

**The Recruitment of the Indonesian Army Personnel: A Study on the Merit System in the Admission Process of Career Enlisted in Army**

**Budi Prasetyono**

Student of the Doctoral Program on Administrative Sciences,  
Faculty of Administrative Science,  
University of Brawijaya, Malang

**Abdul Hakim**

Professor of Administrative Sciences,  
University of Brawijaya,  
Malang,  
[abdulhakim@ub.ac.id](mailto:abdulhakim@ub.ac.id)  
[hakim\\_abdul61@yahoo.co.id](mailto:hakim_abdul61@yahoo.co.id)

**Tjahjanulin Domai & Ratih Nur Pratiwi**

Lecturer at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences,  
University of Brawijaya,  
Malang

**ABSTRACT**

*The recruitment process should be based on a merit system, a process of admission of employees carried out in a transparent, accountable, and based on competence so as to increase the ability of the government apparatus. Through a system of recruitment and selection based on merit system, prospective employees who have high competence can be selected. In addition, it also can minimize the occurrence of corruption, collusion, and nepotism in the recruitment process. Therefore, the implementation of a merit system must meet several principles, namely: job at every level, the best candidate, open to all, systematic, transparent and challengeable. The admission process of career enlisted in the Army in accordance with the principles of merit system, which can be seen from the application of the principle of equal opportunity, which provides an opportunity to all citizens to join the selection in accordance with the specified requirements. Recruits who passed then meet the predetermined passing grade. In addition, the recruitment process has been in line with the principle of open competitions and fairness. However, there is a political dimension with regard to policy deployment of soldiers in all parts of Indonesia so there are recruitment locations implementing affirmative action policies.*

**Keywords:** Merit, Recruitment, Admission Process, Policy Development

## **1. BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH**

Recruitment is a process to search, find, and attract applicants who meet certain requirements to be employed in and by an organization. Recruitment process has certain stages, namely: socialization, registration, selection, decision on acceptance, and orientation of the organization (Sikula, 1981; Gomes 1995; McKenna and Beech, 1995; Simamora, 1997; Schuler and Jackson, 1997; and Decenzo and Robbins, 1998). Recruitment is a competency based process, which requires compliance with certain principles in its implementation, namely: an objective, transparent, competitive, accountable, free from corruption, non-discriminatory, free of charge, as well as effective and efficient (Rakhmawanto, 2013). The latter recruitment theory is closely related to the system of merit in the recruitment process.

Merit system is closely related to values considered as something meaningful, useful for the creation of a professional system of personnel administration. Merit system acts as the principle that connotes fairness and respect in public office (public employment) based on merit, not based on political favoritism or discrimination or others. Siegel and Myrtle (1985: 163) state that the public service emphasizing on merit prescribes that there be competition in all aspects of personnel decision making, of the which is the recruitment, selection and placement at the first stage. "Through a system of recruitment and selection based on merit, prospective employees who have high competence can be obtained. This can minimize the occurrence of corruption, collusion, and nepotism in the recruitment process."

The process of the Army personnel recruitment is an important activity in the development of personnel in the system of the Army. Unit organization that recruits must be adhered to the principle of merit system, in order to obtain qualified human resources. Recruitment of personnel based on merit system is implemented to avoid the practices of corruption, collusion, and nepotism that occur in the admissions process. Therefore, to obtain a qualified Army personnel, the admission process is made honest, fair, objective, transparent, and proportionate in accordance with the conditions of the territory and population of Indonesia.

Empirically, it has been realized that there exist negative issues in the process of recruitment of the Army personnel, especially the practices of corruption, collusion, and nepotism. Therefore, research on the process of recruitment of the Army personnel is important, as to know and analyze the extent to which the process has been conducted in accordance with the merit system.

## **2. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The recruitment process based on a merit system is an emphasis in the improvement of civil service system. According to Law Number 5 year 2014 on the Reform of Civil Apparatus, the merit system is the policy and management based on qualifications, competence, and performance in a fair and reasonable way without distinguishing political background, race, skin color, religion, origin, sex, marital status, age or disability.

The consequence of the application of merit system in an organization is the need for standards of competence or performance benchmarks within. Performance benchmarks must be met by an employee in accordance with the duties and responsibilities. An employee must know in detail about the work, job descriptions, job specifications, target, and assessment. Based on these, then employees will know the quality of the work they do and the quality of leadership on productivity performance. Implementation of the merit system can help to achieve transparency in career building, and a healthy competition among employees in the organization, to avoid favoritism, which may lead to jealousy, in the promotion of an employee to a particular position (Suhendra, 2014).

The concept of merit refers to the best person selected to fill certain positions. McCourt (2007: 2) states, "The merit system can be defined as the appointment of the best person for any given job". That is, the position should be filled by the best people seen from their quality and ability, and not because of non-merit factors such as political factors, family, friends, race, religion, ethnicity, place of origin, social class, gender, wealth, and so on. The best people should be selected and rewarded with a reward of being given public positions. Thus, merit can also mean good quality referring to those deserving to be praised (Jiwo and Hartanto, 2003: 8). However, the main issue is how to operationally define "the best person". According to McCourt, the meaning of the merit system with the term "the best person" may have practical implications of controversy. At least four implications of the definition of "the best person" as opposed to the practices of employment in many public institutions as shown in Table 1 below.

Tabel 1 Implication of “A Best Person” Definition

No	Implication	Current Practice
1.	Applies to jobs at every level	A focus on the point of entry
2.	The appointee is the best candidate	The appointee is merely able to do the job
3.	Posts are open to all eligible candidates	Posts are restricted to certain candidates
4.	The appointment process is systematic, transparent and challengeable	The appointment process may be arbitrary, secretive and unchallengeable

Source: McCourt (2007:3).

Mc Crudden (1998:545), defines the implication of the merit system as follows:

1. Job at every level, meaning that merit principles apply as much to promotion as to initial recruitment
2. The best candidate, meaning that demonstrably the most able among a number of candidates, any of whom could do the job adequately
3. Open to all, meaning that appointment for positions not only rely on internal sources of candidates or on limited number of candidates
4. Systematic, transparent and challengeable, meaning that all decisions in the appointment can be questioned, including by candidates who do not succeed, because all these questions are very valuable feedback to improve decision-making for the foreseeable future (we welcome challenges to our decisions, including from unsuccessful candidates, viewing them as valuable feedback which will help us a make better decisions in future)

Merit system is a system that sees personnel skills or expertise of individuals by selection. Selection is defined as the selection of a qualified workforce in accordance with the job description. The selection should be done gradually so that the results are as expected by the organization. This selection process aims to filter out applicants who are able to take the test to the next stage. Selection is basically a systematic effort undertaken in order to better ensure that applicants chosen are considered the most appropriate, either with the criteria established or the amount needed.

Empirically, the practice of merit system is not time nor space free, but it takes place in a changing social, economic, and political dynamics as well as the culture of a nation. Meritocracy should be implemented according to the social context in which it is implemented. With such the context of socio-cultural environment, we need a compromise through an instrument called affirmative action.

Affirmative action is a concept that refers to steps for achieving non-discrimination. According to Julia (2011), affirmative action is the government's response to people who will generally not be able to compete because of various limitations shall they follow the selection the way it is. Affirmative action is a measurement instrument designed to increase the representation considered appropriate against certain under-represented groups of people in the system of recruitment to public institutions. The aim is to promote the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens. Therefore, affirmative action refers to policies that include factors of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, to be considered in order to benefit the groups represented at the expense of the majority. Affirmative action is an action taken to increase the representation of minority groups that are caused by an inability to compete in the specified requirements.

Affirmative action is one of the cutting edges of the most critical public personnel management. This action is the mediating variables which affect the way of recruitment, remuneration, and promotion of employees, because actually what is expected in recruitment is the availability of a qualified applicants or candidates, in order to obtain a list of qualified applicants. However, affirmative action provides intervention in the recruitment process by adding a particular policy, whether it is equity, priority of native, or human resource management, for example maintenance and compensation by giving higher salaries, or certain allowances for someone assigned in remote areas. Affirmative action also contains social value associated with regulatory or organizational decisions, in which employees must be recruited, given the task, and promoted so that the percentage is proportional to the percentage of its counterpart (Sulistiyan *et al.*, 2009: 211).

Conceptually, according to Berman *et al.* (2006), this affirmative action plan includes three phases, namely: (a) conducting analysis utilization, (b) determining the purpose of affirmative action, and (c) developing program accomplishments. Some countries, among others Cyprus, Malaysia, and even the United States, have used the affirmative policies in the process of recruitment of manpower. These countries use a

quota system in the public appointments to accelerate the progress of the disadvantaged various members of a community group, such as certain ethnic groups (minorities of Turkey in Cyprus and Malays in Malaysia).

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon of recruitment of the Army personnel holistically by describing the phenomenon of research and analyzed inductively by comparing the relevant theories (Sugiyono, 2007: 9; Moleong, 2008: 6).

The focus of this study is as follows. First, the process of career enlisted recruitment with the merit system within the Army, which includes: (a) organization of the selection committee; (b) the functions and authority of the organization of the selection committee; and (c) the implementation of selection: administrative inspection, health inspection, physical test, mental and ideological interviews, psychological examination, and passing determination. Second, the factors that support and hinder the recruitment of career enlisted with the merit system, which includes: (a) internal factors within the Army; (b) external factors: political, economic, and cultural.

The location of this study is the Directorate of the Army Adjutant General (Ditajenad) which is the implementing agency centers that perform the task as an organizer of personnel administration, including the administration of the soldiers recruitment, the Adjutant General of the Military Area Command (Ajendam) and the Adjutant General of the Military Resort Command (Ajenrem) which carry out the acceptance of soldiers for career enlisted class rank.

The research data was collected through observation, depth interviews, and documentation. The informants were recruitment committee, career enlisted recruits, and failed recruits, in order to obtain complete information about the recruitment process. Documents related to the study are the Report on the Admission of Career Enlisted Period I and II in the year of 2013; the Book of Career Enlisted Candidates Period I and II proposed to the Assembly of Regional Military Parade; Indonesian Government Regulation Number 39 year 2010 concerning Administration of the Indonesian National Armed Forces; the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 year 2002 on National Defense; and the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 34 year 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces. The collected data was then tested for validity and reliability through the following criteria of credibility; transferability, and confirmability.

Analysis of data was done using data analysis model of Miles *et al.* (2014), which called Interactive Data Analysis Model, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying. Data condensation is done through the selection of relevant data to the research focus, simplification of data, making abstract or changing the data recorded in the field notes and data obtained from the documents and the results of observations made. Data was then condensed, sorted, set aside, arranged according to the groups, and was prepared according to similar categories to be presented in line with the research focus. Conclusions drawing and compilation in the form of in-depth descriptions were done, and a proposition of research results was then made.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Recruitment Process of Career Enlisted in the Army: Suitability with the merit system

Some of the criteria that can be used to identify the implementation of the merit system in the recruitment process, are:

- (1) All citizens are given the same opportunities in accordance with the requirements (equal opportunity);
- (2) The competition is open and fair (open competition and fairness);
- (3) The decision-making on competence is in accordance with the passing grade.

#### *Equal Opportunity: All Citizens Given the Same Opportunity in Accordance with the Requirements*

One of the indicators in the implementation of the merit system is attracting prospective applicants from all elements of society. That is, all elements of society are given an equal opportunity to apply regardless of race, religion, gender, political ties, as well as physical condition. However, in order to produce qualified recruits, requirements must be made suitable with the qualifications required and can be followed by all citizens who meet the requirements. Therefore, in the process of soldiers recruitment, the organizers have tried to accommodate all citizens in accordance with the requirements set forth in the statement to be a

soldier. It is mentioned in the general rule that every Indonesian citizen who meets the specified requirements can be included in acceptance or deployment activities.

Furthermore, the principle of soldiers recruitment is equality, i.e. the process must be able to give an opportunity to all Indonesian citizens in the entire territory of the Republic of Indonesia. However, taking into account the quality and quantity aspects, that is the process must seek quantity without sacrificing quality. This is in accordance with the opinion of Enoma (2008) that meritocracy is a formal system in which the progress or achievement is based on the community's social cognitive ability, effort, and achievement.

Recruitment of soldiers aims to provide enough troops so that management can choose a resource that meets the necessary qualifications (Koller, 2001). Thus, through the recruitment, organization can have and select candidates (soldiers) in accordance with the qualifications and needs of the organization. Number of candidates to follow the recruitment will also affect the opportunities to get the best candidate. The more candidates following the recruitment, the greater the opportunity to get the best candidates will be.

Merit system applied properly will ensure all members of society to have equal opportunities to enter and rise in a position in the organization, including providing protection for employees against various acts of discrimination, political oppression and arbitrary action (Setyowati, 2013). Along with this, there are several principles on the recruitment of soldiers, namely (1) fairness, meaning that recruitment of soldiers must be able to provide opportunities and equal treatment to all citizens who meet the requirements; and (2) accountability, meaning that the results obtained in recruitment of soldiers should always be measurable and accountable. This principle is in line with the idea by McCourt (2007) that the merit system can be defined as "the appointment of the best person for any given job", a post to be filled by the best people for its quality and ability, not because of non-merit factors, such as politics, family, friends, race, religion, ethnicity, region, social class, gender, wealth, and so on.

Requirements as recruits include requirements relating to the physical and non-physical. This is done deliberately considering that soldiers guard the security of the country. Therefore, quality becomes the most important criterion in the recruitment of soldiers, as submitted by Nogi (in de Jesus, 2006), that the quality of human resources is a very important element in improving service to the needs of public organizations. Notoatmodjo (2006) reinforces this argument by stating that quality of human resources involves two aspects, namely the physical and non-physical quality, which involves the ability to work, think, and other skills.

Giving opportunities to all people without looking at their origins, ethnic, and professional background of parents indicate that the Army has managed to expand the recruitment base geographically and in social classes. It also occurs in Pakistan, as revealed in a study conducted by Fair (2011) about the recruitment base of the Army by geography in Pakistan, which found that the Pakistani Army has managed to broaden the base of recruitment geographically, with the aim to recruit soldiers with varying degrees of intellectual and physical ability. The Army could be a cornerstone of greater national cohesion rather than a source of ethnic tensions, by expanding the recruitment base and expanding military infrastructure to new areas. Thus, there is justice in the system of recruitment of Army soldiers represented in various aspects, regional, ethnic and so on.

#### *4.2 Open Competition and Fairness*

Recruitment of soldiers is held with regard to quantity without compromising the quality in which the composition of the troops prepared is in accordance with the needs of the organization and the environment where the troops work. Therefore, recruitment of soldiers is carried out through the selection process to take into account the territory and domicile as well as strict supervision. Supervision is done both at the central and regional levels to ensure the implementation of recruitment to be done transparently.

The principle in the implementation of recruitment of soldiers include: (a) objective, meaning that recruitment of soldiers must ensure that no personal interests or groups are involved, but the interest of the Army; (b) professional, recruitment of soldiers is carried out through a process in accordance with the expertise based on knowledge and skills, responsibility for the benefit of the organization; (c) selective and orderly, the recruitment of soldiers is held by prioritizing the quality aspect, and is transparent, in which it is accessible by the public, especially matters related to the selection process for soldiers.

Follow-up of the implementation of recruitment of soldiers in order to avoid collusion, corruption, and nepotism, is that every parent or guardian must fill out the agreement form of no-bribery statement. In this form, there is a statement not to bribe or provide anything to the committee or individual with the intent

for their child to be accepted as soldier, and if in the future the parent or guardian violates the statement, then qualified recruits will be excluded from education and prosecuted in accordance with the applicable law. This is done to ensure the implementation of the recruitment of soldiers to be transparent, accountable, and fair.

Announcement of the results of inspections and tests are carried out openly and directly, so that each candidate has a clear idea on the results and find out the reasons for them to pass or fail. Any candidates who do not pass will get explanations orally and in writing, accompanied with reasons. This is in accordance with the dimensions of merit according to Mc Court (2007), namely systematic, transparent, and challengeable, meaning that all the decisions can be questioned, including for those who do not succeed, because all these questions are valuable feedback in the future (we welcome challenges to our decisions, including from the unsuccessful candidates, viewing them as valuable feedback which will help us make better decisions in future).

#### 4.3 *Passing Grade: Decision is Based on Specified Scores*

Selection procedure adopted to recruit soldiers include: the selection and administration, medical tests I and II (general check-up, x-rays, and laboratory routine check), physical tests (posture, swimming, and physical fitness), mental and ideological tests, and psychological tests. Each of the process already has passed criteria. This is an attempt to get high-quality and innovative soldiers. According to Ndraha (1997: 12), high-quality human resources are individuals able to create not only a comparative value, but also generative, innovative and competitive value, using the highest energy, for example: intelligence, creativity, and imagination, and no longer to merely use coarse energy involving raw materials, land, water, muscle power, and so on (Ndraha, 1997: 12).

Initial checking and parade in the recruitment process applies the elimination system. The parade trial activities and announcements have been determined by strict rules. This work is done in order to select only quality recruits, both physically and non-physically. This is in line with the argument by Alwi (2001: 38) stating that it is not easy to make human resources as a source of competitive advantage of the organization, because it does not only relate to the capability and expertise but it is also related to other personal factors, such as value adopted, perception, attitude, personality, and the willingness of individuals to be better. Human Resource is said to have a competitive advantage if it has the unique ability and expertise, and has a personality that fit with organizational personality where they work.

Selection of the physical ability of candidates is also conducted in the recruitment process in other countries, for example in the United States (Cawley and Maclean, 2011). Cawley and Maclean found that in the United States, the percentage of adults recruited in the military do not meet the requirements due to physical factors characterized by excessive weight, both for men and for women during recruitment. In addition, there is a gap in the race, education, and age in the fulfillment of standards, with the increase reaching one percent of body weight and fat, thereby further reducing eligibility for military service.

Based on the description above, the following proposition can be formulated:

#### Minor Proposition (1)

Quality performance of recruitment process is determined by the quality of input candidates, and the implementation process that meets the principles of the merit system, namely: the provision of equal opportunities to all candidates who meet the requirements (equal opportunity); open competition and fairness; and decision making in accordance with the passing grade criteria or other competency requirements.

#### 4.4 *Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Recruitment of Career Enlisted*

Recruitment of soldiers is held not solely because of the need for the national defense and security, but also the duty of the state in terms of providing jobs for citizens, as well as other objectives as follows: (1) recruitment as a tool for social justice; (2) recruitment as techniques to maximize efficiency; and (3) recruitment as a strategy of political responsiveness (Sulistyani and Rosidah, 2003). Therefore, the implementation of the recruitment process has been supported by adequate infrastructure as needed through the help of the Adjutant General of the Military Area Command (Ajendam) by using existing facilities. Supporting factors also come from the available budget suitable with the index of admission costs to support the selections process of the Army career enlisted. The supporting factors have significant meaning in the recruitment process so that it can run properly and smoothly in accordance with the principle of merit.

The recruitment process is carried out in accordance with the mechanisms and guidelines in order to find qualified and the best recruits. Nevertheless, to achieve this is certainly not easy because the public

organization recruitment practices are influenced by several factors: the political situation, economic conditions, affirmative action, and existing policies (Sulistiyani and Rosidah, 2003). Affirmative action is essentially the government's response to people who will not be able to compete due to various limitations through the common recruitment process (Julia, 2011). Affirmative action is a measurement instrument designed to increase the representation against certain under-represented groups of people in the system of recruitment to public institutions. In this study, this is especially true for the people of Papua and the Dayakis in Kalimantan whose representation level is low in the Army. The aim is to promote the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens. Therefore, affirmative action refers to policies that include factors of "race, color, religion, sex or national origin" to be considered in the context of the recruitment of soldiers. Thus, "affirmative action" in the process of soldiers' recruitment is the measures taken to improve the representation of minorities in the Army.

Data shows that there are recruits who passed but there is a score from one of the selection tests which is below the average, and this is when the concept of affirmative action in the recruitment process must be done. In addition, related to defense and security throughout Indonesia, it is unavoidable that the biggest challenge to the application of the merit system is the political context (Setyowati, 2013).

Recruits with the status of K-2 (not fulfilling the standard) principally can be accepted because these aspects are still within the tolerance limits as the conditions will not cause a failure nor lead to fatality during further education and career. In addition, the status of the K-2 can still be improved during the first education. This shows affirmative policy for the sake of meeting the needs of career enlisted.

Further based on the results of period I selection, it is known that affirmative action measures are not negotiable for the sake of greater interest, namely the fulfillment of the number of recruits expected to care for the defense and security of the state. It is known from the results of the selection; K-2 is found on the administrative aspects of minimum height, which is less than the minimum requirements (163 cm), but the candidates have good ability and potential, and Papuan or Dayakis native. K-2 is also found in which the physical aspects are less than the requirement, but the candidates have fair ability and potential and the weakness can be improved during the educational process. K-2 on the health aspects, among others are due to condition of teeth or weight, but still within the limits of tolerance and the candidate is Papuan native region. K-2 on the psychological aspects, among others due to the lack of emotional stability, but the candidates has fair physical health, and they are Papuan native. As said by Sulistiyani and Rosidah (2009), that affirmative action is an important step that must be taken to tackle inequality and social inequality and fairness of public servants. In the process of recruitment, compensation and promotion of the rights of employees in particular sometimes is not based on rational values. There are times when the value of equity and justice should be given to all levels of society. It is necessary so that no jealousy exists between different ethnics, religions, and others. A chance to be a soldier must be given to the whole race, religion, ethnicity, and this principle must become an inevitable part of the recruitment system. This condition is sometimes indispensable in order to align the position of the weak and strong, between the minorities and the majority. In addition, this method can open the same opportunities to all o become a soldier, because the representation of ethnic groups is very important in the public employment system. Affirmative action emphasizes certain priorities to the weaker party in order to achieve social justice in human resource management. Affirmative action plans can set goals for minority hiring so that the percentage of employees in the organization could be comparable to the percentage of their representation in the population. In the context of this study, through affirmative action, representation of certain ethnic groups in the organization of the Army can be proportional to the percentage of their population in the region of origin.

In addition to political factors, obstacles in the application of the principle of merit in the recruitment are administrative and technical factors (Prasojo, 2006). Administrative factors are related to the mechanism of implementation and technical factors are related directly to the activities and measures undertaken in the field. Registration with the online system on the one hand makes it easy for prospective applicants to follow the registration, but on the other hand some data filled is not based on the actual physical condition of the prospective applicants. For example, data on height of the prospective applicants is manipulated in order to meet the requirements. Therefore, during actual height check, many of which do not meet the requirements and fail is a waste of time for the selection committee.

Further, it is noted that the timing of the test is relatively very short, only five days. The elimination system is also a barrier, because it requires readiness of the implementers on the field prior to the final trial.

Similarly, the implementation of health exam and swimming in some Military Area Command located far away makes it is not efficient both in terms of time, effort, and cost. Insufficient numbers of personnel to handle the secretarial and administrative materials prior and during inspection of candidates also inhibit the recruitment process.

Further, data in the field indicates that there has been a delay in budget support for the recruitment of career enlisted period I and II of the year 2013 from the Department of Defence and Army Command. In addition, the funds allocated are far from the amount needed.

Based on the description above, the following proposition can be formulated:

Minor Proposition (2):

Three factors that hinder the implementation of a merit system in the process of recruiting candidates for career enlisted, are political, administrative and technical factors. The political factor becomes the dominant factor. Political factors are in the form of affirmative action measures, namely giving a chance for candidates who cannot fully fulfill the passing criteria to pass the test.

Based on the minor proposition, the following major proposition can be formulated:

Major Proposition:

Performance of quality recruitment process is determined by four factors, namely:

- (1) The quality of input candidates
- (2) The implementation process that meets the principles of the merit system
- (3) Human resource management capabilities to overcome political barriers, administrative barriers and technical barriers that occur in the recruitment process
- (4) The implementation of affirmative action.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The recruitment process is in conformity with the principles of merit system, with regard to the principle of equal opportunity that gives equal opportunities to all citizens in accordance with existing requirements. The selection process is carried out through the elimination system in each stage. Criteria for passing each stage of selection are clearly measurable through the guidelines of standard and applied equally in every military area command to ensure the quality of recruits. Recruits selected have passed the predetermined passing grade. Supervision is done strictly that can be identified at both the local committee and the sub-committee of the area. This is done to avoid collusion, corruption, and nepotism. In fact, every parent or guardian must fill out the agreement form shall bribery takes place; the candidate will be excluded from the process or later from the education. The effort is in line with the principle of open competitions and fairness.

Support in form of funds and facilities have contributed in the process of recruitment of candidates. It can be inferred from the assistance provided by the local Military Area Command Adjutant General using existing facilities. Supporting factors also come from the funds based on recruitment costs to support the activities of soldiers. The factors that hamper can be identified as internal and external factors. Internal factor is related to the allocation of time needed in the selection process, which is not matched with the number of personnel supporting the process. External factor includes political and economic dimensions. Political dimension is related to policy deployment of soldiers in all parts of Indonesia so there are several candidates that pass certain criteria due to affirmative action.

This study confirms the theory proposed by some experts (Setyowati, 2013; Dezhong and Kleiner, 2000) that in order to build a merit system in the recruitment, it must be supported by specific policy and organized by institutions that can ensure that the principles of merit system can be run properly.

The results also illustrate the factual conditions that the implementation of the principle of merit system in reality is juxtaposed with the concept of affirmative action in accordance with the needs of national defense through military area command in the entire territory of Indonesia. This suggests that the presence of limited merit system caused by the environment in which the recruitment process is held.

Considering these conditions, the results of this study confirm that the understanding of the merit system in recruitment of soldiers is not just a mechanism for implementation in accordance with the principles of implementation, but it is also in line with the changing environment, that is the system of merit in the recruitment process is also related to the competence of existing human resources. Thus,

environmental conditions, organization's needs, political and social factors contribute to the merit system (Mc Crudden, 1998).

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