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APPLYING SÜMER'S MODEL OF MILITARY TURNOVER ON JUNIOR OFFICERS FOR A PRIVATE SECURITY FIRM IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

The concern of staff turnover affects all organisations whether public or private, and security firms are no exception. This study set out to investigate the influences behind the exodus of junior officers from a private security firm. It further focused on determining the factors which influence the exodus of junior officers and their job expectations to determine whether decisions to leave the security firm were personal. This study employed a qualitative research approach. The sample consisted of 15 junior officers selected by means of purposive sampling. A further six ex-officers who participated in the study were selected through a convenient sampling method. The study unearthed critical factors that contribute to voluntary turnover in the private security firm which stems from unmet expectations, low remuneration, deployment away from their families, tribalism and nepotism relating to promotions, and deficiencies of aligning qualifications with remuneration. Recommendations were that the security firm introduces an exit interview protocol to gauge the discontent of the junior officers, as well as introducing transparent promotional policies in order to avert tribal lines and nepotism. This study used the terms 'security firms' and 'military' interchangeably.

Keywords: nepotism, promotion, tribalism, turnover

1.   INTRODUCTION

Staff turnover is a topic that continues to receive substantial focus due to its effects on an organisation's operations and costs (Smith, 2011). The private security industry is no exception. The debate about staff turnover in security firms is sparse, according to Mafini and Dubihlela (2013). Studies on security guard officers, de Waard (1999) argues, are few, given unclear legislation and regulations in the profession compared to occupations such as the police and military forces. When security officers leave the organisation, the performance of the entity is compromised and income from guarding contracts is affected due to a shortage of personnel. Kimosop (2007) contends that an organisation tends to suffer great costs when trained employees leave.

There is no doubt that attracting and retaining employees should be a top priority for many organisations including private security firms.

1.1 Research questions

The research was designed to address the following questions:

- What are the perceived factors causing the attrition of junior officers at the private security firm?

- Which are the specific factors causing the attrition of junior officers at the private security firm?

- What appropriate retention strategies can be recommended to the private security firm?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Jager and Kummel (2009), private security companies are defined as entities that provide security services for profit, such as guards to business premises, public buildings and residential areas.

In security firms, turnover is explained as a phenomenon where guards leave their service organisations (Hosek & Totten, 2002). The causes for these occurrences are varied and include the physical and psychological demands

that the job entails. There are two types of turnover: voluntary (where the individual decides to leave) and involuntary turnover (when the organisation decides to sever the relationship with the individual). This study focused on the voluntary aspect of turnover.

2.1 Voluntary turnover

According to Allen (2000), employment separation refers to an employee's chosen exit from the organisation. Griffeth and Hom (2001) contend that determining whether employees leave voluntarily is relatively straightforward through the intervention of exit interviews. Sümer and van de Ven (2007) assert that some quit intentions that are voluntary are not all negative and dysfunctional to the military, but viewed as a sieving process which retains those who are fit to stay with the institution.

2.2 Models of turnover

There are a number of models recommended by researchers to explain what variables influence employee turnover. The classic models that were developed by scholars using the traditional turnover model as a baseline in their bid to determine factors that influenced employee turnover.
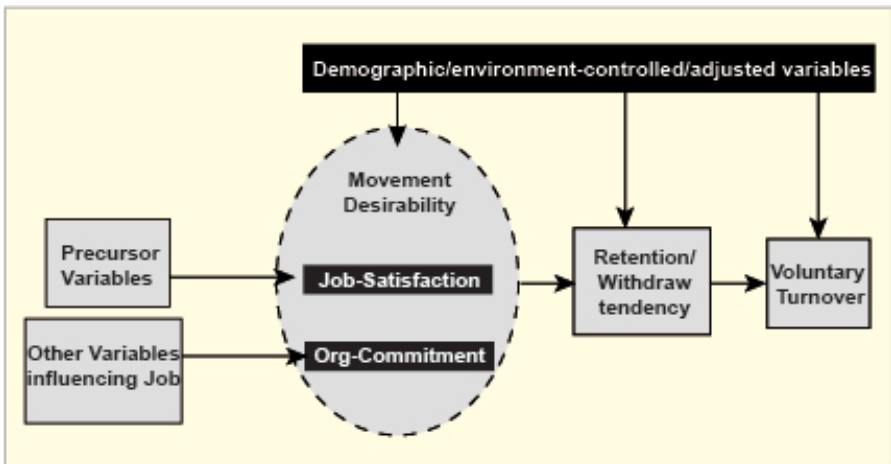

Figure 1: The Traditional Turnover Model
Source: Adopted from Griffeth, Hom and Gaertner (2000)

The traditional turnover model indicated that the main contributors to a person leaving the organisation are triggered by job satisfaction and organisational commitment. When one of these variables is compromised, an individual will have quit intentions in order to deal with this equilibrium. The predictors to turnover in the private security firms are, however, different from those experienced in corporate organisations.

2.3 Sümer's proposed model on military turnover

The proposed model by Sümer (2004) on military turnover is composed of distal factors, intermediate factors proximal factors, which are discussed further.

The factors that apply in the private security guard organisations are mostly centred on the lack of empowerment for an individual to undertake given tasks in ways that the person feels would be the best way of achieving the job. A considerable number of models on employee turnover have been offered in the past and most suggest that job satisfaction influences actual turnover through its effect on intentions to leave. Initially, turnover was linked only to job satisfaction, and it was much later when other aspects were also examined. Sümer's model is the conceptual framework which underpins this study. It illuminates the essential elements that can influence private security guards' turnover.

Innumerable consequences result when talented or knowledgeable staff leave an organisation, which includes the disruption to institutional goals (Chiboiwa, Samuel & Chipunza, 2010). Sutherland (2004) contends that the main objective of retaining committed workers for a long tenure is profitable to an organisation.

2.4 Factors of military turnover by Sümer (2004)

As noted, Sümer's (2004) turnover model has three categories:

- **Distal factors,** which cover job and organisational characteristics and perceived job alternatives;

- **Intermediate factors,** which cover Person-Organisational Fit, Work Attitudes including Job Satisfaction, and

- **Proximal factors,** which cover Turnover Intentions.

2.4.1 Distal factors

These include the Job and Organisational Characteristics/Perceived Job Alternatives. The Job and Organisational Characteristics cover aspects related to how an individual perceives the job, in this case, the military set-up as opposed to the actual job and organisational characteristics. These perceptions cover the instrumental (compensation and workload), and non-instrumental (leader-member relations and workgroup cohesion). There is evidence concerning the role of instrumental factors in the development of negative work attitudes, which are well-established antecedents of turnover in general and specifically military turnover. Griffeth and Hom (2001) stress the following as being instrumental in quit intentions: workload, working conditions and disruptive justice.

Perceived Job Alternatives are when many new recruits find that what they perceived as an exciting job in the military is the opposite and this may cause them to seek alternative jobs outside the military. This could be due to the demanding physical work that is designed in the military (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb & Ahlburg, 2005).

2.4.2 Intermediate factors

2.4.2.1 The person-organisation fit

An increased fit can be expected to result in positive organisational and personal outcomes, such as increased satisfaction, motivation, morale, job performance, commitment and retention. Both empirical and theoretical evidence advocate that the fit between the person, as represented by personality attributes, interests, skills, abilities and values, together with the environment, as represented by the occupation or the organisation, plays a critical role in a number of organisational outcomes. These outcomes include job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career involvement or success, all being positively correlated, while turnover intention and behaviour is negatively correlated (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Westerman & Cyr, 2004). Fit in terms of personality characteristics as explained by Griffeth and Hom (2001), includes negative affectivity, the tendency to perceive oneself

and the environment negatively. The aforementioned are some of the factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction with employee turnover.

Dowden (2000) proposes that personal dispositions are likely to influence three organisational exits such as retention, absenteeism and individual performance through their effects on attitudinal factors, moral, motivation and perceived stress. The former has been supported by Schneider, Goldstein, and Smith (1995), where their attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model states that individuals are attracted to, selected by, and stay with, organisations that suit their personality characteristics. According to the ASA model of Schneider *et al*. (1995), people select to stay in or out of the organisations they work for, and therefore have the liberty to transfer their services to an organisation that meets their life expectations.

2.4.2.2 Fit in terms of values

Values congruence, person-organisation fit refers to the extent to which an employee's personal values and the employing organisation's values or culture are congruent or compatible. Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) state that, person-job fit represents the extent to which the abilities of the person, their needs, and the demands of the job, match and are compatible to what is provided by the organisation.

Cable and DeRue (2002) declare that, though person-organisation fit and personal values seem to be positively correlated, an individual will still have quit intentions.

2.4.2.3 Quality of life perception

According to the results of a U.S.A. Department of Defence (2004) survey of both active-duty and reserve members, 14% of the respondents reported that their desire to stay decreased because of tempo, or being away more than expected (U.S. Department of Defence, 2004). Similarly, the British Airmen and Non-Commissioned Aircrew leavers' survey results indicated that "family stability" was the factor with the highest importance rating in the decision to leave, especially for personnel with more than six years of tenure. Furthermore, high workload, lack of notice for postings, and frequency of detachments, were among the factors that had increased recently in

importance as reasons for leaving or quitting the military service (Bradley, Allen & Sargent, 2003).

Dunn and Marrow (2002) found that the most common reason for members of the Canadian Forces quitting was the workload as it related to personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO). Members of the Canadian Forces are of the view that the high PERSTEMPO and workload put members in a position of having to choose between staying in the Canadian Force, or losing their families due to the amount of time members had to spend away from home. Deployments, exercises, courses and overtime were in many cases beyond the coping ability of their families.

Based on the extant literature on quality of life and turnover, it is theorised that quality of life factors mediate the effects of the job and organisational characteristics of job satisfaction and continuance commitment. Satisfaction with different facets or domains of life as expressed by a global quality of life audit is likely to influence satisfaction with one's work life.

2.4.2.4 Work attitudes

According to Sjoberg and Sverke (2000), organisational commitment, which refers to a relatively stable and more global attitude towards the employing organisation, has been consistently shown to be related to the variables associated with employee withdrawal. On the other hand, Griffeth *et al*. (2000) advance that organisational commitment predicted turnover better than overall satisfaction, especially in the security industry. Even though both satisfaction and commitment have been identified as critical variables in the turnover process, there seems to be a lack of conformity concerning the quality of the relationship between these two variables in relation to employee withdrawal.

2.4.3 Proximal factors

It is a theme in the literature that turnover intentions have been reported to mediate the relationship between job-related attitudes, especially job satisfaction, and turnover behaviour. Almost all the models on employee turnover allude to the fact that job dissatisfaction influenced actual turnover through its effects on intentions to quit. It seems plausible to argue that once

turnover intentions grow, the path to turnover seems more definite in the military, most likely because of the contractual nature of the jobs. Correspondingly, in the tendered model, turnover intentions which are directly influenced by satisfaction and affective commitment are treated as one of the direct determinants of turnover behaviour.

2.4.3.1 Macro-economic factors

Voluntary turnover has been conceptualised as an act largely developing from an individual's subjective experience of organisational life and labour market conditions. Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) perceive that researchers have identified objective indices such as unemployment rate to be a stronger predictor of actual turnover behaviour. Trevor (2001) also concurs that satisfaction had a greater negative effect on voluntary turnover when jobs were plentiful. Hence, based on the reviewed literature, the unemployment rate is expected to influence voluntary turnover both directly and indirectly and through perceived job opportunities. Kirschenbaum and Mano (1999) emphasise the need for inclusion of unbiased job opportunities at the organisation and labour market level within a voluntary model.

Evidence corroborates the existence of different dynamics for military withdrawal as well as the importance of factors other than attitudes in military turnover. The proposed military turnover model is believed to contribute to the existing literature by encapsulating the following aspects:

- The model captures the complex decision-making processes involved in military turnover.

- The model deviates from the descriptive approaches conventionally used to explore and understand military turnover, by presenting a comprehensive casual framework that allows for prediction.

- The model recognises the importance of the unemployment rate as one of the critical determinants of military turnover.

2.5 Causes of military turnover

Voluntary turnover in private security firms can be attributed to many causes which vary from one individual to another. Krueger (2001) states that

military withdrawal can be influenced by several reasons due to the physical nature of the work as well as psychological stamina. Unmet expectations, job satisfaction, and leadership styles are some of the causes noted by Smith, Holtom and Mitchell (2011). Saari and Judge (2004) contend that organisational commitment at an individual level reduces tardiness and turnover. Hosek and Totten (2002) found that prolonged deployment in a stressful environment will lower the morale of the members, which will cause them to de-list from the military. Some of the causes of employee turnover in the military include unsatisfied expectations, work-family concerns, and person-environment fit (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Sümer (2004) also identified similar factors that include job-related attitudes and how the individual was fitted for the job.

2.5.1 Unmet expectations

Griffeth and Hom (2001) speculate that when initial expectations are not met, quit intentions may be the result, especially in the early stages of the military. This phenomenon is rife among many young recruits (van de Ven, 2003). During the early stages of joining the military, there are expectations that the recruit looks to being fulfilled such as pay, security, and future prospects. Should such expectations fail to be fulfilled, the intention to quit would be greatly influenced (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). Griffeth *et al*. (2000) infer that it is the initial job expectations that influence the stay or quit intentions.

2.5.2 Work-family concerns/balance

The hardship and turbulence of military life impacts on service members and their dependants alike. A military lifestyle makes the pursuit of a worthwhile career nearly unattainable for military spouses. Frequent postings, including many to remote areas, sometimes result in highly qualified spouses having to sacrifice their careers to be with their families. Kelley, Hock, Bonney, Jarvis, Smith and Gaffney (2001) claim that this is an area that has not been well-researched. When there is disequilibrium between family life and the military tasks, especially deployment, this can produce quit intentions. Hom and Kinicki (2001) believe that work and family conflict affects not only family, but also personal life. Where there is a lack of balance due to deployment in the soldier's family life, quit intentions will increase (Dunn

& Morrow, 2002). It is therefore imperative that equilibrium is created by the security firm to retain new recruits and junior officers, although this can be a daunting task for the military establishment given the nature of jobs that are demanding and challenging.

2.6 Turnover intentions and costs

The effects of turnover tend to put a strain on organisational performance and productivity (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 2006). Organisations that experience staff turnover either benefit from it or suffer losses. The benefit to the organisation is that it has a team with adequate skills to deliver on the organisational objectives, while the downside is having a group of non-performers. If the factors are identified, they tend to reduce the ramifications of turnover in terms of costs and disruptions in the workplace (Maharaj & Schlechter, 2007). Employee turnover puts a strain on the organisation's scarce resources. Moore *et al*. (2004) identified direct and indirect costs which include replacement costs in terms of recruitment and selection, learning costs, and loss of capital. These costs are also confirmed by Dess and Shaw (2001) and Moore *et al*. (2004).

2.7 The concept of employee retention

The origins of employee retention date back to the 1970s, which is a new dispensation regarding job mobility and employee turnover (McKeown, 2002). Retention in human discourse refers to attempts by an organisation to hold onto and avoid losing talented staff to rivals or the external environment (Michael, 2008). Retention strategies allow the management to attract skilled and high performing personnel within the organisation (Michael, 2008). Sutherland (2004) advances that disruptions in terms of performing the intended goals are a usual occurrence, and the military is no exception.

2.8 Empirical studies on voluntary turnover

There are studies that have been conducted on voluntary turnover intentions in private security firms. For example, Sümer (2004) revealed that there are different categories that can cause quit intentions of guards, which include unmet expectations, work-family concerns, job-related attitudes and person-job fit. Frequent and long deployments, overnight duty, long work hours, and

high tempo, which are typical of most security jobs, were identified as factors that are likely to play a critical role in the decision to join or leave an organisation.

Holtom, Mitchell, Lee and Eberly (2008) note the major trends of the past decade that places emphasis on changes in job satisfaction, including new individual predictions of turnover (for example, personality and motivating forces); increased emphasis on interpersonal relationships (for example, leader–member exchange, interpersonal citizenship behaviours); enhanced focus on staying power such as organisational commitment and job embeddedness, and lastly, dynamic modelling of turnover processes. On the need to improve interpersonal relationships between leader-member exchanges, Holtom *et al.* (2008) stress that this should be the focus in attempting to reduce the exodus of employees from an organisation.

Mafini and Dubihlela (2013) explored antecedent factors contributing to the mass exodus of aircraft technicians from an air force in Southern Africa. Job satisfaction was found to be the most important factor that was causing the attrition of aircraft technicians. The findings of the study emphasised the retention of scarce skills that can be lost in the military. Focusing on pointers such as reward and remuneration, selection, development, and placements, would improve and reduce the attrition in the military.

It can be noted from the above that there is a common thread among the studies on turnover. Lack of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and leader-member relationships, contributed to the escalated rise in attrition from the military.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is inductive in nature and is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative research approach as defined by Lee (2014), is associated with social constructivism which emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality. From the two definitions, it can be observed that the qualitative approach attempts to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. The qualitative method was appropriate for

this study because it sought to get views and opinions from non-commissioned officers on the causes of attrition from the security firm. A semi-structured interview schedule that consisted of questions related to the turnover intentions, and another set of questions for those who have since left the security firm, was designed to interview and probe participants' perceptions.

3.1 Population

Polit and Beck (2012) perceive population as the entire set of objects under study. The population for this study was the junior officers at the security firm and those who have since left the organisation. In order to understand the situation affecting the turnover of junior officers, a sample size of 15 junior officers was selected from a population size of 150 officers, using the purposive sampling method. Once a junior officer was identified as fitting into the target group, he/she was approached. After the aim of the research was explained to the participants, they were then requested to participate in the research. An assurance was given that the data given would be used for the purposes of the research only. According to Sekeran and Bougie (2013), purposive sampling is confined to specific people who can provide the desired information because they conform to the set criteria. Data for this study was obtained from the fifteen junior officers of the private security firm.

3.2 Pilot study

In order to test the relevance and credibility of the interview schedule, a pilot study was conducted on a small sample of junior officers who were excluded from the main study (Altman, Burton, Cuthill, Festing, Hutton & Playle, 2006). Reliability of the interview questions was tested on two participants for whom the questions were repeated over three weeks, to show a degree of consistency in their responses. The purpose of the pilot test was "to refine the questionnaire" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003:308). There were no changes made to the questions.

3.2.1 Internal interview on junior officers currently employed by the security firm

There were internal interview questions for junior officers which solicited opinions relating to how they perceived their job satisfaction and suggestions on how the firm could improve the *status quo* by preventing turnover intentions.

3.2.2 Exit interview on junior officers who have left the security firm

A list of junior officers who had since left the security from June 2016-May 2017 was analysed. Sümer (2009) recommends the identification of precursors of early turnover. Therefore, the interviews, as well as exit interview data analysis to identify causes for turnover, were necessary for this study. Robyn and Gorrick (2016) state that exit interviews tend to provide insights into the reasons behind turnover and provide the ability of the organisation to amend and improve areas that are causing the exodus.

3.3 Validity and reliability

Validity is defined by Cooper and Seiford (2011) as the extent to which the researcher ensures what is intended to be measured, is captured. Robbins and Coulter (2003) perceive reliability as the ability of a selection device to measure the same entity consistently. Validity and reliability in qualitative studies hinge on the concept of trustworthiness. The concept of trustworthiness encompasses both rigour and the relevance of the research (Finlay, 2006). Finlay (2006) asserts that when trustworthiness is reinforced in a qualitative study, the results tend to be reliable.

3.3.1 Member checking

In order to ensure correctness in recording the responses and to validate the data collected, member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, was conducted (Fusch & Ness 2015). The researcher asked the participants to review the interpretation of the data gathered during the interviews. No changes were made.

3.3.2 Elimination of bias

To mitigate bias in this study, the researcher revisited the facts and cross-

checked against what the participants said and what was captured. This enabled the participants to review their comments. There were no adjustments made to the transcripts. Koelsch (2013) states that this process helps to mitigate any bias. An interview schedule was followed, and all the participants were asked the same questions. Xu and Storr (2012) state that asking of the same questions in a qualitative study tends to minimize variations in the responses given by the participants. Responses were written on the interview schedule by the participants; thereafter, the responses were recorded by the researcher in a note book. There were some follow-up questions that were asked arising from responses in order to obtain clarity. These responses were also recorded by the researcher. Since the responses on turnover intentions and job satisfaction expressed by the respondents has job security implications, it was necessary to store the information in a safe in the researcher's office.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were followed in this study. The potential respondents had a choice to participate voluntarily or to decline participation. Participants were protected by giving informed consent before participating and being allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. None of the individuals could be identified in any manner in the research findings or throughout the final mini-thesis. In addition, all participants were offered a debriefing session telephonically in order to pose any specific questions. The respondents who accepted participation were required to give verbal consent, after which they were asked questions from the semi-structured interview schedule that was prepared to achieve the objectives of the study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos, Schurink & Fouché, 2011). Ethnographic content analysis was applied through the data to identify any recurrent patterns. This was because of the interest in the discovery of regularities, patterns and themes in the data. Patterns in the data were grouped, and the number of frequencies noted (Sekeran & Bougie, 2013).

4.1 Demographics

There were ten male members and five female members of the junior officers who participated in the study. The findings showed that the number of females were 5 (33%), while those of males were 10 (67%). More males than females are employed by the private security firm. A plausible reason is that males have always dominated the security sector and that the conscription of females is a new phenomenon, especially in Namibia. Most of the participants were aged between 31-40 years, with 4 aged between 21-30 years and 1 aged between 41-50 years. The reason attributed to the majority of those aged between 31-40 years reflects that the recruitment policy of the security firm is to recruit the young who will serve the firm for a longer period.

4.2 Section B: Interview questions and responses

How many years have you been employed by the security firm? Out of 15 participants, eight members have served the security firm for a period of 2 to 21 years. The majority of the participants had served between 15 and 21 years respectively. The reason for the long tenure of service may be due to a number of factors such as promotion opportunities, patriotism and lack of alternative employment elsewhere. However, it was interesting to note some of the reasons for the long tenure. For example, Participant #5 noted: "*Not that I am motivated to continue serving with the organisation, but as long I am getting my salary and serving where I can. If a better opportunity comes up I will definitely take it with open arms or go to another ministry where my work experience will be valued*".

What first attracted you to join the security firm? A number of reasons were given by the participants on what attracted them to join security firm. Among the reasons were the culture, physical appearance, employment opportunities, and patriotism to protect and support the nation, job security, peer pressure, parents' influence, career opportunities and job security.

What do you like most about your job? There were numerous answers to this question from the participants which included physical fitness, career

opportunities, gratuity allowance, learning new aspects every day, serving the nation and teamwork.

What do you like least about your job? Numerous reasons for disliking their current job were given by the participants: energy sapping chores, discrimination and favouritism regarding promotions, failure to contribute effectively by lower ranks, discriminative selection for workshop participation selection, and a lack of recognition, despite qualifications as well as an unconducive working environment. For example, Participant #2 said: *"No career growth in the firm because employees work according to ranks and it is very difficult to be heard if you have a low rank, your contribution becomes useless".* The views of Participant #4 were: "*I don't like how the high ranking officers work with things they have no idea about and leave out people who know things better. It could be good to select the right people to be sent for short courses than sending high ranking officers who will not use the knowledge they got.*" Participant #8 said: "*Promotion, because it does not apply equally to everybody and the process is full of favouritism".*

Were your expectations met? The majority of the participants were of the view that their expectations were not met. For example, Participant #3 stated: "*Not really, because the chain of command affects most of the ideas which young, educated people have. As a low ranking officer, you have no say, you are commanded, and you just follow".* Participant #4 stated*: "Never, when I was employed they asked for university qualifications but I am not being paid for it".* A minority indicated that their expectations were met. New work experience was achieved by this group. Participant #11 indicated: *"Expectations met as work experience gained".*

These findings concur with those of Griffeth and Hom (2001), who contend that it is during the early stages of joining the military that the recruit looks to his or her expectations to be met. Should such expectations fail to be fulfilled, the intention to quit would be greatly influenced.

What was the best and worst aspect of working for the security firm? This question attracted a myriad of reactions from the participants. Most of the participants indicated their best aspects of working in the security firm were

during the training itself because it focused on discipline and physical fitness. The worst experiences indicated by the respondents pertained to tribalism and nepotism that have become customary practice by the top ranks when promoting non-commissioned officers. For example, *Participant #3 said: "When I graduated from the training I expected to excel in terms of position".*

4.2.1 Excerpts on the worst working experience

Most of the respondents had a number of reservations relating to their worst experiences serving in the security firm, such as working away from family, mingling with different cultures, lack of promotion, deployment to unfamiliar territories, working under harsh conditions, as well as the issue of tribalism and nepotism. *Participant #9* said: *"The worst part was when I went for training I did not know anything about the military. The best part was on my graduation day from being a recruit at Osona. I was so happy and felt so different".* Another participant *#13* stated: *"The worst aspect is tribalism and nepotism when it comes to people in high ranking positions".*

What are your views on the following:

- *Your current and previous salary grade?*
- *Communication within your department and at your command station?*
- *Your physical working environment?*

This question drew mixed responses. The majority were not happy with their current salaries which they considered inadequate, as well as disparities in the way members are treated. Most respondents in this study were not content with remuneration levels and felt that there was a lack of equity in the way the remuneration grades were structured. They attributed this inequity to the practice of nepotism and favouritism at the security firm. Such disparities cause withdrawal from the security firm (Dale-Olsen, 2006; Böckerman & Ilmakunnas, 2009). The majority of the participants indicated that the working environment was poorly designed and lacked resources such as computers and copiers. *Participant #14* indicated: "*The place is overcrowded, and there is no air conditioning".*

What do you suggest should be done by the management to reduce the issue of labour turnover? The following suggestions were made by the participants: develop skills through training, post junior officers according to their qualifications, and give officers some latitude to seek transfers, improve communication and deal with tribalism. *Participant #8 observed:* "*Encouraging the subordinates to do more, better and avoid recruiting people with higher qualifications because at the end of the day these types of people leave the force without serving for a year in the force*".

What motivates you to continue serving the private security firm? The answers were mixed with some saying it was for economic reasons and some attributing their stay to motivation, to patriotism, and national security. For example, *Participant #14 said:* "*I cannot go back on the streets. I have to wait for a good offer to go in case the security firm did not give me one*".

4.3 Section C: Exit interview questions and responses

The study observed that there are no exit-interviews that are conducted when an officer leaves the security firm. The researcher managed to conduct exit-interview questions with six officers who had since left the security and were working with different organisations. The data revealed that out of the six participants, four are working for the Namibian Police, while the other two had joined different security firms.

4.3.1 Exit interview guide for former non-commissioned officers

How long were you employed by the private security firm? Out of the 6 former officers, the longest serving members were two with 27 years and one for 21 years. The shortest serving was one who had served the private security firm for two years.

What first attracted you to work for the security firm? All six participants indicated the following as the attractions for joining the security firm: physical fitness, salary/pay, and the physical appearance of security personnel. Two of the participants stated peer pressure and work itself as their reasons for joining the security firm. One of the participants indicated that he participated in the liberation struggle as a guerrilla fighter and joining the private security firm was in line with his career.

Were your expectations met? All the six participants indicated that their expectations were not met and that was the reason they left the organisation.

What was the best and worst aspect of working in the security firm? A large number of the participants stated poor salary, favouritism regarding promotion, not happy with posting, harsh commands, and being deployed far away from family. For example, Participant #2 stated: "*My son was only 3 years old then, and my worry was the boy will fail to bond with me after being away for a long period of time. I could not stand that. That's why I had to leave*".

What were your reasons for leaving the security firm? The reasons for leaving security firm were similar to those given for the internal interviews, for example, bad working conditions, deployment, including earnings not improved and poor leadership.

What would have encouraged you to stay? A significant number of the participants indicated that improved salaries, working conditions, and promotion would have encouraged them to stay.

What is attractive in your present position compared to the previous job? All of the six participants mentioned better salary, and salary commensurate with their qualifications. For example, the opinion of Participant #3 was that the firm should ensure "*Fair remuneration in relation to qualification*".

4.4 Observations from secondary data

Records obtained from Human Resources covering the period from June 2016-May 2017 showed that a total of 32 junior officers had left the security firm for a number of reasons, which included pursuing further studies, low salary, not interested anymore, found new jobs, not content with the working environment, as well as changing careers.

4.5 Emerging themes

Three themes relating to remuneration, unmet expectations including work-family concerns emerged from the study.

4.5.1 Theme 1: Fairness of remuneration

Most participants were concerned with the fairness of remuneration, promotion and the discriminatory tendencies practised at the security firm. Milkovich and Newman (2004) state that pay is a motivator for an employee to remain with the organisation.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Unmet expectations

Findings from both of those who remain in the employ of the security firm and those who have since left the organisation pointed out that they left due to unmet expectations. Griffeth and Hom (2001) posit that when initial expectations are not met, the quit intentions will follow.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Deployment away from family

According to Hosek and Totten (2002), deployments that take the military members to a far-off place will tend to encourage searches for alternative job opportunities and finally withdrawal from the military. Schumm, Bell and Resnick (2001), in a study conducted on attrition from the military, found that family factors play a vital factor in the quit intentions. A feeling of detachment between fathers and their families will disrupt communication and may cause withdrawal from the military (Kelley *et al*., 2001).

5.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to explore the causes of quit intentions and attrition at a private security firm based in Windhoek, Namibia. The reasons that have been revealed as predictors of turnover affecting junior officers, include low remuneration, unclear information relating to what is expected from the officers at the time of being recruited, deployment away from their families, and nepotism practised in promotions. Tribalism and nepotism have blighted the private security firm where the majority of the command officers is dominated by one ethnic tribe. Promotion and the apportionment of lighter duties are given to their tribesmen and the difficult ones are assigned to the other tribes. Low pay was another concern as the guards felt the

compensation was at a disequilibrium with the long working hours the job entails.

The necessity for reducing the exodus of staff from an organisation cannot be avoided as it attracts unnecessary costs in terms of recruitment and training. This study concludes with recommendations to curb high turnover in this field.

The following recommendations were made to the private security company on measures for retaining junior security officers emanating from the findings of the study:

- Improve salaries

Management should elicit government to review the remuneration packages so that they are commensurate with those that are paid in other private security firms within the SADC region. There is a need to benchmark with other countries in order to arrive at an equitable salary range. This could retain and reduce turnover within the private security firm.

- Provide adequate information to non-commissioned officers before they sign employment contracts

Management should clearly communicate work expectations to recruits about their work goals, and give them the opportunity to engage in conversations with management on what affects them and the cause for their dissatisfaction. This will enable management to correct the symptoms of quit intentions before it is too late. The problems surrounding the aspect of ambiguity relating as to what is expected from the junior officers would be allayed when communication channels are open.

- Devise better strategies regarding deployments

The security firm should consider finding ways to deal with deployments by means of a transparent and fair policy framework. The command could deploy more of the unmarried junior officers and fewer of those who are married or with aged families to take care.

- Introduce transparent appraisal systems.

In order to eliminate the issues of favouritism and tribalism when recommending officers for merits or promotions, a transparent appraisal system must be introduced. The inclusion of senior officers from other security firms or sector could be invited to appraise the staff in order to reduce familiarity and bias. Overall, all appraisers should undergo training in order to equip them with appraisal standards and ethics.

- Introduce exit interviews

Management must, as a matter of urgency, introduce exit interviews to determine what is causing the turnover, and make efforts to rectify the causes. Regular surveys should be undertaken to also assist in detecting problematic issues affecting the junior security officers.

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