For all recruiters who are no longer in the command we are able to classify the reasons for their release. In addition, for those in the relief category of unsuitable we will be able to ascertain more detailed information about the circumstances for this disqualification. From these data, relief reasons will be coded and the ability of the RSB-X to predict relief and the major categories of relief can and will be determined.

Awards. Through the cooperation of USAREC staff we have been able to obtain awards records for the recruiters in our sample. As these awards are based on cumulative performance, their use as a measure of performance is contaminated by the recruiters' time in the command. However, since all of our recruiters entered the command within a few weeks of each other, this contaminant is not likely to be a significant problem in this sample. Consequently, the number and kind of awards received can be examined as an indicant of exceptional performance.

Predictor Data

As indicated, the overall objective of the current project is to examine to what extent any of the elements in the set of information collected as part of the RSB-X correlates with recruiter performance. We have briefly described the performance data available to answer this question and will now proceed to describe the predictor elements of the data set. To begin with, the data set constitutes various skills, personality and background measures for a sample of 417 recruiters who entered the ARC between the beginning of May and the middle of June,

1985. The RSB-X was administered to these recruiters at the time of entry into the ARC.

Recruiter Selection Battery - Experimental. The RSB-X is the primary predictor set of this project. It has four components:

Descriptive Statement List. A list of 100 statements concerning what a person does, thinks or feels. Recruiters were asked to decide if each statement was true or false for them.

Adjective Checklist. A list of 95 adjectives for which the recruiters were asked to indicate whether the adjective was or was not descriptive of him/her.

Most Descriptive Adjective List. A list of 45 pairs of traits for which the recruiter was asked to indicate the most descriptive trait.

Background Questionnaire. One hundred and thirty-six questions concerning things that a person may have done or experienced in the past. The recruiter filling out the questionnaire was asked to select the most appropriate choice for each question.

The first three components of the RSB-X are subscales of various traditional personality indices, the Personality Research Form (PRF), the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), the Differential Personality Questionnaire and the Ghiselli Self Descriptive Inventory. In addition, some of the Dunnette Sales Effectiveness Scale is also included. The subscales were chosen based on validity evidence developed in the Navy projects mentioned earlier. Although the scale scoring developed for the Navy research will be used in this project, separate factor analyses of the scales will also be conducted to confirm the scale structure and/or to indicate the need for developing a more appropriate structure. The last component of the RSB-X is a traditional biographical inventory, again including items known to have predicted Navy recruiter performance.

TABE Vocabulary and CAST scores. Although the RSB-X has been the focus of the research, the assessment of aspects of general intelligence was also done using the TABE (vocabulary) and CAST measures. These will also be evaluated for their ability to predict recruiter performance.

Demographic Information. Race, sex, age, and education data are available for each recruiter and will be used as both predictors of success and potential moderators of the ability of the other indices to predict success.

ARC Performance. Performance during the ARC was measured for each of the 417 recruiters in the sample. This information can serve as both a criterion for evaluating the predictive usefulness of the personal characteristics as well as a predictor of future recruiter performance.

RESEARCH PLAN

It is clear that the data is available to evaluate the ability of the various personal characteristics included in the RSB-X, as well as the TABE and CAST, to predict recruiter performance. To that end, the following activities are planned:

1. Develop the criterion set by collecting and evaluating performance measures including:
 - a. Production data (with mission information)
 - b. Relief information
 - c. Awards records
2. Prepare a criterion data base with the above information for each recruit in the sample.
3. Prepare the predictor set by:
 - a. Reducing the elements of the RSB-X, TABE and CAST into meaningful scales.
 - b. Preparing a data base with both raw data and scale scores.
4. Conduct Predictor/Criterion Analyses by analyzing the ability of the predictor components to predict the criterion components.
5. Produce an integrated data base containing full predictor and criterion information for each recruiter.

CONCLUSIONS

From interviews with key USAREC personnel, it is apparent that an acceptable definition of recruiter success can be developed to guide the evaluation of the RSB-X and related predictor information. Further, the nature and availability of relevant data bases suggest that such an evaluation can be accomplished within the parameters of this project. This evaluation will allow USAREC to judge the feasibility of using the RSB-X and related personal predictor information for assessing recruiter performance potential at the time of entry into the recruiting function.

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