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## Factors Influencing Cadets Adjustment to Training in the Nigerian Defence Academy

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### **Abstract:**

*Adjustment refers to the psychological processes through which individuals manage to cope with the demands and stressful challenges of everyday life such as encountered in a military environment. This study investigates the probable stressors affecting cadets' adjustment to training in the Nigerian Defence Academy. An ex-post facto survey method was undertaken to uncover the influences of psychological, physical, socio-political and organizational factors on cadets' adaptation especially in the first and second year of training. Suggestions for developing programmes to raise morale, enhance mental readiness and promote adaptation to military and academic training are discussed.*

**Keywords:** Adjustment, adaptation, psychological, stress, mental readiness

### **1. Introduction**

The Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) plays a unique role in the moulding of cadets for future leadership roles in the Nigerian Armed Forces. The mission of this premier officer cadet training institution is to provide cadets with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces through military, academic and character development. This mission is achieved through a well articulated selection policy and the rigorous pursuit of effective administrative and training techniques, designed to produce high quality officers for the Nigerian Armed Forces.

The admission of candidates into the Academy is usually very competitive since it is virtually the only institution of higher learning in the country that guarantees employment on successful completion of training. Apart from passing the NDA Entrance Examination, all short-listed candidates are invited to the Academy where they are subjected to the rigors of credentials screening, medical and physical fitness examination by the Armed Forces Selection Board (AFSB) in order to ensure that only those with requisite academic qualifications, physical and medical fitness are allowed to appear before the Board for final evaluation and selection. The role of the AFSB is very crucial in the selection process since it is supposed to among other criteria; identify suitable officer materials that would subsequently come to the Academy.

Thus, from the well articulated selection policy and the adoption of an ambitious training programme by the Academy, one could safely assume that, to date only the very best among talented young men are admitted and groomed for leadership positions in the Armed Forces. None-the-less, efforts by this prestigious premier military institution to achieve the established mission objectives had not always been successful with some cadets. In a communiqué to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) titled, "Personality Evaluation of Candidates during Armed Forces Selection Board," HQ NDA observed that the personal demeanour and comportment of some cadets had shown in general that they do not possess the right leadership qualities and military orientation to train as officers. It was noted that although almost all the cadets had enviable academic qualifications, yet quite a number of them lacked the required motivation and military bearing to make a successful military career. Some cadets were simply not cut out for leadership in the military, while others were found to be here because of excessive family pressure. Also, some cadets were said to be simply too in-disciplined to make any progress in the military. The contention by HQ NDA is that the continued struggle for the production of high quality officers in respect of some cadets is definitely a wasted effort, and that changing the attitude of some cadets in the Academy will simply be of temporary nature. Once these cadets earn their commission and join their respective services, they are more likely to be the sources of anguish than relief to their respective Commanders. It is based on the above observations that the NDA authority had requested for a review in the procedure of the Armed Forces Selection Board (NDA/Comdt/37/A dated 24 May, 1988).

Similar observations were made by Maj Gen AB Mamman (1989) whilst presenting the Nigerian Army view on the need for proper selection of cadets. He stated as follows:

... The congestion in the labour market rather than the call for duty and national service has forced many of the cadets to seek enlistment into the army (today). For example, cases already abound where, for reasons of security and job opportunity, two-year University undergraduates abandon their course to vie for admission into the NDA. It is doubtful whether any amount of military

training and orientation given to such people will make them professional career army officers. Besides, due to the highly competitive nature of admission into the NDA coupled with the Nigerian social environment, one may find that most of these job opportunists who eventually succeed in gaining admission may turnout to be children or relations of the elite. The circumstances under which they find themselves in the Army preclude any hope of majority of them being career Army officers. In the long run the NDA might inadvertently end up training leaders for the nation instead of for the Armed Forces (Ukpabi, 1989:85-86).

This study is a modest attempt at examining the probable factors militating against the successful adjustment of some cadets to military training in the Academy. The study is an ex-post facto survey and derives part of information from an earlier feasibility study undertaken by Academy for the purpose of establishing a Guidance and Counselling Centre to cater for adjustment needs of Cadets (Udoh, Ikeotuonye & Maisamari, 1990). Attempts are made to suggest strategies for improved performance and adaptation of cadets to military life and training.

## 2. Aim of the Study

To examine probable influences of socio-political, psychological and organizational factors on the adjustment of cadets to training in the Nigerian Defence Academy.

## 3. The Concept of Adjustment

The term adjustment refers to the psychological processes through which individuals manage or cope with the demands and stressful challenges of everyday life, such as encountered in a military environment, and which require adjustment (Weiten et al, 2009: 12). Available evidences suggest that adjustment or adaptation means different things to different people depending on the perspective taken. For example: the medical model of adjustment considers pathology, symptom reduction or physical adjustment; the psychological model connotes emotional wellbeing, or lack of distress, cognitive adaptation or psychiatric morbidity; while a bio-psychosocial perspective of adaptation embraces a combination of pathology, emotions, cognitions and coping responses and also the nature and extent of social adjustment or functioning (Carta et al. 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Perhaps, a well-cited example of psychological model of adjustment is that provided by Taylor (1983), who argued that the process of adaptation to threatening events, whether illness or not, centers around three themes: searching for meaning in the experience; attempting to gain a sense of control or mastery over the experience; and making efforts to restore self-esteem. According to Taylor (1983), gaining a realistic sense of control does not mean actual control over the stressful event or challenge, but may simply mean control over some aspects of it. The same author has described how the meaning, sense of control and restoring self-esteem may be illusions which are nonetheless essential if adjustment is to take place. Taylor's psychological model of adjustment can also be referred to as a cognitive adaptation model, in that following a stressful event (challenge or threat), the individual is motivated to face it and be proactive in finding ways of dealing with the challenge or event in order to restore equilibrium in one's life. The present study will adopt Taylor's cognitive model of adaptation to explore the dynamics of cadets' adjustment to training in the Nigerian Defence Academy.

## 4. An Overview of Basic Military Training in NDA

The military training programme for transforming fresh cadets from the raw civilian life into a regimented military life in NDA is usually tortuous and stressful, especially for individuals with weak physical, emotional and psycho-social dispositions. The goals of basic military training are to develop loyalty, self-discipline, physical fitness, self confidence, pride in service, and military values in new trainees (Carbone, 2001).

These goals also point to the fact that the military profession thrives on a mission of discipline, order, and control over its manpower, unlike civilian organizations (Gal & Mangelsdorff, 1991).

Thus, it is mandatory that all service members including fresh cadets must embrace the art of listening without question, a major focus during basic training. Critical thinking, challenging authority, and thinking independently are not valued characteristics within a military environment (Katz, 1990). Moreover, the military de-emphasizes individuality, discourages introspection and verbalization of emotional states, and encourages strict obedience to highly specified behaviour in a hierarchical fashion, resulting in total control of its members (Katz, 1990)

The first day a new cadet reports to the NDA is usually characterized by indelible memories that remain with him/her throughout the rest of his/her professional life. The young raw civilian arrives the academy full of apprehension that his/her expectations would ever be met. He/she probably would have heard rumours and legends of this great institution where one could be literally eaten up alive. Thus, the fear of the unknown and anxiety of a young individual at the threshold of a completely new and challenging life becomes the symptom that haunt Cadets' first ten weeks in the Academy.6

It is therefore, natural that anyone who could help to alleviate these fears and anxieties of fresh cadets would permanently make good impression on their lives. Cadets become indebted to the one who most positively contributed to moulding them from a raw civilian to a professional officer in the making. That person becomes a role model whom each officer cadet would emulate for good or bad depending on what positive or negative trait was inputed to the cadet. The most desirable trait, of course, is the positive one which would enhance the new cadet's devotion to duty without fear or favour and without expecting reward. This trait also aims at honing the cadet's sense of responsibility and personal sacrifice to the service and country. Boring (1979:345-71) has enumerated the adjustment needs of recruits as including: threat to ego needs due to restrictions and sudden loss of freedom, confusion of rules and discipline, forced conformity to activities without understanding the reasons, restriction on dress codes, loss of identity and self-esteem, rigid regimentation, loss of privacy, worry, chronic fatigue, and loneliness due to preoccupation with thoughts of home

(cryptic nostalgia). The author notes that the above requirements for adjustment may be too much for individuals with weak personalities.

Thus, most cadets face these different challenges during the preparatory period and second year in the Academy. However, as new habits become familiar, adjustment improves and morale is enhanced.

### 5. Stresses Experienced In Preparatory Training Wing

Fresh cadets do not resume training in the Academy on equal footing. Some cadets are raw civilians while others are graduates of military schools, who usually have an advantage militarily to the rest of their colleagues. De-civilianizing new cadets, therefore, becomes very significant to prepare such cadets physically and psychologically for the challenges they will face while in the NDA. The orientation and preparatory training of fresh cadets seeks to allay the fears and anxieties they may have about life in the Academy. It seeks to create a very strong impression in the minds of the new cadets using senior Cadets of the Academy to instruct and prepare them for life in the Cadets' Battalion lines. Most importantly, they would all have been introduced to the Academy and their Battalions on the same standard.

The preparatory training programme items for fresh cadets are as listed in Table 1 below:-

S/No	Programme Description
1.	Puttee Parade
2.	Push Ups/Sit Ups
3.	Forward Roll
4.	Endurance Race
5.	Hunching
6.	Obstacle Course Training
8.	Vertical and Horizontal Rope
7.	Novices Boxing
8.	Muster Parade
9.	Drill Square Test
10.	Camp Initial Training
11.	Boot Shining
12.	Starching and Ironing of Uniforms
13.	Dress Codes
14.	Academy Dos and Don'ts
15.	Mess Etiquette
16.	Fire Alarm

Table 1: Preparatory Training Programme for Fresh Cadets.

On arrival of fresh cadets to NDA, they report to the Academy Quarter Guard, from where they march to the reception center for documentation after which they are handed over to Preparatory Wing Commanders, who are Model Cadets deemed to be averagely good, and are selected from each Battalion to oversee the activities in the Preparatory Wing. The Preparatory Wing is designed as a transformatory unit for the newly admitted Regular Course Officer Cadets. Experience has shown that new officer cadets need a period of gradual introduction into military life. They are therefore, put under the care of senior cadets who serve as models for the cadets and are expected to prepare them for life in the Cadet Battalion lines. The objective of such a preparatory programme is to change the civil mentality of the new cadets to conform to military behaviour. Thus, the first ten activities in the table are aimed at building up the physical endurance of new cadets, while the remaining activities are aimed at developing good military bearing, turnout, discipline, and military ethics.

The introduction of puttee parade into fresh cadets' daily routine is geared towards erasing their civilian mentality and instilling new military values of discipline, confidence, honesty, integrity, perseverance, team spirit and physical endurance. In a similar vein, the introduction of Drill Square Test is the first assignment of the fresh cadets in the Academy, which helps to transform them from crude civilian life, as well as prepare them to wear and respect Military Uniforms. Thus, one of the primary objectives of passing the drill square test in the NDA is to afford the new cadets absolute liberty and privileges of wearing military uniforms, paying compliments to commissioned officers, marching while in squad instead of doubling on non-tempo days, signing out on liberty days, and going home during semester break.

The following extract illustrates the stresses experienced by fresh female cadets on arrival in the NDA Camp for training:

The 8<sup>th</sup> October 2011 will forever remain a day we will never forget in our lives. That was the day we resumed in NDA as cadets.. We wondered what we were going to face in the course of our training and how we were going to be received not just as incoming cadets, but as female regular cadets... From the point of entry, the senior cadets were waiting for us like lions. We started hunching with our luggage on our heads from the point the taxi dropped us off till we got into the Academy.

We hunched round the parade ground severally where we were being documented and the senior cadets made us do so many unimaginable things...The beginning was very rough and we were confused.

We were lazy and hated everything we were told to do. We hunched to the cadets' mess for lunch but for sure, we were not allowed to eat. We got frustrated because we were very thirsty and even when we were eventually served water, we were not allowed to drink.

From the mess, we hunched back to the parade ground. At that point, some of us had a change of mind and wanted to go back home but it was too late because the taxi that brought us had left the premises, so we had no means of leaving. We continued to serve puttee like market thieves... We wondered why we had come to the Academy. Our lives brightened at night when we saw female officers brought to administer us. We admired them a lot and their presence gave us great hope. We always slept very late and woke up very early and found it very difficult to adapt initially, because it was a lot stressful. For the first 3 weeks, all we were doing were first period lessons and puttee-puttee-endurance. It was our regular routine for that period (63 RC Female Cadets, Valiant, 40<sup>th</sup> Edition, September, 2012:21).

Perhaps the most stressful and feared activity which all cadets must encounter during the preparatory period and thereafter, throughout their stay in Academy is the 'Puttee Parade' Puttee is seen differently by different people as a way of de-civilianizing and re-orientating officer cadets. Others see puttee as a psychological means of wounding the Cadets feelings of pride and making him realize that irrespective of formal status, he now has superiors over him. Puttee is also regarded as a corrective measure and an instant way of meeting out justice on a cadet who commits an offence that does not require a formal charge. This type of puttee is most common amongst cadets and can be in form of frog jumping, crossing of obstacles, endurance, forward rolling, push up, heaving on the beam, changing parade etc. Puttee administered on cadets in this way tallies with the official way and must be done in good faith. Thus, brutal types of Puttee as sometimes observed amongst cadets are prohibited and punishable under the rules of the Academy.

The training programme as listed in Table 1 are thus, deliberately designed to de-civilianize and re-orientate cadets This orientation takes different forms but is tailored towards erasing the civilian mentality from the young cadet and replaced with new military virtues of discipline, confidence, honesty, courage, integrity, perseverance, loyalty, team spirit, and physical endurance.

Having discussed the concept of adjustment and the stresses of basic military training, this study will proceed to explore probable factors influencing Cadets' adjustment to military training.

### **6. Influences of Socio-Political Factors**

The privileged position that the Academy occupies in the country, as the only institution of higher learning that guarantees employment on successful completion of training is no doubt a positive achievement for the institution. Perhaps for this reason, also, many young men and women keenly compete for admissions into the institution far more than they do in the case of similar institutions in the country. Amidst this teeming competition, therefore, factors other than meritocracy may come to play in the final selection process, such as god-fatherism, excessive family pressure, or other social and political considerations. Thus, it is observed that an aspirant may not perform up to the expectation to be considered for selection but is finally selected due to similar influences and political considerations (Mamman, 1989).

Furthermore, reported cases of involvement by junior officers (some of them fresh graduates of the Academy) in the past military coups and attempted military putsches tend to support the contention that socio-political rather than the genuine desire to serve in the Armed Forces have been the major propelling forces behind some of the officers enlistment into the Armed Forces (Aja, 1990). It is therefore, doubtful if such caliber of officers could withstand the prolonged stresses of military service and discipline without these propelling forces in them. A study by Anderson (1981) highlights the relationship between personal factors, social characteristics and adjustment to military life, as being a good match for the military. According to the author, the most common reasons of discharge from Army boot camp were lack of motivation, poor attitude, and lack of self-discipline.

In addition, those who joined the service for self-serving reasons, such as an improvement of life-style, were more likely to be discharged than those who joined for duty to their country. Anderson (1981) also found that successful recruit identification with the military was high prior to entry and not just a result of successful completion. The above findings are partly in conformity with the observation by Mamman (1989:85-86) that family pressure and congestion in the labour market rather than the call for duty and national service had forced many young men and women to seek enlistment into the NDA, and that it is doubtful whether any amount of military training and orientation given to such people will make them professional career officers.

### **7. Influences of Psychological Factors**

The cadets' personal attributes of personality, intelligence, emotional status, attitudes beliefs, past learning experiences, cognitions and mental orientations are well documented in the contemporary literature as predisposing factors for successful or unsuccessful adaptation to military training (Boring, 1979; Anderson, 1981; Gunderson & Houranie, 2003; Agashua, 2011).

Gunderson and Houranie (2003) identified personality disorder as the leading cause of premature discharge from naval service. Individuals with personality disorders have difficulty adjusting to military life, have limited coping skills and may be unable to respond to leadership, counseling and therapeutic measures available in a military setting. The large proportion of cases designated as existing prior to entering the service strongly suggest that an intensive screening aimed at identifying a history of psychopathology in applicants for enlistment would be worthwhile in order to reduce attrition.

Traits and features associated with personality disorders tend to have a negative impact and adjustment to the military. Fielder, Oltmanns and Turkheimer (2004) reported that features of personality disorders lead to adjustment problems within the military. Recruits who experienced high levels of dysphasia and are poorly motivated to adjust during basic training are clearly at risk for early discharge from the military.

The hypothesis that individuals with dependent personality traits and depression would join the military to support their primary needs was tested by Salmon and Gerber (1999), who found an inverse relationship between dependency and depression and a relationship between years in service and depression. They also found art therapy assessment as an intervention which can identify those members prone to depression and self-destructive episodes

These researchers (Salmon & Gerber, 1999) also hypothesized that individuals join the military for conscious and unconscious reasons, possibly looking to gratify dependency needs by joining an authoritarian organization. Finally, Ellis (1997) found that depression among members of the military is very common and that life in the military can cause stress that leads to depression. It is pertinent to state that these findings must be considered with caution due to the small sample sizes and lack of control measures used in the studies.

However, Psychological factors identified as influencing adjustment of recruits to military training as reviewed above are similar to the findings in a feasibility study conducted on NDA cadets by Udoh, Ikeotuonye and Maisamari (1990). The authors identified the prevalence of behavioural, social and psychological problems as militating against the ability by some cadets to cope with academic and military training.

Truancy as a behavioural problem and conduct disorder deserves special mention here. Some cadets were reported to avoid attending lectures, weapons training, drill and muster parades. Others with low self-concept or self-esteem often behave as if they are forced to come into the Academy. Also, these authors had reported cases of cadets with behavioural manifestations that border on superstition, frustration, drug abuse, wanton aggression, bullying, stealing, stress, anxiety and depression. Persistent cases of Absence Without Leave (AWOL) and Malingering were observed to be common amongst all ranks and file of Cadets in the Academy.

From the number of cases referred to the Department of Psychology for assessment and advice by the Cadets Battalion, it was observed that those cadets with unstable personality dispositions were more likely than others to perform poorly in both academic and military exercises. The psychological profiles of these cadets as measured by Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck; 1975) often portray them as harbouring feelings of tension, high levels of neuroticism traits, low self-esteem, unhappiness, anxiety, possessiveness, lack of autonomy, hypochondriasis (or chronic complainant), and guilt or self-blame. The presence of these strong emotional reactions often interfere with cadets' proper adjustment to military and academic training (Agashua, 2011; Fielder et al, 2004; Farsides & Woodfield, 2003).

## **8. Influences of Organizational Factors**

These are factors intrinsic to the organizational structure, command and control of the Nigerian Defence Academy. They include such aspects as goals and mission of the Academy, its admission policy, the development and implementation of training programme, general administration, welfare and discipline etc. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing NDA today is how to achieve its mission objective by providing each cadet with knowledge, skills and values necessary to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces through military, academic and character development.

This study maintains that loop-holes in the design and implementation of some programme may probably contribute to problems of adjustment being observed with some Cadets, especially if not properly executed.

### *8.1. Admission Policy*

As earlier stated, the role of the AFSB is very crucial in the selection process which is supposed to among other things; identify suitable officer materials that would subsequently come to the Academy. However, the present selection system does not allow for comprehensive psychological evaluation of the candidates to be carried out by professionals in this field. Moreover, the psychologist hardly has any impact on the proceedings of the Board within such a short period of time available to him. Furthermore, report by the Psychologist in respect of some individuals with Psychological deficits such as personality deviance, emotional disorders, low intelligence, learning disabilities etc, is not seriously acted upon by the Board before final decision on the admission in respect of any candidate is made. Thus, lack of consideration of Candidates' Psychological attributes in the final selection process has been identified as partly responsible for the inability by some cadets to cope with the rigors of military and academic training as well as general discipline in the Academy.

### *8.2. Training Facilities*

It has been observed that at initial entry, cadets do not come into NDA on equal footing both academically and militarily. Apart from differences in academic attainment, some cadets who are graduates of military schools usually have an advantage militarily to the rest of their colleagues. However, by the time these cadets complete the first year of military training, some kind of abridgement is achieved. This process can, however, be facilitated if there are enough facilities for military training in particular. Presently, these facilities are inadequate, while some facilities require expansion and modernization in order to accommodate more cadets.

The problem of inadequate training facilities for cadets (including teaching aids-maps, protractors etc) are seen as potential contributing factors in lowering the rates of assimilation of skills by cadets as well as their poor response to some military training exercises.

### *8.3. Administrative Requirements of Cadets*

The technical report on the establishment of counselling services for cadets had identified some needs which are considered as likely to affect the performances of cadets both academically and militarily (Udoh, Ikeotuonye & Maisamari, 1990).

These needs include one or more of the following.

- Inadequate supply of kitting items;
- Insufficient mess facilities;
- c .Lack of adequate medical facilities;
- Lack of adequate equipment for games and leisure activities;

- Inadequate laundry facilities and service;
- Inadequate supply of copies of the Academy Standing Orders for the full awareness and compliance of the cadets.

Some of the above needs are considered as potential contributors to the declining discipline and morale, as well as the timely turnout out of cadets at military and academic activities.

#### *8.4. Staff Welfare and Morale*

It is not an under-estimation to state that welfare and morale could have variable effects on the performances of cadets. Where staff welfare and morale is low, the standard of discipline which is the bedrock of military professionalism and regimentation cannot be vigorously enforced.

Presently, apart from the problem of staffing being experienced by the various units, some key staff officers such as Battalion Adjutants and Cadets Brigade officers who are the custodians of cadets are accommodated at various locations in town. With the problem of mobility and persistent fuel scarcity, these officers are not always available to conduct regular on-the-spot checks on cadets. Moreover, some of the posted in officers both military and civilian, have no accommodation or the means to report to work. These factors inadvertently affect the performance and morale of the staff, and subsequently the supervision of cadets.

### **9. Suggestions for Improved Cadets Adjustment**

Report of the Committee on the physical and psychological aspects of fresh cadets training in the NDA observed that some fresh cadets had suddenly collapsed on the first day of reporting for training as a result of medical disabilities; whilst a few cases with mental problems had run amok or broken down during training (NDA/425/CDT/A dated 5 Jul 2001). Also cases of AWOL and desertion are observed to be more frequent in the first and second year of training than in the later years. The Board is of the opinion that a comprehensive programme on the physical and psychological aspects of fresh Cadets should be developed and introduced during the preparatory wing training. The programme should include a confirmatory medical examination as well as psychological assessment which must first be conducted for all cadets reporting to NDA, and only those found fit would then be exposed to gradual and systematic physical training exercises.

The various organized events aimed at building the physical endurance of new cadets as contained in Table 1 should not be left entirely in the hands of senior cadets. The Physical Training Wing (PTW) has a crucial role to play here. Thus, a graduated introduction of the fresh cadets to physical training gives a more positive result than loading new entrants with high level exercises in a short period of time, which would invariably lead to muscle tears, stress-fractures, sleeplessness and possibly absence without leave (AWOL). For the first three months, therefore, fresh cadets should not be introduced to serious exercises like cross-country, and obstacle course competition.

Rather, within this period, the PT Wing should build up the physical strength of the cadets, while they also take part in activities like sit ups, press ups and other short endurance exercises, all tailored towards building them up for subsequent major events.

Where senior Cadets are involved in such training, they should receive proper briefing and training by the PTW staff before conducting such exercises. Officers of the Cadets' Brigade should also assume the responsibility of supervising the orientation course for fresh Cadets, so that by the time Camp Initial comes up, Cadets would have been adequately prepared physically and psychologically.

The Cadet's Brigade, PT Wing, Medical Centre and Department of Psychology should prepare a comprehensive programme for the orientation of fresh Cadets. In conjunction with Medical Centre, the Department of Psychology should draw up a programme that would enable fresh Cadets to cope with the initial stresses encountered. For maximum impact, Psychological re-orientation should span the length of Cadets' training, and involve the use of Training films, power-points presentations, simulation exercises, stress exposure and stress inoculation training, and brief psychotherapy to enhance the morale and mental readiness of fresh Cadets (Driskell and Salas, 1991; Meichenbaum, 1996).

Also, pamphlets should be produced outlining those physical and Psychological aspects of training that all fresh cadets would encounter in NDA. These pamphlets should be released as briefs to prospective candidates as they purchase the NDA application form.

Finally, in order to facilitate the adaptation of cadets to various stresses of military and academic training as well as the rapid adoption of military values, it is necessary that both the general and specific needs of cadets as identified in the blue-print for establishing guidance counselling centre be addressed by the Academy.

The general needs involve stresses expressed by cadets in the areas of psychological development, social, economic, vocational and educational attainments. The specific needs on the other hand, relate to those considered as peculiar to the individual cadets, and to the Academy as a military institution with set-goals and objectives. On the part of the individual cadets, conflicts were observed in such areas as the choice of military as a career, the desire by some to change service or course of study at entry, the emotional and intellectual ability to cope with the military and academic programme, exhibition of delinquent and antisocial behaviour etc. On the part of NDA, there is an expressed need to maintain military status-quo by producing officers with requisite qualities of command, loyalty and dedication to the nation.

To maintain a balance in the status-quo, therefore, aggressive emphases should be placed in the areas of selecting Candidates with suitable attributes and motivations for training as officers in the Nigerian Armed Forces. In the area of Cadets administration, emphases should be placed on effective administration of Cadets' welfare, provision of well equipped training facilities; skilled, competent, and dedicated staff; and high quality supervision. A good knowledge of the forces operating for and against the successful adaptation of Cadets to training and discipline should be the major concerns of all commanders, instructors and lecturers directly

responsible for the administration and training of cadets. To this end, NDA should encourage applications of scientifically tested modern techniques for imparting knowledge and skills to cadets. Academy should also encourage its staff to conduct research in the areas of Cadets adjustment and advance modern training techniques in both academics and military in order to produce a balanced and well adjusted future officers for the Armed Forces.

## 10. Conclusion

The objective of this study is to explore the probable influences of factors influencing the adaptation of officer cadets to training in the NDA. The impact of socio-political, economic, psychological and organisational factors were identified and discussed, suggestions for improving the adjustment of cadets to the stresses of military life and training were also provided. In order to truly succeed in the noble task of producing high Caliber officers for the Nigerian Armed Forces, therefore, NDA authority should continue in efforts to create and maintain the enabling environment for promoting and preserving the productivity of cadets and staff in all areas of training. Failure to do this would inadvertently breed discontent with the resultant rise in cases of psycho-social distress, indiscipline, low morale and productivity, poor performance, malingering, AWOL and deliberate mischief.

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