



Research Project looking at the Recruitment of Women into the SANDF

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Introduction

Three years ago, Dr Juliet Colman, External Research Associate, University of East Anglia, UK and Director of SecurityWomen¹, sought permission from the Transformation Directorate, Department of Defence, to carry out research into the Recruitment of Women into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). A pilot study was conducted in August 2016 and a report on the findings of the study was sent to the Transformation Directorate and is available on request. A partnership with Professor Lindy Heinecken, Stellenbosch University, was established and with the findings from the pilot study, the approach to the research project was refined and adapted. The stated purpose of the research was to uncover the factors that influence the recruitment of young people into the SANDF and especially the propensity of women to enlist in the SANDF.

Data was collected throughout 2017 at various SANDF selection events across South Africa. A questionnaire eliciting attitudes to the military, motivation to wish to join, and views on UN peacekeeping was used both with male and female candidates applying for a variety of roles. A total of 608 young people participated. In addition, the views of SANDF personnel involved in the recruitment process were sought in terms of challenges and enablers to recruiting, in particular women.

Background

There are many arguments for the inclusion of more women in the military, ranging from the view that they bring different qualities and hence enhance operations, to one based on gender equality, and another to reflect the society in which we live, and hence the demand for the representation of at least 50 percent women. Historically, globally, military employment is considered a male domain and none more so than in South Africa. However, since the establishment of the new Constitution and Bill of Rights in 1996, the country has been moving toward a more equal representation of all elements of society in its public institutions and a transformation of policy, laws, plans, programmes, administrative and financial activities in order to effect profound organisational change (DOD 2012).

The SANDF has committed to increase the recruitment of women to 50 percent in order to have 40 percent overall representation in the military, and at least 30 percent at decision-making levels. At present, women constitute 25 percent of the full time uniformed personnel component of the SANDF, which is high compared to international standards (DOD 2015). However, this does not realise the aims of the DOD recruitment strategy. The findings of this research provide a fuller picture of the factors limiting the enrolment of more women in the SANDF.

¹ SecurityWomen is a UK registered charity (No. 1169486) and US registered non-profit, which advocates for greater gender balance in security institutions and conducts research into the state of gender equality within the security sector. See www.securitywomen.org.

Project approach

The main approach of the research is qualitative through the dissemination of a questionnaire asking for detailed responses to 9 questions (see Appendix A). As mentioned, the questionnaire was given to male and female candidates who were attending selection events for roles in the SANDF – Army, Navy, Airforce and South African Military Health Service – and who agreed to participate. Selection events were attended at military bases in 7 of the 9 provinces: Western Cape, North West, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. In addition, a selection of semi-structured interviews were carried out with key informants consisting of SANDF personnel involved in the recruitment process and who were willing and available to be interviewed (see Appendix B). The study was conducted in English which is the main language of communication in the SANDF, and proper and ethical procedures were followed in terms of briefings regarding the project and emphasis on confidentiality and anonymity.

SANDF Key Informant Interviews

A number of face-to-face interviews were conducted with SANDF recruitment staff of varying seniority in the different Services. The findings are not representative of all staff involved in the 2017 selection process for the SANDF, since it was difficult to gain access to personnel and agreement to their participation in the research project. However, for those who agreed to take part, these are the main points made:

- A recognised challenge to the successful recruitment of personnel into the SANDF was seen as getting the right number of suitably qualified people. This point is echoed in the conclusion of the Report on the Status of Women in the DOD (2010) which calls for an integrated person-in-environment (P-I-E) approach to deliver on the appropriate fit between people and the environment. In other words, getting the right people into the right posts.
- There appears to be little connection between the marketing to attract candidates carried out by the Services and the need to target certain groups in society, eg, women, white or Indian candidates, and no debate on how this should be done. The appetite to apply an element of positive discrimination to a marketing strategy is lost in an attitude of “we discriminate against no one”. It appears that no targeted advertising or marketing was carried out for under-represented groups such as women; although the Airforce confirmed that they did place advertisements, and visit schools, in white communities in South Africa. There is a focus on statistics, but more around racial identity than gender.
- The SAMHS has a higher number of women in its personnel because the nature of the work, for example, nursing, attracts more women to apply. They are also more specified when taking people on, since most will undergo lengthy training.

- Supposedly, there is one recruitment office per province, but these lack funding and are poorly resourced. In the selection process, diversity is only considered after various other competencies/characteristics, eg, qualifications, age, fluency in English, etc. The candidates with the higher matric scores are the ones invited to a selection event.
- A view, which is also highlighted in the Status of Women in the DOD Report (2010), is that patriarchal attitudes exist in the recruitment process which perceive women as incapable of leading, or being on the front line, and are physically weak. There is no way to verify how widespread this attitude is, but, if it exists at all, could have a damaging effect on the successful recruitment of women into the SANDF.
- The physical environment in the SANDF is not always conducive for women. This can be exacerbated by sexist attitudes and lack of respect for women.
- Frustration was voiced on how to reach disadvantaged rural candidates with no access to technology. It is recognised across the Services that the focus is on rural areas and the empowerment of the youth.
- Concern was also expressed about fraud in the system in terms of fake application forms and falsely promised jobs.
- Views on the selection events ranged from 'fair, accurate and professional' to 'poorly organised'. Emphasis was placed on the fact that everyone is treated the same. Budget cuts have meant that numbers of people to be recruited into the MSDS is limited in terms of types of positions available to be filled. When it comes to consideration of gender, it is a balancing act.
- Concern was expressed as to the health of a growing number of candidates. So many are over- or under-weight, and asthma is a problem.

Demographics of candidates

The questionnaires handed out to candidates at selection events in 7 provinces, totalled 608, although 600 questionnaires were completed satisfactorily. The demographics of the candidates do not reflect the gendered dynamics of applicants to the Services, but simply the candidates that were available to complete the research questionnaire at the various selection events which were attended. This should be borne in mind when looking at the following sets of statistics, although often they reflect what would be expected if *all* applicants participated in this project, for example, the number of women applying for combat roles in the Army is under half the number of men. It should also be noted that gender was not presented as a binary option on the questionnaire but that the results came

back as binary in nature. It is recognised that sexual identity takes many forms but for the purposes of this research, the categories are dichotomous in that data is viewed from the perspectives of how candidates aligned themselves, ie as men or women, and their views are reported as such. The following are the demographics of the group:

55.8 percent male (n = 335); 44.2 percent female (n = 265). The percentages referred to in the Results section in analysing the responses to the 9 questions from men and women, are adjusted to take into account the discrepancy between numbers of male candidates and female candidates.

The distribution of where the candidates came from is as follows:

	Gender		Total
	1 Male	2 Female	
Home Province			
1 Western Cape	17	38	55
2 Northern Cape	1	1	2
3 North West	15	18	33
4 Eastern Cape	77	61	138
5 Mpumalanga	49	19	68
6 Limpopo	64	40	104
7 Kwazulu-Natal	86	59	145
8 Gauteng	25	28	53
9 Free State	1	0	1
Total	335	264	599

As can be seen, most applicants came from the Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal, and there is not an even distribution between the provinces. The total of 599 indicates that one person from the group of 600 did not complete this part of the questionnaire.

The breakdown of which Services the candidates were applying to is as follows:

	Gender		Total
	1 Male	2 Female	
Arms of Service			
1 Army	93	62	155
2 Air Force	102	98	200
3 Navy	82	42	124

4 SAHMS	57	61	118
Total	334	263	597

For the Army, the female numbers were 2/3rds of the male applicants, and for the Navy, roughly half, but for the other two, they were roughly equal (slightly more women applying to SAHMS and the reverse for the Air Force). Within these numbers, candidates were asked which corps they were interested in serving in and this is the breakdown of numbers:

	Gender		Total
	1 Male	2 Female	
Corps interested in			
1 Combat	76	37	113
2 Combat Support	32	39	71
3 Support	60	86	146
4 Technical	125	42	167
5 Other	36	42	78
Total	329	246	575

It is no surprise that women applying for Combat roles in the Army make up less than half the number of men, yet are greater in number applying for Combat Support roles. Also, more women have applied for Support roles. In contrast, women make up only 25 percent of those applying for Technical roles. The total number completing this section is 19 women short and 6 men short. Does this reflect more uncertainty from women as to what role they wish to play within the SANDF?

The racial make-up of the candidates in this group is as follows:

Race	Gender		Total
	1 Male	2 Female	
1 African/Black	269	216	485
2 Coloured	34	38	72
3 Indian/Asian	11	4	15
4 White	20	6	26

Total	334	264	598
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It should be noted that Indian/Asian and White applicants are in low numbers, in particular, female applicants. Should these be the target of a marketing campaign to attract more applicants?

The distribution by age, ranging from 18 to 26, is as follows:

Age	Gender		Total
	1 Male	2 Female	
18	41	37	78
19	47	38	85
20	55	37	92
21	66	45	111
22	53	33	86
23	16	26	42
24	26	24	50
25	24	18	42
26	4	5	9
Total	332	263	595

The peak age for men and women is 21.

The educational background of the applicants is as follows:

Highest education	Gender		Total
	1 Male	2 Female	
1 Grade 12	226	167	393
2 Diploma	48	29	77
3 Undergraduate Degree	21	38	59
4 Post graduate degree	16	14	30
5 Other	23	13	36

Total	334	261	595
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As can be seen, the largest number of candidates of both sexes have a level of education at Grade 12. More men than women have diplomas, but women make up the higher number of candidates with degrees.

Other details include the marital status of the applicants and whether they have children or not. A handful of applicants are married – more men than women, and a handful have partners, but the vast majority are single. Proportionately more women have children (15.5 percent) as opposed to male candidates (7.5 percent):

	Gender		Total	
	1 Male	2 Female		
Marital status	1 Yes	6	3	9
	2 No	311	248	559
	3 Partner	12	9	21
Total	329	260	589	

	Gender		Total	
	1 Male	2 Female		
Children	1 No	308	223	531
	2 Yes	25	41	66
Total	333	264	597	

The last demographic is looking at whether the applicants had previously been employed:

	Gender		Total	
	1 Male	2 Female		
Employment	1 Yes	51	39	90
	2 No	255	182	437
Total	306	221	527	

These figures show that the overwhelming majority have not had previous work experience and there is no significant gender difference.

Results of candidate questionnaires

Each candidate was asked to write responses to 9 questions and given the opportunity for further comments if they wished. The responses have been analysed and various themes have emerged. Some candidate responses fall into more than one theme, and there is overlap between the different themes themselves. There is also a repetition in responses to the different questions: the same ideas/themes are brought up time and again.

1. Motivation to join the military

Q: Briefly describe what motivated you to join the military?

Four main themes came out of the responses to the above question which have been categorised as: (a) altruistic reasons, (b) personal benefit, (c) occupational benefit and (d) attraction of military culture.

(a) Altruistic reasons:

- *To defend/protect South Africa and its people*
- *To serve/help the country*
- *To ensure (global) peace, participate in peacekeeping, prevent crime/corruption, particularly at South Africa's border, and to help disadvantaged/underdeveloped people.*
- *Important to have a meaningful job and make a difference*

These were the most commonly given reasons for wishing to join the military both for men and women. Statistically, there was little difference between the sexes: 59.4 percent of men gave this as a reason and 56.6 percent of women.

It is interesting to note that the legal mandate of the military in South Africa is more wide ranging than in most countries in that it is a service which can be used for the preservation of essential services within South Africa².

These responses are typical:

'My country. To make it a better place for all who live in it, to improve it and for the love of the people of South Africa.'

'It's just that I am patriotic to my country, so I want to serve it from the threats of the enemy just as that of the apartheid regime. I want to make peace keeping in this country, Africa and world.'

(b) Personal benefit:

² The Constitution of South Africa allows the Army to be deployed 'for service in the preservation of life, health or property; for service in the provision or maintenance of essential services; and for service in support of any department of state for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment'.

- *Utilisation of personal skills and qualifications*
- *To gain knowledge/experience/skills/personal growth – a career*
- *Opportunities to travel and work with people from different places*
- *Passionate about joining – a dream from an early age*
- *Motivated by family/friends/neighbour*
- *To be a role model for younger people/women – change perception of military*
- *To break into male dominated area – take advantage of opportunities*

The gender breakdown on this aspect of motivation to join the SANDF shows 53.9 percent of women mentioned personal benefit and 48.0 percent of men, so fairly significant difference and the reverse to that given for altruistic reasons.

The last two statements in the list above, come from female candidates and these are a sample of comments they made:

'I was motivated to join the military because in SA, it is seen as though the military is a place where only men can do the job. So my motivation is triggered so I can prove that females also can participate and so just as well if not better.'

'Getting the opportunity to learn and work in a world that is usually fit for men and not women. Wanting to build a strong character in the world of work.'

'Because of the scarcity of females in the industry I also wanted to utilize my degree in a different industry than the media industry. Also because of the scarcity of jobs in the country.'

'I saw a need to join the SA military because I've noticed that the number of women in the industry not as much as males, hence that gives males more reason to disrespect us as females thinking we are not strong enough to fight for our country.'

'In today's world it's not only the 'man' that can serve in the ARMY, but women also. The army has strict rules and regulations and has a broader field of studies where women can be employed.'

'Growing up in a rural community, most jobs/careers are gender stereotyped and the military is one of them I wanted to break the stereotype or to prove that women can be the shield of this country just like men are.'

Comments from both men and women re influence of family and friends were common. The first is from a candidate for the Army, the second illustrating the

lineage of military service, and the third, on how family is important in giving positive influence:

'My father is the major influence in my choosing to join the army since he is also in military. Some of the reasons include being at peace keeping operations particularly in African continent to end the suffering of women and children.'

'My whole family has been in the military and I would like to carry on with the family history of working in the military.'

'My grandfather motivated me to join, he nicknamed me soldier. Every time I was sulking about the distance I had to walk to school he would tell me to be a soldier. So I have always thought of myself as a soldier. Joining will honour him and fulfil my passion.'

Travel was mentioned 19 times as a reason to wish to join the military. Often, young people are looking for experiences beyond their limited world, to meet people of different races and religions, to work with different people and to learn how to communicate, speak different languages and understand different cultures. These are comments from candidates, the last two females, to the Airforce:

'What motivated me is the environment of SAAF and how productive, effective and efficient the employees are. You get to explore SA and also the world at large due to traveling and also to learn more about other places and their cultures.'

'I have always had a passion to travel. And since I decide to attend a 'course' at the Air Force base Ysterplaat, it motivated me to go further and pursue a career within the air force. The order and discipline also motivated me.'

'I love travelling the world but due to financial reasons I could not pursue a career in the university or college that's why I decided to join the air force.'

A large part of this theme was the motivation to be trained and gain skills. Here is a typical comment:

'Because of the level and standard of training the military offers and that the training is beneficial not just at a physical level but emotional/social level too.'

(c) Occupational benefit:

- Job opportunities and variety/different types of jobs – engineering, medicine, etc

- Attraction of a government job
- Benefits
- Unemployment – to get a job for money/support family
- pay university fees – study for free

This aspect was mentioned fewer times by both men and women, but still a significant difference between the two: 20.2 percent of men, and 14.7 percent of women.

Views ranged from low expectations, “just a job”, to the accomplishment of career dreams; and, from the military being the vehicle to help achieve goals, for example, being a nurse, to wanting to be in the military per se, for what it stands for. There is a stigma to being unemployed. Respect is important to young people – they want respect from others and are searching for self-respect. Respect/status is linked to employment. Often the need to support one’s family is felt very keenly, more often by men, and is obvious in some of the responses:

‘I want to support my family and get money.’

‘Poverty being born to a family that affords little or nothing at all.’

‘Financial difficulty at home.’

The public sector is seen as more stable and offering more job opportunities than the private sector.

(d) Military Culture:

- Discipline – the environment and lifestyle of the military
- To be independent
- Team-working – to be part of military team spirit
- Introduced to military at school/college – boot-camp – air shows/parades – through media
- Respect for military – values/ethics – professionalism
- Recognition – looking for personal honour/pride – to be a hero
- Fitness [for a man]
- Uniform
- Miscellaneous service specific reasons, eg love of heavy artillery

The responses that fell into this theme were almost equally both from men and women – 34.3 percent vs 35.8 percent. Some of the definitions brought into the theme of ‘military culture’ are more relevant to certain roles than others, for example the difference between applying to be a nurse or a combat soldier.

'The discipline and soldiers have motivated and attracted me into wanting to be in the defence force. The respect and dignity accompanied by the uniform is also attractive.'

Candidates mentioned hearing about opportunities in the military through the media – SABC, radio. One candidate mentioned the Young Lion programme which compelled him to apply to join the SANDF.

Summary

The most common response to the question of motivation to join SANDF is the desire to serve the country and help protect its people. This was repeated in different forms of words time and again by both male and female candidates.

In the theme, 'personal benefit', the percentage for female candidates is 6 points higher than for male candidates. The concepts captured under this theme are wide-ranging. What is most obvious is the number of gender-based comments from women that fall into this category, illustrating a desire to prove themselves within a man's world. The percentages for the following theme, 'occupational benefit' are the opposite with the percentage of male candidates 6 points higher than for women, although the overall level is much lower. This may be explained by the underlying societal norm of the traditional role of the man as the breadwinner and the need to gain respect through having employment.

The attraction of military culture is equally mentioned by both male and female candidates. Gaining discipline and respect are paramount in the motivation here and the reasons for this are discussed further in the next section.

2. Personal Benefits

Q: What personal benefits do you hope to gain from joining the military?

There are four main themes identified in the candidate responses. The tangible benefits mentioned come under the umbrella of Educational and Financial benefits. The other themes are entitled 'Self-enrichment' and 'Pride and Honour'. There did seem to be considerable overlap between the themes and candidates often cited reasons which fell into two or more themes.

(a) Educational benefit:

- A range of skills – communication/interpersonal skills – team-working – leadership skills – critical thinking
- Work experience – learning about aspects of military
- Military skills – survival skills
- Further study – education – professional and role specific training

The breakdown between men and women in this theme was markedly different: men 64.4 percent; women 55.0 percent. Both were high, but significantly more

men indicated educational benefit was important to them personally in joining the SANDF. Does this indicate that young men particularly feel the need for further education and training to help them in their careers? The demographics of the candidates show undergraduate degrees twice as high amongst women, and this might have had a small bearing on responses.

Here are some of the comments made:

'I hope to strengthen my leadership abilities by joining the military. Improve myself professionally and academically therefore improving my self-confidence and self-esteem.'

'I'm hoping to get leadership skills and communication skills, self-confidence, being responsible.'

'My personal benefit would be given a chance to get work experience in the technical department and then after a chance to grow my knowledge by completing a b-tech in mechanical engineering.'

'I will benefit more from joining the military like uplifting my level of education and also sharing the experience I have learned previously.'

'In joining the military u hope to gain new skills that would help me in my development as a young professional. Apart from learning new skills it will help me develop my confidence and ability to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds.'

(b) Financial benefit:

- A career – employment status and empowerment
- A job – financially support family – financial independence
- Work benefits – medical aid, pension, bursary, housing/car allowance

The percentages of candidates indicating 'financial benefit' as a personal benefit to joining the SANDF was lower than for other themes, and there were similar numbers for both men and women: 23.8 percent and 24.9 percent respectively.

There is overlap with this theme to the 'occupational benefit' theme in Question 1. Again, some responses indicated a certain desperation to get a job and earn money:

'By joining the army [...] I will be able to help out my family financially and be able to take care of myself and my relatives.'

'To get a job and be able to support my siblings financially.'

It is noticeable that the screening for the selection events did not distinguish between those applicants for whom it is "just a job" and those for whom it is "my dream". It is an indication of the very poor backgrounds of a number of

applicants, that their focus is on getting a job, any job, which will enable an income to support themselves and their families.

(c) Self-Enrichment:

- Discipline – self-discipline and time management
- Physical fitness, strength, being active and healthy
- Confidence, self-esteem, self-motivation, self-respect, mental strength
- Self-discovery, gain personal maturity, take responsibility
- Utilisation of knowledge already gained
- Travel – learn about SA, the world and different cultures

Again, the responses were similar for men and women: 56.7 percent and 57.7 percent, and at a relatively high level. Many of the responses captured how they might personally be enriched through the experience of working within the SANDF:

‘The opportunity to become a much better person.’

‘To become a man and be respectful.’

‘I’m hoping that the Navy gives a platform on starting my career as a young woman I also am hoping to learn more things to get myself developed physically and mentally.’

‘I hope to grow in terms of maturity and intelligence.’

Discipline is a huge part of this theme. Out of all the responses to the question of what personal benefits are likely to be gained, the word ‘discipline’ is mentioned 127 times:

‘The personal benefits that I would love to gain is self-respect and self-discipline.’

‘I’m hoping to gain skills about the military. Also being a person of honour and respect. I’m also hoping that the military will groom me with more discipline than I already have.’

‘I gain in experience and also certain characteristics, namely discipline, leadership and team work etc.’

(d) Pride and Honour:

- Gain respect from other people, the country, and learn to respect others
- Personal recognition – be a hero
- Be a role model to others – particularly women
- Satisfaction in helping others – serving/protecting the country – making SA/Africa/world better

Again, as in the themes above, there was a lot of overlap with other themes. The percentages were not as high as in 'Educational benefit' and 'Self-Enrichment', but again, they were similar for men and women: 27.1 percent and 28.3 percent respectively.

Comments made by female candidates a number of times were around being a role model for others:

'Becoming a role model to young people especially women, because they believe being in the military is a job or career for males. Getting the respect of other colleagues.'

'I hope to become a better individual woman as in being a good example to other ladies and motivation to them.'

'I hope to achieve the goal most captains want from us as females, which is to join parts in the military where there aren't women but only men in the squad e.g. Engineering/air defense.'

'I hope to be noticed as a woman who can stand for others.'

And helping others came out as an important aspect. This type of comment was made by candidates applying to the SAMHS, for roles in, for instance, nursing:

'To lose weight, to have self-discipline, beside the fact that I will be able to put the needs of other people first.'

A number of responses illustrated the pride and honour that candidates felt in applying and ultimately achieving a position in the SANDF:

'A different mindset on life. Physical stamina. The fulfilment of the desire to serve. Of course the pride of going through one of, if not the only training that is the toughest to accomplish.'

Summary

It is to be noted that *respect* is a significant aspect of wishing to join the SANDF. It has different aspects expressed by the candidates: firstly, the wish to gain respect from other people, secondly, to learn how to respect others, and thirdly, to increase one's self-respect. These aspects although to be found in theme (d), also came into theme (c) as a sense of self-enrichment, and into 'educational benefits' (a) through gaining military skills. Both male and female candidates indicated this was an important benefit to them, although more male than female candidates indicated that they wished to learn *how* to respect. Both sexes indicated a desire to be respected by others, but for women it was often linked to needing to have respect to operate in 'a man's world'.

Closely aligned to *respect* is *discipline* which, as stated earlier, is mentioned many times. The message given is that if an individual is disciplined then they can gain respect. The

predominant image of the SANDF is that of a disciplined and respected institution. This goes to the core of what many of the candidates were seeking in that somehow the military was going to transform them into *'becoming a better person'*. It was clear that a number of the candidates were looking for order and discipline in their lives. Phrases like *'to become a man...'* and *'I wish to become a better man...'* appeared suggesting the military is closely aligned to male identity and masculinity. As seen in the first question, the motivation of some female candidates to become *'a better woman'* is to break the stereotype of the SANDF being seen as a male domain.

One could apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in that if an individual is desperate for a job to earn money to keep him/herself and family then financial benefit and employment benefits are going to be foremost in the mind, but for others less needy, expectations are higher and consideration may touch on self-enrichment and the chance to gain new skills.

3. A Good Soldier

Q: What traits do you think are important for being a good soldier?

There were many different adjectives and descriptions used in response to this question which were grouped under 20 headings and brought into 4 main themes: (a) Physical ability, (b) Intellectual ability, (c) Integrity, and (d) Courage. Often candidates would describe the traits of a good soldier in terms which fell into all 4 themes. What stands out with this question, is how both men and women have similar views, since the percentages around the 4 categories are very close.

(a) Physical ability:

- Fit – physically active, healthy, energetic, agile – survival skills – ability to run and swim
- Strong physically – tough, aggressive in war - will to win – shoot weapons – a fighter

Physical ability was seen as the least important trait out of the four themes by both men and women: 21.1 and 23.7 percent respectively. Here are a few comments which fall into this category:

'Be physically fit, self-motivated, confidence, average or normal BMI not overweight or obese.'

'Physical fitness. Ability to swim. Run. Be responsible with your behaviour. Good strategy'

'Being fit and healthy also being able to work as a team or leadership skills.'

'To be physical, to be able to fight peacefully, to understand what being a soldier is and why it does.'

(b) Intellectual ability:

- Mentally stable/strong – able to work under pressure – resilient – positive mind/attitude – self-esteem – optimistic – adaptable – perseverance – level headed – controlled emotionally – mature and with common sense
- Communication/interpersonal skills – active listening – diplomatic skills – languages
- Leadership skills – leading by example
- Quick learner and thinker – decisive – competent – intelligent – critical/broad/logical/lateral thinker – creative problem solver

This aspect of a soldier was deemed more important than physical ability by both men and women: 35.8 and 33.5 percent. Emotional intelligence as well as good communication and leadership skills sum up the importance placed here. Comments include:

‘I feel the traits a good soldier should have should be neatness, the ability to exercise authority when needed and not abuse the authority that comes with your rank, patience as well as to maintain a cool and calm mindset under pressure.’

‘Good communication problem solving person and able to analyse or any other queries.’

‘Leadership Qualities such as being able to work as a team. Have good communication with co-workers. Ability to resolve conflict. Determination and dedication. Must not be area bound. Flexible to change.’

(c) Integrity:

- Respect (for others) – patient and tolerant
- Disciplined – self-control – meticulous – professional and able to follow orders – organised with time management
- Kind – compassionate – empathy – humanity – Ubuntu – care for others
- Honesty – trustworthy and reliable – ethically and morally sound
- Responsible – accountable
- Team worker – co-operative – supportive
- Hard-working – diligent – willing to go the extra mile – strive for excellence – goal oriented – determined
- Loyalty – dedicated – faithful – committed
- Cleanliness – neat – well-dressed – uniform
- Humble – humility – selfless – put other people’s needs before own

This grouping of adjectives used to describe the traits of a good soldier were brought under one term: ‘integrity’. The percentages of both men and women using these adjectives were very high: 82.0 and 78.8 percent. This is not surprising; *loyalty*, *respect* and *discipline* appear to be key characteristics cited. Very often comments had the word ‘respect’ or ‘respectful’ included (total of 157 times) and also ‘discipline’ (205 times):

'Respect for others, determination, courage.'

'Respectful and disciplined.'

'Respect. Although a soldier might be in a position of power, they should not exploit it. Empathy is also important, as you have to be ethical. Loyalty and a team player. Need to be able to stand together and support each other or else combat will be unsuccessful.'

'Respect for others, discipline, integrity and excellence, hard worker and dedication, loyalty and perseverance.'

'Respect, honesty, discipline, motivation, belief, unity and health'

'Self-respect, discipline, obedience and honesty.'

Discipline and perseverance.'

Discipline, good behaviour, honesty, loyalty and gratitude.'

Discipline and respect.'

For some, the uniform was a symbol of everything the SANDF stands for, including good behaviour and pride in serving the country:

'Soldier must be well dressed, dress-code is very important because it defines who you are. They must be well trained as well.'

(d) Courage:

- Confident – bold – independent – willing to take risks – explore new things – strong willed
- Brave – fearless – courageous
- Passionate – enthusiastic for the love of the country/the job/peace and security – pride/honour in serving – patriotism – sacrifice, to be prepared to fight/die for your country – peace-making and peacekeeping

This trait is considered important by a similar percentage of men and women: 29.2 percent and 30.1 percent respectively.

'Pledging allegiance to a country, [being] trustworthy and interested in the country, willing to engage in matters where deployment is necessary for safeguarding natural interests and global peace. Pride, commitment and loyalty shapes a good soldier.'

'A soldier must be a person with a good judgement, or individual who is willing to take risks, as well as enhancing integrity and peace using diplomatic skills to safeguard domestic and foreign traits.'

'To be disciplined at all times, to have integrity, highly motivated to serve and to sacrifice.'

Summary

Both men and women were broadly in agreement as to the traits of a good soldier. What stood out was the need for discipline and respect (respect for others and self-respect), and, in the same theme, a solid basis of loyalty and moral aptitude together with a sense of caring and selflessness. The physical aspects of being a soldier were not seen as paramount and least mentioned by candidates. Intellectual ability and the skills to communicate effectively were deemed important by circa 1/3rd of candidates. On a slightly lower level, bravery and patriotism were cited.

The responses to this question show that irrespective of gender, there is broad agreement as to what attributes and behaviours constitute a good soldier. More masculine traits such as being aggressive and a fighter were only mentioned by a few candidates and equally by both men and women. When strength was mentioned it was as much about having 'a strong heart' or to be 'mentally strong' as to have 'physical strength'. More common were the characteristics of empathy, integrity, team playing and perseverance.

4. Women in the Military

Q: Do you think it is necessary to have more women in the military? Explain

There are a huge range of different jobs being applied for, from cook to doctor to infantry soldier and signals engineer, and so understandably there are different outlooks on the question asked. The overwhelming response was 'yes', but there were some 'No's' too, and some candidates took the question literally and thought it meant 'more women than men'.

The positive responses are divided into two themes: Equal Rights and Special Contribution. The negative responses too are put into two categories: Lack of Ability and Morality and Cohesion. The candidates who took the question literally numbered 15 men and 9 women (out of 600).

(a) Equal Rights:

- SA practices gender equality—women should be equal—balance the genders— stop the discrimination
- Women can do anything men can do (and often better!)—have the ability/capability
- Break down stereotypes and role segregation—change society
- Empower women— make them independent—stop men undermining them
- Women were excluded in the past—times are changing —deserve a chance
- Women need experience in the military—opportunity to serve—take responsibility – to grow and prove themselves – defend themselves – must meet required standards

The female responses which came into this theme were 73.2 percent of the total female input (n = 194). The male candidates were a lower percentage at 63.8 percent (n = 214).

Below are a sample of the responses, which show the majority of men and women are supportive of an equality of opportunity approach to employment in the SANDF for both women and men. It is often cited in terms of a human rights approach. They also underline the common view that women should be given a chance to prove themselves within the armed forces. A few responses were somewhat grudging in support for more women in the military saying that they are supportive because the government insists on gender equality, and this was part of the BEE program.

'Yes, because now this democracy in SA men and women are equal.'

'Yes, people have this tendency to think that the military is only for men but it's time to change that perspective. Women have rights to join the military and serve the country just like men. So this myth of seeing men as superior should stop.'

'Yes, so that we can promote gender equity and also those women are just like us they can do whatever men can do. It's important to have them because most of the women they can bring new ideas in the system.'

'Of course as a country we cannot talk about women equality while we still have a small number of women serving in the military. There must be a balance.'

'It is necessary South Africa is fighting against gender inequality so in every aspect we need to have gender balance.'

'Yes, so that bias can cease and gender equality be considered.'

'Yes, because women are mothers of the nation and it is their right to be treated equally with men.'

Here are some of the comments which focused on the aspect of a new era in which women can be given a chance and opportunities previously denied them:

'Yes, due to change of time, women play a very big role in changing the society.'

'Yes, because military is mostly considered as a male dominated career and that has to change.'

'Yes, women were the previously disadvantaged group. I think and strongly feel they should also be given a chance. Because everything a man can do, a woman is also capable of doing.'

'Women in our country are told that their only obligation is to get married and have kids. We are not raised to be whatever we choose to be, certain jobs are being picked out for us. More women in the military will prove that gender equality does exist.'

There is also an emphasis, not only of equality of opportunity, but the importance of treating men and women the same, and to the same end goal. The approach is that the best candidate, whether female or male, should get the job/promotion:

'Yes, it is necessary, because gender does not make any difference in the military the aim is to serve and protect our country.'

'Yes, because although men will contribute more to the physicality of being a soldier, they bring the same capabilities, work better under pressure and remain humble. Having more [women] will show that they are able to perform the same and should not be treated differently.'

'I think it is great that women are given opportunity to join the military. I do however also think that applicants should be assessed on skills and achievements, not according to gender or race, whichever is the best candidate for the position should be employed.'

In some of the responses, there was an emphasis on empowering women:

'Yes, through allowing women in the army, women are no longer treated weak and defenseless they feel empowered and part of something.'

'Yes, because we live in a democratic country, and for women empowerment.'

'Yes, because the empowerment of women is of importance and it will also help inspire other women all over the world.'

'Yes, because it will help women gain more confidence and be able to stand for what they believe in. To give the women a chance to showcase what their made of and capable of. Women empowerment is needed.'

The empowerment of women was also needed to show that they are not weak and subject to abuse:

***'Yes! As for the problems we are facing right now in our country with the abuse of women and children I think this will give them courage to be able to stand up for themselves the training they'll be able to defend and protect themselves and their children.'*³**

(b) Special Contribution:

- Essentialist characteristics of women (compassionate, caring, perseverance, more co-ordination, submissive) – different from men – bring new ideas/different perspectives – multi-tasking – neutralise culture

³ The statement from the South African Government, following the Presidential Summit against Gender-based Violence and Femicide, described the situation as a National crisis and the rate of femicide in South Africa as amongst the highest in the world: <https://www.gov.za/speeches/declaration-presidential-summit-against-gender-based-violence-and-femicide-2-nov-2018-0000>

- Military will be improved as a result of more women—good team work—men need women’s input – better environment for women
- Need to inspire future generations of girls—need role models (to show women, and men)

The percentage of responses falling into this theme were much lower than (a), and again, the female response was significantly higher than for men: 29.8 vs 22.0 percent respectively.

There are comments about changing attitudes around gender norms, in particular, male stereotypes, and providing the opportunity to create new female role models:

‘Yes. As to break the stereotype that men are stronger therefore more likely to have protective traits. So women joining is a great idea to stop the narrow minded thinking.’

‘Yes, because it will remove that stigma that women are made to do kitchen work only.’

‘Yes. To put a stop to the sexist notion that "the army is for men only because women are weak."’

Following on from comments made under ‘Equal Rights’, there is a view often made by female candidates in particular, that women can do anything men can do, and often do it better! But a common thread, which is illustrated by comments below, is that women bring something different to the table. Often essentialist qualities are cited as reasons why women are or will be successful working in the military. A few responses pointed to the preponderance of female-headed households and how this indicated the strength and capability of women. Conversely, individual female qualities are used as excuses for not allowing women into the SANDF and in particular to take up certain roles, such as that of combat soldier (as can be seen in (c) below).

‘Yes. Women are good decision makers and they [are] also responsible and caring.’

‘Yes, firstly to balance between men and women and secondly women bring a new characteristic that men don't have much of, which is compassion and they're born to be caring and understanding nature which will contribute greatly in different fields in the military.’

‘Yes, because women have a certain role to play that sometimes a man can't do.’

‘Yes, to be more diverse in the military. Having women might add more intelligence.’

(c) Lack of ability:

- Yes, but only in certain roles – in jobs suited to women, eg cooking – as ‘companions’
- Yes, as long as - we are not at war – they are physically fit – not bringing personal problems to work
- Women should not be in battle/war- it’s a man’s job- women could get harmed- should be at home.
- Women are too unfit/lazy/weak/soft – women not physically strong/brave enough- get pregnant.

Of the responses from female candidates, 4.5 percent fell into this theme, and 14.9 percent of the men. Is this surprising? Responses that come into this category represent conservative views, and, as the demographics show, candidates have come from all parts of South Africa, often very rural areas. The higher male response in this theme also points to the universal stereotype that men are the protectors, protecting women and children.

A number of responses highlighted the strength differential between men and women, indicating the unsuitability of women in the armed forces because of lack of physical strength. This also extended to mental strength. It is an indication of the narrowness of understanding of some of the candidates as to the function, purpose and wide-ranging tasks undertaken by the SANDF, and the focus on the perceived primary task of fighting wars:

‘It is not really necessary because we all know women are not really strong or brave enough to deal with fighting and killing.’

‘No, because there is no place for a woman in a battle situation.’

‘No, women are weak when it comes to threats, instead women should be recruited under cooking services because their hands can cook delicious food for real soldiers.’

Other reasons given for women’s unsuitability for service:

‘No because women are lazy and they getting pregnant during the work.’

‘No, women are needed most in the social life as they take good care of kids than in the military.’

‘In my point of view I think women are not 100% for army training and work and they are too smooth for such employment.’

As indicated in the comment above re women being suited to cooking, if women were to be allowed to join the armed forces, they would only be suitable for certain roles, particularly catering roles, it would seem:

‘Yes, because they can go for medics.’

‘Mostly in health section but not in the field of battle.’

'Yes women are being stronger daily by the challenges they have and there are careers within the army like catering that needs women because not all men can cook.'

'Yes, because there are other careers on the military, like chef so women can be the ones who will be dealing with cooking.'

In some of the comments there is a hint of men's identity and the nature of masculinity:

'No, men are more likely to work with guns and so on. Some people want/might not take our country serious.'

And of course, women are seen by many, particularly men, as needing to be at home, especially when children are involved:

'No, women are the ones who must take care of their children on daily basis. Builders can be away yes like 2 month and it is not a good way to start a relationship with your kids.'

'It's not necessary because most of the work done there is mainly for men, women can also do it but men are the people who should do it because the duties are very dangerous and for a woman who has a family it would be a great loss if she was to die during the wars.'

(d) Morality and Cohesion:

- Women are a distraction.
- Danger of contracting STIs

The percentage of candidates citing this theme in response to the question of more women in the military, was very low: 0.7 percent female respondents, and 4.4 percent male. The particularly low female percentage is not surprising since the aspect of 'morality and cohesion' is taken very much from a man's perspective. Here are some of the comments:

'No because it is really important to concentrate on your position, you will lose respect for others more when you date your colleagues. In a nutshell it is not good to have more women.'

'No, because you are not going to focus on your work.'

'No-because it will affect your health fitness and I will lose focus and self-confidence and it will create a lot of diseases in my system.'

'No, because they might fight you and kill each other. There will be no trust, spreading of diseases.'

Summary

There is a definite gendered divide in opinion over this question of whether there should be more women in the military, but overall, the responses expressed were largely positive from both sexes. The biggest percentages were for the theme 'equal rights', although at 73 percent, women's comments were 10 percentage points higher than men's. This was all about equality of opportunity and treatment, the removal of discrimination, and a change from the past in allowing women to prove themselves. Many of the women expressed supreme confidence that women could perform to men's standards if not better.

The 'special contribution' theme again had a higher percentage of female responses (by 8 percentage points). Bearing in mind the vast range of jobs being applied for, women were deemed to bring something different to the table. What may be hidden is to what extent responses extol having more women in the military but meaning only in certain positions, for example, as cooks.

The negative category 'lack of ability', was over 10 percentage points higher for men than for women. The comments ranged from patronising (... *'[Women's] hands can cook delicious food for real soldiers'*) to derogatory and suspicious, to putting women on a social pedestal where army work was deemed too grubby for them. Many comments in this theme indicated a definite gendered division of labour where the traditional role of women is seen as more domestic.

The final theme garnered very few responses, but again male responses were significantly higher than from women. They revolved around fear of catching diseases and distraction from one's job.

The following comment by a female candidate gives an indication of the deeply embedded social mores in South Africa and the gendered meaning and connotation of military:

'No, men are more likely to work with guns and so on. Some people want/might not take our country seriously.'

5. Which Service

Q: Where would you like to serve in the military and why?

The responses to this question were split between what military department they were applying to/wished to serve in, and geographically where they would like to be based. Four themes emerged: Altruism, Personal Benefit, Occupational Benefit and No preference. There is a certain amount of overlap between the themes, for instance, often altruistic reasons are combined with an individual having the necessary skills to perform a particular role.

(a) Altruism

- Inside SA – to serve/protect SA – to tackle problems in SA, eg gangsterism, drug smuggling, chronic diseases – explore SA
- Outside SA – want to see peace in Africa/Burundi/Somalia/DRC and disaster countries
- To help people – support role – caring – where people need protection – to save lives – to better our country – Health Services

The responses here were higher for female candidates by 7 percentage points; women = 37.3 percent; men = 30.1 percent.

These are some of the comments made:

'In the SAMHS because I believe our country needs more medical care concerning HIV, Cancer, TB and other chronic diseases, therefore, being a helping hand in eliminating or preventing the spread it needs people who have more compassion and patience.'

'Intelligence, gather enough necessary information for my country to be analysed and make decisions which are good for the nation.'

'It is completely up to where I am needed. I think that one should accept the fact that there are terms and conditions before apply. I do not have dependants, nor am I married, so I will go where I am needed.'

'DRC because when I watch the news I see that they are in need of a helping hand eg. Food, shelter etc. I hand power, I would help schools to get better education so that they can uplift their standard of living in the future.'

(b) Personal Benefit

- Everywhere – to travel around the world..... to bring peace – meet new people – explore new places
- Home or nearby – to be close to family – for benefit of family/community/province
- Away/far from home
- Cape Town/Pretoria/Simon's Town/Mpumalanga/Potchefstroom, etc - like something about the place – weather – sea/harbour
- Have certain skills/knowledge – personal qualifications - studied the topic to be..... – have personal characteristics to be..... – have technical skills
- Aspire/my dream to be - have a passion for....

The level of responses in this theme was similar for men and women: 37.9 and 41.4 percent respectively. This category was where the women's responses were highest of the 4 themes. Some of the responses were related to wishing to be near home and family:

'South African Air Force in Pretoria. I have family there so I want to be near them and protect them.'

'In Mpumalanga because it's where my family is especially my mother so it's better to be near your family to be there when they need you most.'

But just as there were expressions of wishing to be near home, there were others, both female and male, that expressed the opposite viewpoint. These are comments from two female applicants:

'Pretoria, because it is far from home, I want to start life all over again, learn to be independent and responsible.'

'At Durban because it is far from home I would like to concentrate on it without any interruption like home stuffs.'

With regard to certain skills and wish to utilise these, these are some of the comments:

'In the supply chain/logistics side, it's something I studied and so I believe I can add value.'

'In the technical because I am good at electricity and I like to work with it. I was also specialising with it at school during study and I would be happy when I get this opportunity.'

'Health facility so that I can provide my skills and knowledge and my degree in order to be the person that provide[s] the best service in the countries. I would also like to serve as social work[er] for the employee[s] that are facing personal challenges on their lives at work.'

(c) Occupational Benefit

- Gauteng, Durban etc - because more opportunities here – more military departments - dockyard
- To fly/Airforce–To be at sea/Navy
- To learn to be - to learn about – to train as doctor/nurse/paramedic, etc – to gain skills – become a specialist
- Opportunities/Challenges in – the best unit – inspires confidence/pride in – best training
- Want active service – to take part in war/to defend – to be a fighter pilot – to be physically/mentally fit – make a difference fighting terrorism – Army/Infantry/ Armoured corps/Signal corps/Special Forces/Support function

The male applicants cited responses higher in this theme: 43.5 percent, as opposed to 35.4 percent for the female candidates. This correlates with the responses to the question of personal benefit from joining the armed forces (Q2), in that men gave a much higher response rate than women to the theme of 'educational benefit', referring to the opportunity to learn new skills. Here are some of the comments:

'SA Navy, because they offer opportunities like Naval technical officer training. I believe that with the skills and knowledge combined with training and resource in the SA Navy we can improve in this field engineering, design and maintenance of equipment and ships.'

'I'd like to serve in the Navy as an engineer as I am curious as to how things work out and because of my love for physics.'

'Air forces section, because I am interested in mechanical engineering sector. I think it will provide me with the skills I require in order to be recognized as a mechanical engineer.'

Often particular locations were mentioned for specific characteristics of that place:

'Western Cape to protect costal area.'

'Durban because the busiest harbour in SA.'

And the following are comments from male candidates which illustrate a certain masculine propensity to be involved in fighting and close combat and the masculine link to guns:

'Infantry, because I'm interested in close combat and the training and discipline.'

'Special forces regiment. Best of the best and it provides the most action and adrenalin.'

'Special forces- I want to be in the fight not far away from it.'

'Army- infantry. I like to be physically fit and mentally challenged.'

'The army fighting for peace. I always wanted to be good with guns and I am not scared to die, so I wouldn't be sitting in SA watching innocent people die. I would volunteer to go outside the country and help. It's better to die in battle than at home drinking coffee.'

But it was not only men who applied for combat roles, these are comments from female applicants:

'The infantry, the combat soldier because feel like am physical and mentally fit and can withstand hard and harsh conditions.'

'Infantry, because I am willing to serve and protect our country as the infantries are known as the ones who die first. I would like to be handy and in action to fight against any enemy/crime to reduce our countries crime rate.'

(d) No Preference

- Anywhere – does not matter where – not sure/don't know - just follow instructions

The numbers of candidates expressing no preference for either an arm of Service or geographical location were very small: 4.5 percent for women, 6.2 percent for men.

'I don't know because I don't know what the Air Force offers.'

'Not sure, it doesn't matter.'

Summary

The level of female responses to the question of where to serve, was much higher in the 'altruism' theme than that of men's by 7 percentage points, which is above all showing a desire to help people whether at home or abroad. Whereas the opposite is true under 'occupational benefit' where a much higher percentage of responses are from male candidates and shows there is more concern to focus on career opportunities and training in different branches of SANDF, and a desire for more technical training, such as engineering. Could this indicate the gendered divide in subjects studied at school/college where boys are more likely to study STEM⁴ subjects? This theme also captures the 'masculine' combat side of military, such as, fighting and use of guns.

Worryingly, over 6 percent of male candidates and a slightly lower figure for women, expressed no preference for a branch of service or geographical location of any kind, either from lack of knowledge or indifference. How did they manage to get this far in the selection process?

6. Challenges

Q: What challenges do you envisage you will experience serving in the military?

Again, four themes emerged which have been labelled as: Military Culture, Cohesion, Fear and None. The responses which came into the different categories were evenly balanced between men and women. The biggest differential was for the last category where no challenges were envisaged and men's responses were only higher by 4 percentage points. Women's responses often comment on issues of gender inequality and discrimination, as can be seen from the quotations (b) below.

(a) Military Culture

- Physical training – basic military training – physical endurance

⁴ Science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects

- Being away from family/home/friends – lack of social life/relationships – relocation - isolation
- To kill someone – see people die/suffer – combat
- Physical fitness and strength – health/well-being – being injured – possibility of death
- Discipline – how to take orders....when you might disagree
- Deploying to a foreign country – working with people in different countries – travelling – going away – being in dangerous place – making peace
- Working under pressure – overtime + long hours – time management – hard work – small holidays
- Adjusting to the environment – soldier’s life – early rising – wearing uniform – changing diet – lack of sleep/food – dirty/cold water – lack of freedom MC
- Learning rules and regulations – mastering skills – understanding new facts – knowing what’s going on

This was by far the largest category of responses. Both men and women recorded 68 percent (women 0.6 percent higher than men). Often the reasons given were a combination of aspects of military culture.

Firstly, being away from family/friends/home for long periods was cited often as a challenge. This was just as much a male point of view, as a female one. A few male candidates particularly talked about the challenge of being absent from family from the point of view of family responsibility, that they would have less time for family, and that it was often about the family needing them:

‘I will be away from home and my family will need me for a short period of time per year. The possibilities to die are very high.’

‘Change of lifestyle as soldiers have to be fit to be prepared for deployment. Choosing between deployment and family responsibility. Changing provinces as one will be exposed to a lot of racial segregation.’⁵

And having little time off:

‘Only having a few days off.’

‘[Difficult training, challenge to prove her renewal contract], small holidays.’

Physical fitness and training was another oft cited challenge for both men and women. Women in particular were concerned about being overweight and unfit and not having done any kind of fitness training before:

⁵ This comment was made by a 24 year old black African from KwaZulu-Natal

'Well as a woman, I think I will most probably have physical challenges, depending on how far we are pushed but I believe I am determined to break through any challenge or obstacle.'

'Fitness! To gain confidence in who I am as a woman.'

'Fitness training, sexism and adaption to environment.'

'Exercise that will be done on training because I don't usually do exercise.'

The aspect of being disciplined and taking orders was another challenge for some. This is a comment by a female applicant:

'Becoming a soldier requires obedience and discipline and a lot of times it is hard to follow orders but putting your personal feelings aside and doing what you have been told no matter how hard it is will be a big challenge.'

And these are comments by two male candidates:

'Being told what to do and when to do it without considering how I would feel about it.'

'My patience, discipline and how to react when given commands even with something I disagree on.'

Seeing people suffering or dying is a challenge mentioned by some:

'Because I am looking at SA Navy my challenge is to see people die. I will make sure that I'm going to help them.'

'Losing soldiers, seeing injured soldiers in agony but still we serve the brave. [Also learning new things, physical abilities. Going in different countries learning to adapt in different environments conditions.]'

Or the prospect of being injured or dying oneself:

'Is that you are between death sometimes or injured.'

'To be injured, to die.'

'Coming in close with danger and possibly injury.'

The challenge of adapting to a new environment is mentioned several times. Specifically, the environment of the military in terms of long hours, early rising, alien food or not enough food, and so forth, is of concern:

'Working long hours and doing assignments in other foreign countries.'

'Long hours of excessive training, sleepless nights, extreme conditions (hot and cold), carrying heavy equipment for a long time from point A to point B.'

'Tough times, like waking up early in the morning and going to bed late at night. Going on a hunger period for a few days.'

'Waking up very early, hard training and not eating as much as you normally do.'

Some candidates thought the main challenge was learning new ways of doing things:

'Learning all the rules and regulation I think that will be challenging but I'm a good learner I will learn fast.'

(b) Cohesion

- Dealing with new (difficult) people/personalities/backgrounds/ cultures/languages – communication – working as team
- Discrimination because of gender/culture/class/colour/appearance
- Being able to take criticism – being spoken about – attitude
- Superiors exploiting their power – people undermining you – male dominance/ competition

The percentages of responses to this theme were similar: 14.3 percent for women and 12.5 percent for male candidates.

It was a concern by many of the female candidates that they would be discriminated against in some way because of their sex. See the following comments:

'Some people might take advantage of that I am a woman and end up not taking or giving me respect.'

'Perhaps it would be being treated differently from men since I'm a woman. Therefore, the task that I will be summoned to do may be calculated/estimated on being enough for a woman.'

'Being a woman, and not being taken serious of because of my gender. Being told I can't play part in certain jobs.'

'Being given easier tasks because I am a woman or being provoked by being given impossible tasks to prove a point that women can't be in the industry.'

'Being looked down on because I am a woman. Unfair advantage.'

'Mostly I think the challenges would be gender related. In terms of the training and how females will be addressed. I think it would be a challenge at first to be in front of a person dictating wh[at] must be done ignoring the gender differences.'

In addition, one female candidate presented her challenge as being in competition with the men:

'Having to compete against men in the military.'

The challenge of communicating with difficult people was cited in different forms:

'[The challenge of some times being for my family. The challenge of being taken to where I stay and go somewhere that I know.] The challenge to trying to make peace with people who don't want to make peace.'

'[Training hard and work hard is one of the challenges but I am ready to take it as I will be working with people sometimes.] There will be conflict and misunderstanding of one another.'

'Working with people speaking other languages.'

'Working with someone who don't listen.'

'Meeting rude people, fighting for peace.'

'Personal conflicts, communication barriers, as it will be people from different backgrounds [and obviously waking up in the morning.]'

And being able to take criticism:

'The challenges, I think I will experience serving in the military would be being able to take people's opinions not personal, trying to adjust to the environment and sticking to a given time slot to do things.'

(c) Fear

- Trusting one's judgement – self-doubt - being confident/independent – mental strength
- Swimming – drowning – spending time in water
- Personal fears/shortcomings – hydrophobia/shyness/guns/danger (animals)/ personal failure/heights – fear of the unknown
- Morality – conscience

The figures were very low for this theme: the percentage of women's responses was 8.6 percent, and men's 9.5 percent.

Both men and women expressed concern about not being able to swim; mainly these were the naval candidates:

'Handling big guns, swimming, climbing mountains.'

'Swimming only.'

'Learning to swim, improving my physical fitness, adapting to the sea side.'

'[The issue of male dominance,] being asked to swim, that's something I can't do. Being asked to lead a group of people, I don't doubt my leadership skills. However, it does seem intimidating.'

Fear of failure was upper most in some candidates' minds:

'Maybe not passing well, or doing well in some of their tests.'

'Not being able to finish a certain task in time.'

'Not being selected.'

(d) None

- None – take it as it comes – or a lot of challenges but will handle

20 women (7.5 percent) and 40 men (11.9 percent) stated that they would not face any challenges serving in the military. These are typical responses from this category from two young men:

'None that I am aware of but willingness to take every challenge as a learning curve.'

'I don't think there would be many that I could think of because I am always dedicated and up to the task. I am always more than willing to learn new things adapting in new environments and learning others' cultures is not a challenge I can think of.'

Summary

By far the biggest response both for men and women was the challenge of military culture. This was an all-encompassing theme, ranging from early rising to taking orders, and extensive training to the prospect of dying. Being away from family and friends was one of the most oft cited challenges. Within the SANDF, men and women are treated equally and undertake the same training, etc.

The other themes had much lower percentages, and sexism, which was an issue raised by a number of female candidates came into 'cohesion', where the percentage was slightly higher for women than men at 14.3 percent. Self-doubt and fear of swimming were encapsulated in 'fear' where men's responses were marginally higher than women's. The confidence seen in the 'none' category was much more prominently displayed by men than women.

7. Peacekeeper traits

Q: What character traits do you regard as important in a peacekeeper?

101 candidates did not answer this question which primarily indicates a lack of knowledge of what peacekeeping is, and therefore inability to answer; in addition, question fatigue may have set in. Those who did enter a comment had responses with wide-ranging characteristics. On the one hand, many candidates talked about the importance of being disciplined and following orders, but then on the other, it was about personally taking responsibility, listening to both sides, communicating and preventing conflict. The four main themes which came out of the responses have been labelled as: Diplomacy, Integrity, Courage and Intellectual Ability. Most responses covered a combination of the themes.

Some candidates provided a homily on the importance of peacekeeping:

'It is not called a country if there is no peace within it. Peace is the main foundation and every country in today's time.'

'To provide peace across the globe and also the humanity. To prevent future conflicts and upcoming wars. To strengthen communication within the states and the humanity in order to prevent any conflict.'

And one young woman brought a gendered aspect to her response:

'Gender navigation skills. Calm in nature - able to 'work' in riots.'

Comparisons can be made to the responses to question 3 as to what makes a good soldier. The themes are not the same⁶, which indicates differences in opinions of what a good soldier is, as opposed to a peacekeeper. Firstly, physical ability is not seen as particularly important for a peacekeeper: the characteristic has been incorporated into the 'courage' theme, and the percentages here for responses is low (f: 16.2 percent; m: 13.1 percent), whereas physical ability for a soldier garners responses of between 21 – 24 percent.

(a) Diplomacy

- Communication/Interpersonal/Negotiation/Mediation/Conflict Management skills – use of different languages – tactful – diplomatic – talkative – extrovert – persuasive – confident – assertive
- Listening (to all/both sides) – non-judgmental – keeping quiet – not arguing – objective – democratic – counselling
- Leadership skills – professional – responsible – able to put personal feelings aside – manage other people
- Team player – co-operative – unity
- Fair – open-minded/openness – neutral (not biased – not take sides) – agreeable – approachable – willingness – interact with different races, etc – welcoming – worldly
- Calm – peaceful – tranquil – not violent or aggressive – temperate – gentle – even-tempered – patient – tolerant
- Persevere – determination – hard-working – diligent – self-motivated – positive – optimistic – be happy (not moody) – enthusiastic

This range of traits was considered more important by female candidates than male ones: 61.1 percent vs 53.1 percent.

⁶ Themes for question 3 on what traits make a good soldier are: Physical ability, Intellectual ability, Integrity and Courage.

Many of the characteristics for a good soldier which came under the theme of 'intellectual ability' (m: 35.8 percent and f: 33.5 percent) are to be found here under the theme of 'diplomacy', such as communication and leadership skills. There is a very definite increase in focus on such skills (as can be seen by the percentage differences), and aspects such as, active listening and being non-judgmental.

'Empathetic quality- being able to listen to both sides of the story without judging.'

'A peacekeeper must have effective communication skills, must listen to both sides and understand what the problem might be, must not favour one over the other, must willingly help when a problem occurs.'

'Leadership skills, being able to communicate well and have the ability to remain calm in stressful situations.'

'The ability to interact with different kinds of people irrespective of their age, gender or race.'

Within this theme, there are lists of personality traits that are deemed important:

'Calmness, patience, understanding and good listener, curious and aware.'

'Patience, negotiating skills and people skills.'

A comment from a female candidate combines the role of soldier with that of peacekeeper, and that one's role is to prevent war, not participate in it:

'Stopping the violence, being in the army is not all about war. Peace[keeping] plays a big role in stopping war.'

(b) Integrity

- Self-discipline – strictness – obedient – focussed – controlled - well-organised – good timekeeping/management – precise – careful – dutiful – follow the rules
- Empathy – compassionate – sympathetic – caring – considerate – loving – thoughtful – kind-hearted – benevolent – forgiving (not holding grudges) – understanding – generous – friendly – kindness – supportive – use of humour – helpful
- Patriotic – love/compassion for your country/job – want to serve SA – drive to protect – change the world
- Loyalty – committed – dedicated – reliable – faithful
- Honest – trustworthy – integrity – sincere – morally good – authentic – noble
- Respect – dignity – polite – courteous
- Humble – humility – selflessness

The responses here are the same for men and women: 55.5 and 55.4 percent.

The 'integrity' category for question 3 (traits of a soldier) garnered much higher percentages: 82.0 and 78.8 percent. This can be partly explained by the fact that certain soldier traits were not thought important to mention in respect of a peacekeeper, for example, a tidy uniform, being clean and well-dressed. This may be partly explained by the fact that the uniform is seen as a symbol of South African pride and patriotism, and this is not foremost in candidates' minds when thinking of peacekeeping in foreign places. Also team-working appeared strongly when describing a soldier but not so much for a peacekeeper. The emphasis for so many of the respondents was about having a caring/loving/generous, but disciplined approach.

'A positive attitude, courteous towards others and have a keen interest in serving your country.'

'Respectfulness, care for others, high level of discipline, leadership abilities and diplomatic mindset.'

'Disciplined, loves people and time conscious.'

'A passion to protect the innocent, ability to keep your personal views from hindering your ability to serve. Having compassionate but discipline approach.'

Again, as can be seen by the above responses, certain characteristics are highlighted as important:

'Being respectful, humble, good listener and good communication.'

'They should be disciplined, patient and show good qualities of empathy and truly in love with their jobs.'

'Understanding, not over-reacting and the ability to look at situations without being emotional.'

'Honesty, integrity, caring, loving, willingness to listen, willingness to speak for those without a voice.'

(c) Courage

- Decisive (able to make important decisions – that benefit all) – risk-taker – quick thinking – action-oriented – adaptable/versatile
- Strong – physically fit – stop the violence/enforce peace – a fighter
- Brave – fearless – courage – emotionally intelligent/resilient – strong-minded – cope with stress

The percentages of responses for male and female candidates in this theme were fairly low: m: 13.1 percent, f: 16.2 percent. This compared to the same theme for question 3 re traits of a good soldier where m: 29.2 percent and f: 30.1 percent. Although, this may partly be explained by the fact that patriotism and fighting/dying

for one's country is included here, whereas the aspect of patriotism, albeit with a different nuance, has been placed in 'integrity' the theme above. It implies that soldiering is connected to fighting for one's country (if attacked), and yet, for peacekeeping one is carrying out a mandate for one's country but under different circumstances. Here are some of the comments:

'Is person who is brave and know how to handle a difficult situation to bring peace that person sacrifices.'

'Be brave, be co-ordinated.'

'To control anger, be punctual and time management, respect, physically strong, no health issue, decision making and ability to make the right decision, a person who has passion, friendly and strong, not a short temper, a heart for serving people.'

'You must be strong and not be afraid.'

(d) Intellectual Ability

- Have knowledge – get facts straight – understand the problem/situation – use intelligence – wise – think outside the box – problem solving – analytical – being critical – logical – innovate – creative – curious – realistic
- Observant – aware – being mindful – self-aware – sensitive – attentive – receptive (to people of country) – incisive – good judge of character

The responses to this theme were low, but with female candidates deeming 'intellectual ability' more important than male candidates: f: 18.4 percent and m: 12.8 percent. What is recognised here is the complexity of situations that peacekeepers may find themselves in; an emphasis on thinking before acting. These are some of the comments:

'The peacekeeper has to be open minded and a critical thinker, they should remain neutral and not be biased.'

'Being a good listener, open minded and able to think out the box, be able to move out of your comfort zone and risk taker.'

'Being able to judge a situation, being willing to understand both parties, can carefully listen and observe.'

'Someone who is able to identify the problem and come up with a good solution which will be fair to both parties.'

'Has to understand the problem before interacting or reacting. Good at research.'

'Usage of intellectual capacity and logical reasoning.'

Summary

The differences in characteristics for the role of a peacekeeper as opposed to a soldier are subtly expressed. There are some gendered differences of opinion on what traits a peacekeeper should have. Firstly, more female candidates by a factor of 8 percentage points value 'diplomacy' more highly than the male candidates, that is, the importance of communication skills, listening, being fair and calm in approach and showing leadership qualities. Whereas 'Integrity', being disciplined and loyal, was rated highly and equally by both sexes. Slightly more females than male candidates valued bravery, but these were a small percentage. So too was 'intellectual ability', but nevertheless, the female percentage was 6 points higher than for the men. This showed women in particular placed importance on analysing the situation and 'thinking before acting'.

8. Peacekeeping Missions

Q: Explain why you would like/not like to serve on peacekeeping missions?

Similar to the previous question, 116 candidates did not write any answer; and likewise, this reluctance to respond, primarily indicates a lack of understanding of what peacekeeping is or what they might commit themselves to. Approximately 80 percent of those who did respond pointed to a desire to serve on a peacekeeping mission; approximately 20 percent were against the prospect; some respondents straddled both, along the lines of, 'don't like it, but will if necessary....' Four main themes emerged from the responses which were given the following labels: Altruistic, Personal benefit, Danger and Capability. Again, many of the responses included aspects of more than one theme.

A few candidates, through what they wrote, indicated they thought peacekeeping was something South Africa needed, either to bring about peace or maintain peace:

'I would love to serve on peace-making missions because I feel like our country needs peace, it needs people who will strive as the advocate of peace, who will master the wrong lessons and show people direction so I am willing to be one.'

'So that the country can be at peace and not have civil wars and just so that the country is really at peace.'

'I would love to change the corruption and crime going on in SA and in that I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions.'

Yet others indicated, somewhat ambiguously, that it was through participating on peacekeeping missions that peace was ensured back home:

'I would like to assist on peacekeeping missions as I'll be protecting my country in a peaceful manner.'

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions to make our country a peaceful place to live without war etc.'

Many of the responses from both men and women were lofty in their rhetoric and provided 'big picture' reasons for either wanting or not wanting to participate in peacekeeping, for example:

'I would like to serve in peacekeeping missions because I believe more in a united world in order to be able to accomplish a greater and better new world'

'I believe war is unnecessary and was created to benefit greatly, it is inhumane. If peacekeeping missions' first priority is the well-being of every single human, then I would without a shadow of a doubt pledge my life to seeing it succeed.'

Whereas for others, it was taken very much from an individual viewpoint:

'Because most people do break the laws so it might happen when I try to tell the person how that person has broken the [law] it might be hard for me to control the situation.'

(a) Altruistic

- To work for peace – World/Africa/Country/SA better without war/violence/xenophobia/environmental problems
- Protect SA – keep peace in SA – promote SA
- To serve/help people – change lives – give people Freedom
- To save lives – ensure safety for all – stop killing
- Soldiers' imperative to keep peace – purpose of military
- Chance to travel – see and learn about other cultures
- Work still to do in RSA – work based in SA – lack of promotion

This was the most compelling theme for the candidates, both male and female, but particularly the former: M: 43 percent, F: 35.4 percent.

Many comments were about helping vulnerable people and saving lives:

'I will like to serve on peacekeeping mission because it will be a great duty to serve helpless and innocent people.'

'Making sure everyone is safe, no one is harmed unnecessarily.'

'I would like it because that gives me the opportunity to defend the defenceless.'

'Lives are at risk, but for me serving on the basis of saving lives I wouldn't mind being on that mission.'

Others focused on the nature of peacekeeping:

'If it wasn't for peacekeeping our country would not be where it is. We achieved what we did because of peace so we should help others achieve peace. We need peace to focus on improving technology, focus on innovation. Peacekeeping is the right thing to do.'

'I would like because I believe in peace making and don't like to solve problems by fighting but I want to solve problems by speaking and motivating.'

'It is because it is a very critical thing and it needs a good vision.'

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions because it makes the situation calm.'

'I would definitely be interested in helping other countries achieve peace. This can only be done by helping countries obtain stability, which is particularly lacking in African states where political instability is at the core of conflict.'

For some, the love of their country was the driving force:

'I think it is risky but I would like to serve on it because I love my country, I can do all the hard work for it.'

And for other candidates, it was a matter of duty:

'Yes, I would like to serve peacekeeping missions because [as] a soldier it is your duty to ensure that there is peace in your neighbouring countries.'

Some candidates were attracted by the thought of travel:

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions as I would get to be deployed and make an impact on other countries and it would also help me to travel and see the world.'

'Because it'll involve travelling a lot. I'll get to meet and learn about other cultures.'

Overall, there was a lot of confusion as to what 'peacekeeping' is. The following four comments by both male and female candidates show peacekeeping is felt to be the main purpose of the military:

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions as I believe that is why the army was formed.'

'Yes, I would like to serve peacekeeping because as I want to be in the military I believe it's all about peace and keep the good image of the country.'

'I would like. Reason: that is the primary duty of a soldier if there is no war.'

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions, because that is what I believe the main objective of the army is to provide protection so that there can be peace.'

And likewise, this response from a personal viewpoint:

'I would like it because peace is my biggest mission that brought me in military.'

The following is an example of someone who believes diplomacy (not soldiers) is the first step and military should only be deployed as a last resort:

'I would only like to partake in peacekeeping missions if the situation desperately needs it. Diplomatic steps should always be the first resort so that soldiers of a specific country won't be deployed unnecessarily. Depending on the situation, I would volunteer.'

And this person likewise distinguishes between 'peacekeepers' and soldiers:

'I would greatly like to be an ambassador or meet at office to be a peacekeeper, not in a soldier form.'

And yet, this individual believes the 'diplomacy' should be carried out by soldiers:

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions to negotiate for peace for a country and to be part of that.'

Some responses from a South African viewpoint were negative about serving on a peacekeeping mission:

'I would not like to because of the work that still has to be done in RSA.'

'Not like work overload, personal loss. Like helping everything back home well and safe. Keeping everybody healthy/well.'

Others wanted the chance to travel and learn about new cultures:

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions because it gives one the opportunity to learn about different cultures and life stories.'

'Would like to serve; would give me an opportunity to learn different cultures and their way of life. I would also feel proud to have been part of a possible solution that might bring peace and better people's lives.'

'I believe I will get to explore other countries get to learn their norms and customs and personal interest. I will get to transform to another or a higher level of being a soldier maintaining peace for civilians of different countries will assist me to grow as a soldier.'

(b) Personal Benefit

- Personally suited – personally believe in peace
- To form alliances across the World – mutual benefit – unites people
- For the experience – gain personal benefit – I would like to do....
- Moral imperative – God's will
- Just a job – follow orders

- Not want to be abroad (for so long) – not understanding language – away from family
- ‘Not enough action and adrenalin’

Almost a third of both male and female candidates identified with this theme: M = 30.4 percent; F = 32.0 percent.

Here are some of the positive comments:

‘Because they bring people together and we end up forming alliances from all over the world. Another reason is it saves lives and it will help reduce the amount of environmental problems we have.’

‘To increase familiarity with other countries in order to strengthen relationships with other countries.’

‘Yes, would like to make a difference and create understanding amongst all.’

Some candidates focused on the experience they would gain:

‘I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions as it grants me more hands on and participative work.’

‘I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions as not only does it help build you psychologically. It also challenges you mentally.’

‘I like to serve on peacekeeping missions because you learn more things.’

Others thought they were personally suited to peacekeeping:

‘I would like to serve on a peacekeeping mission because I think I have the traits fitting for it.’

‘I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions because I love people and I’m a caring person.’

And some, even when they didn’t think they were suited to it, supported the idea:

‘Because I am impatient person who don’t like to share love much but as for peacekeeping missions I’ll go for it. What is the world without peace.’

The following are negative responses from two young men:

‘Not like to serve. Doesn’t sound like it would provide enough action and adrenalin.’

‘Not like to go on a peacekeeping mission because, you are far away [from] friends and family and you put your own life in risk unnecessary.’

(c) Danger

- People/I could die/be killed or injured/mentally damaged

- Too stressful/dangerous – not safe for women
- When governments interfere, cause more damage – not our fight

The percentages for this theme were very low and there was not a significant difference between men and women: M = 6.2 percent and F = 7.9 percent. Here are some of the comments:

'Peacekeeper mission travelling to other countries and intervening with foreign affairs. Reason I do not approve of this is that sometimes negotiations do not go according to mission objectives and may lead to casualties.'

'I won't like to serve a peacekeeping missions because people can get violent and hurt each other.'

'I will not like to serve on peacekeeping because there will be people who are going to die over there.'

The following were comments by two female candidates, followed by a male candidate:

'I would not like to serve in peacekeeping missions as I feel that it's not safe for women, as the areas of that I would feel are not suited for women and there's a chance that I could die during the peacekeeping missions so I'm [not] willing to take the chance.'

'I would not like to serve on peacekeeping missions because I am afraid of death and when you are ever at the missions there is very limited chance that I am not going to die.'

'Because it could be dangerous [for] some time and afraid of dying far from my home.'

The above comments are negative about participating in peacekeeping missions, but the following is positive for the very same reasons:

'I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions because that can put my life in danger.'

(d) Capability

- Lack the skills/temperament – not brave enough
- People have different values – won't listen – too dominant – tension
- Too much responsibility
- Don't have knowledge about it – not thought about it
- Impossible task

This theme overlapped with the one above in respect of bravery and fear of dying. Again, the percentages were very low, but more so for women than men: M = 7.1 percent and F = 5.6 percent.

The lack of skills/temperament was voiced by a mixture of men and women:

'I would not like to work as a peace keeper as it requires a person to be brave during an unsettling environment. They are usually not in the country to fight the conflict.'

'I would not like to serve on peacekeeping missions, mainly because I'm not good at being patient, and patience is not one of my strong points.'

'Because I am not a talkative person.'

'I'm not one who is all for peace and don't have the patience for it.'

Concerns re the difficulties of peacekeeping took many forms:

'I wouldn't serve there due to human beings not seeing with the same eye and having the same goals plus different countries having different perspectives and motive and some people just want things that will only benefit themselves alone.'

'I would not like to serve on peacekeeping because it has too many responsibilities and creates too much pressure.'

'People might hate you. Dealing with different people every day is too stressing.'

'[I would like to serve on peacekeeping missions because you will be helping many civilians and the children who are surviving.] I would not like to serve because you can be easily dominated by the people who are causing conflicts.'

Some candidates admitted their knowledge of peacekeeping was limited:

'Peacekeeping is not something I have thought about.'

'I would like serving in peacekeeping missions because I feel I need to know more about it to.'

And others didn't like the idea of peacekeeping but regarded it just as a job:

'Well I do not like fighting so for me it's a matter of being in need of a job.'

'I would be disappointed because it's my only chance of getting a job that secures my future financially.'

Summary

There is a distinct lack of understanding of what peacekeeping is and what is involved. However, there was little time given for the candidates to write responses and understandably most answers are superficial and often reflect the candidate's own circumstance. The range of responses vary from 'big picture' altruism around saving the world, to views expressed on 'how it will affect me'. The largest theme, altruistic, had a higher percentage of male responses by over 7 percentage points. This reflects an idealistic viewpoint re serving on peacekeeping missions 'for the greater good'. Slightly more women

than men thought they were personally suited to peacekeeping, and likewise in terms of fearing the dangers inherent. However, slightly more male candidates viewed peacekeeping negatively as opposed to women.

9. Accepted or not

Q: What will you do if you are not accepted?

The responses here have been divided into 4 themes: Try again, Move on, Altruism, and Despair. As with other questions, responses from candidates often overlapped more than one theme.

(a) Try Again

- What to do? Try again (next year) – keep trying – never give up (whilst can still apply) – my dream – purpose in life – my calling
- Try other military services/departments/posts
- Find out what went wrong and rectify (if can) – opportunity to learn and improve oneself – improve where lacking - encouraged to work harder – try harder – use the experience gained at the selection event

By far the highest number of responses fell into this category and were evenly divided between men and women: M = 57.3 percent; F = 57.7 percent. There is an upper age limit for entering the SANDF which some candidates referred to. These are very common responses:

'I will keep applying and not give up.'

'I will always try again until my time is up. But I will not give up.'

For some candidates, the military was the only place they wanted to work:

'I will re-apply for next year because military this is where I belong. Military is my life.'

'Well I will keep on applying as long as I still qualify because to me I was not passing by when I applied. Its somewhere I wish to belong to.'

'I will try and apply again the following year till I get accepted, because being in the military it is my dream.'

And some indicated they would apply to other branches of the military:

'I will look for an alternative from other military branches in order to get in Navy.'

'I will try applying the next year for a space in air force.'

Other candidates focused on what might have gone wrong:

'I would look what I did not do right and then try correcting that mistake then try applying for the following year.'

'Try again next year at a different branch of the military. I would find a way out why I wasn't accepted the first time and rectify the error. I won't take no for an answer.'

Some candidates indicated that they would try or work harder as a result of being rejected:

'That will encourage me to work harder for me to be where my goals are so I'll try again on the next time.'

'I would take it as a learning opportunity, and strive to better myself in the criteria, that I lack in to better myself in every way possible.'

(b) Move on

- Do nothing – give up - accept God's will – accept not what SANDF is looking for – tell myself, this is not for me – sour grapes
- Accept and move on – look for other options – regard as stepping stone – start own business – join the private sector – look for similar type jobs to the military
- Continue studying – get more qualifications/knowledge/experience – upgrade qualifications - pursue another course – alternative career
- Keep working in current job
- Join the police

This was the second largest category of responses and again, the numbers were similar for male and female candidates: M = 42.6 percent, and F = 41.1 percent. There were degrees of positivity expressed around acceptance:

'Nothing much but to accept their decision making and improve where I am lacking.'

'I will not take it as a failure, I will actually take as a stepping stone for another challenge that will be there in the long run.'

'Will move on because I'm not what they are looking for.'

To continue studying was mentioned several times:

'I will continue with my studies and pursue my career in HR.'

'I will further my studies and finish it after then I will reply again and if I'm not lucky then I will find another career.'

A handful of candidates said to continue working in current job:

'Keep on working for the company that I'm currently employed at.'

'I work at Jonker Sailplanes so I will continue my job.'

And others indicated they would pursue different jobs/career or a different route to achieving their chosen career:

'I will pursue my dream in another field e.g. apply for other nursing bursaries.

'I continue with my studies and look for other job opportunities.

A few candidates, more women than men, indicated they would apply to the police:

'I will look for other career in other places maybe start with SAPS, I don't want to lie but I will be disappointed at this point giving up is not an option.'

'Firstly try my utmost best to get in, if not, join police (very last option).'

'I will search for another job, preferably at SAPS.

Others were philosophical in their outlook:

'Everything have it's time, I will move on with my life looking for some other opportunities because will go on.'

'I would accept the situation even though I am going to be hurt but I will accept, because in life they are two things sometimes you win or you lose. And I will also tell myself that this position is not for me.'

(c) Altruism

- Encourage others to apply
- Find other ways to help people – serve country/people of SA

The type of response encapsulated by this theme is not given by many of the candidates. Again, the levels from both men and women were very similar: M = 4.7 percent; F = 4.5 percent. Here are a sample of comments:

'I will encourage others to apply if a door closed for you it will open for others.'

'Most probably start my own business, so that I could help other young people get employed.'

'I would go home feeling so bad but I'll just continue with other stuff since there's nothing I would do if not taken. I would still do things that will make a difference in my community and my country.'

(d) Despair

- How accept the news? Cry – disappointed – sad – hurt – angry – heart-breaking – kill myself - stay hopeful – not think negatively
- Desperate to find a job – critical financial situation at home – no money for further studying – try other means of survival, even crime

This theme caught the emotional and very personal responses of candidates. The levels of responses that fell into this category were fairly low, with female candidates slightly higher than for men: F = 14.3 percent; M = 12.8 percent.

Some candidates, both male and female, expressed degrees of emotion:

'Cry my heart and lungs out and maybe apply next year.'

'I will be sad but I will continue and apply for other jobs where I can also serve SA.'

'I will be disappointed a lot. I would kill myself.'

'I will be very angry myself because I like to be part of it because I want to protect our country.'

Other candidates indicated desperate repercussions of being rejected:

'If I'm not accepted I would be very disappointed because always wanted to achieve this dream. I can try to see other opportunities. SA the unemployment rate it could be hard for me, and my family is hungry, I am the only hope to get a serious career.'

'I will be disappointed as this is one of my only options to complete my studies as I cannot afford to on my own.'

'Try other means of survival even if it means having to commit crime everyday just to make sure my family eats and my siblings go to school.'

Summary

The largest response from candidates to the question of what would you do if your application to the SANDF is unsuccessful, is to try again. This reflects the fact that an individual can apply as many times as he/she wishes as long as they are within the age limit. In an environment of very high youth unemployment, this ability to try again is seized upon, albeit by some stating they would upskill, try harder or apply to a different branch.

In all the themes, there is no big gendered difference in responses.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The recruitment marketing of the Services could be improved. Because of high levels of youth unemployment, most Personnel departments are lackadaisical in professionally fulfilling their role of attracting the right candidates. In order for the DOD to reach its stated goal of equal representation in terms of gender, race, etc, more effort should be placed into targeted campaigns. This may alleviate the pressure in certain areas of the SANDF to find suitably qualified applicants for certain roles and branches. The cost involved need not be prohibitive, but gender mainstreaming should be considered throughout the whole

recruitment process. This would help not only in more effectively identifying the suitable candidates, but also in tackling the existence of latent bias against women in the military which exists to some extent in ranks up and down the SANDF (DOD 2010) and is particularly damaging in its existence in Personnel in the areas of recruitment and selection.

Targeted campaigns should also address the issue of reaching rural populations, and the intention of the SANDF to provide the means to empower the youth in these areas.

An assessment of the relationship between the Services of the SANDF and secondary schools/colleges/universities in the different provinces would be a useful exercise to conduct in order to establish what recruitment marketing activity takes place and whether subjects studied by pupils matches the qualifications the SANDF is looking for. This would establish what communicate takes place, if any. If STEM⁷ subjects are what the SANDF are looking for, what percentage of girls study these? What action could be taken to guide girls to taking the 'right' subjects for a career in the military?

As raised by one of the key informants, the environment for women within the military needs to be considered. Again, gender mainstreaming can help identify areas where this falls down. The focus here is on physical environment, training and so forth, but an issue which has been highlighted through the questions to candidates, is that around 20 percent of the sample group of young people have sexist attitudes that don't believe women should be part of the military, or only in roles in keeping with traditional female occupations. This can create an alien environment for women in which to work and a strategy of how to handle and neutralise such attitudes would be beneficial. The result of not dealing with this could be widespread with the potential of high turnover of female military staff and poor publicity alienating potential female recruits.

To go back to the stated purpose of the research to find out what factors influence young people to seek employment within the military, and in particular, the propensity of women to seek employment in the SANDF, each of the questions asked gives an insight into this. There was considerable overlap between the responses to the questions and the themes identified.

The motivation to join the SANDF is high since it is perceived as a good employer. The level of desperation to join is linked to the personal circumstances of individual candidates, but overall the responses indicate a high level of altruism to serve the country and its people. There was a strong response from female candidates wishing to break down the barriers to women being seen as credible members of the SANDF which reflected the understanding that indeed it was a male dominated arena and they would have to prove themselves to be a successful part of it.

The importance of the influence of a relative or friend to the motivation to apply to join was expressed in many ways, and so too, the influence of a chance course, meeting, or media item to decide to apply.

⁷ Science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects

There appeared to be slightly more focus from male candidates on securing a job with benefits and a career in order to provide for family. The attraction of working within the SANDF for many young people is to gain order and discipline in their lives. If they achieve this, then respect from others and self-respect will follow. Opinions on what characteristics make a good soldier were similar for both male and female candidates. Physical strength was not considered a pre-requisite trait. Integrity encompassing loyalty, respect and discipline were seen as paramount.

The adjectives used reflect what is deemed important as regards societal values and norms, but also can mirror a candidate's perceptions of their own strengths, fears and weaknesses. For example, 'being clean', cited a few times, may reflect an individual's perceived difficulty in achieving the standards of cleanliness of the military. Tied into this is how the uniform/dress is seen to define who you are.

The question which provided the biggest divergence in opinion between the male and female candidates was around the need for more women in the military. The new Constitution of South Africa is driving the spirit of the Country which calls for equality of opportunity in all institutions. This prescribes 50 percent of military positions to be held by women, and facilitates the changing of norms about women's roles from the domestic sphere into all areas of work. Most candidates recognised this. In an ever more sophisticated and technologically advanced world, admitting more women recruits helps provide the military with competent and skilled personnel. The SANDF needs to ensure that sexist attitudes and behaviour are not allowed to hold sway and that women are given the opportunity to prove themselves in all areas of the military.

APPENDIX A

GENDER AND MILITARY RECRUITMENT STUDY

Candidates

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

The aim of this study is to obtain your views on a number of issues related to your recruitment; motivation to serve in the military; personal benefits of joining the military; your idea of a soldier profile; women in the military; challenges you think you will experience serving in the military; and interest to deploy on peacekeeping missions.

Circle the appropriate response and fill in the code in the last column under Code

1. Arm of Service applying for										Code
(1) Army		(2) Air Force		(3) Navy		(4) SAMHS		(5) PSAP		
2. Corps interested in										
(1) Combat		(2) Combat support		(3) Support		(4) Technical		(5) Other		
3. Home province										
(1) Western Cape	(2) Northern Cape	(3) North West	(4) Eastern Cape	(5) Mpumalanga	(6) Limpopo	(7) KwaZulu-Natal	(8) Gauteng	(9) Free State		
4. Race										
(1) African/Black			(2) Coloured			(3) Indian/Asian		(4) White		
5. Age										
(1) 18		(2) 19		(3) 20		(4) 21		(5) 22		
(6) 23		(7) 24		(8) 25		(9) 26		(10) >27		
6. Highest education										
(1) Grade 12		(2) Diploma		(3) Undergraduate Degree		(4) Post graduate degree		(5) Other		
7. Marital status				(1) Yes		(2) No		(3) Partner		
8. Children				(1) No		(2) Yes		(3) If Yes Number:		
9. Gender				(1) Male		(2) Female		(3) Other		
10. Employment										
(1) Yes					(2) No					
Name position and years										

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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Thank you for your valuable contribution!!!

APPENDIX B

GENDER AND MILITARY RECRUITMENT STUDY Recruitment officers

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

The aim of this study is to obtain your views on a number of issues related to the barriers to the recruitment in the SANDF in general, and more specifically women.

Circle the appropriate response and fill in the code in the last column under Code

11. Arm of Service										Code	
(6) Army		(7) Air Force		(8) Navy			(9) SAHMS		(10) PSAP		
12. Corps											
(6) Combat		(7) Combat support		(8) Support			(9) Technical		(10) Other		
13. Rank											
(1) S/Lt	(2) Lt	(3) Capt	(4) Major	(5) Lt/Col	(6) Col	(7) Brig/Gen	(8) Maj/Gen	(9) Lt/Gen			
14. Race											
(5) African/Black			(6) Coloured			(7) Indian/Asian		(8) White			
15. Gender				(1) Male		(2) Female		(3) Other			
16. Current post description											

B. QUESTIONS ON RECRUITMENT

10. What are the main barriers/enablers the SANDF faces in terms of recruitment?

11. Explain how the SANDF goes about the recruitment of potential members and women in particular?

12. Describe how potential recruits are selected and placed in the different services and branches

13. Is there anything specific that you would like to share about the SANDF's recruitment process?