

Introduction

Maintaining a finely balanced relationship between recruitment and retention is a perennial problem which every organization faces, however, the problem is all the more poignant in a military context given the additional risks associated with the nature of defence. My research has investigated the rates of attrition within the UK military and other nations worldwide, furthermore, I have explored the potential motivating factors for leaving service.



Image 1 by Jamie Hunter

Problems

In order to maintain operational capability, the UK military must retain staff for a given period of time to ensure that experienced service personnel are available to lead and mentor future operators. Certain specialist roles have an especially high level of attrition. For instance pilots, who often leave service to pursue higher paid careers in the private sector. Since it costs over \$10 million to train an F35 Pilot from scratch (Mattock et al, 2019), it is clear to see that retention of these staff will lead to saving for the taxpayer and increased experience within the force.



Image 3 by Capt Robyn Haake

Methods

My general methods were a combination of literature review consisting of US and Australian research. Alongside data observation and analysis from the UK.

RRPs

RRPs standing for Recruitment and Retention payments are paid to the roles in which there are long standing Recruitment/Retention issues or where external market competitive pressures exist (AFPRB, 2020). But, in order implement effective retention schemes, motivating factors and characteristics influencing the exit of service personnel must be understood.

Literature Findings

(Marrone, 2020) used Probit Regressions to assess how well different variables predict Attrition at different points in time. Female attrition rates were found to be higher across all four services. Not having a high school diploma also translated to a higher rate of attrition. Similar research on the Australian Defence Force yielded different results based on Gender with no significant evidence that first term attrition rates between males and females were different.



Image 4 by Commonwealth of Australia 2019



Image 5 by Tim Felce

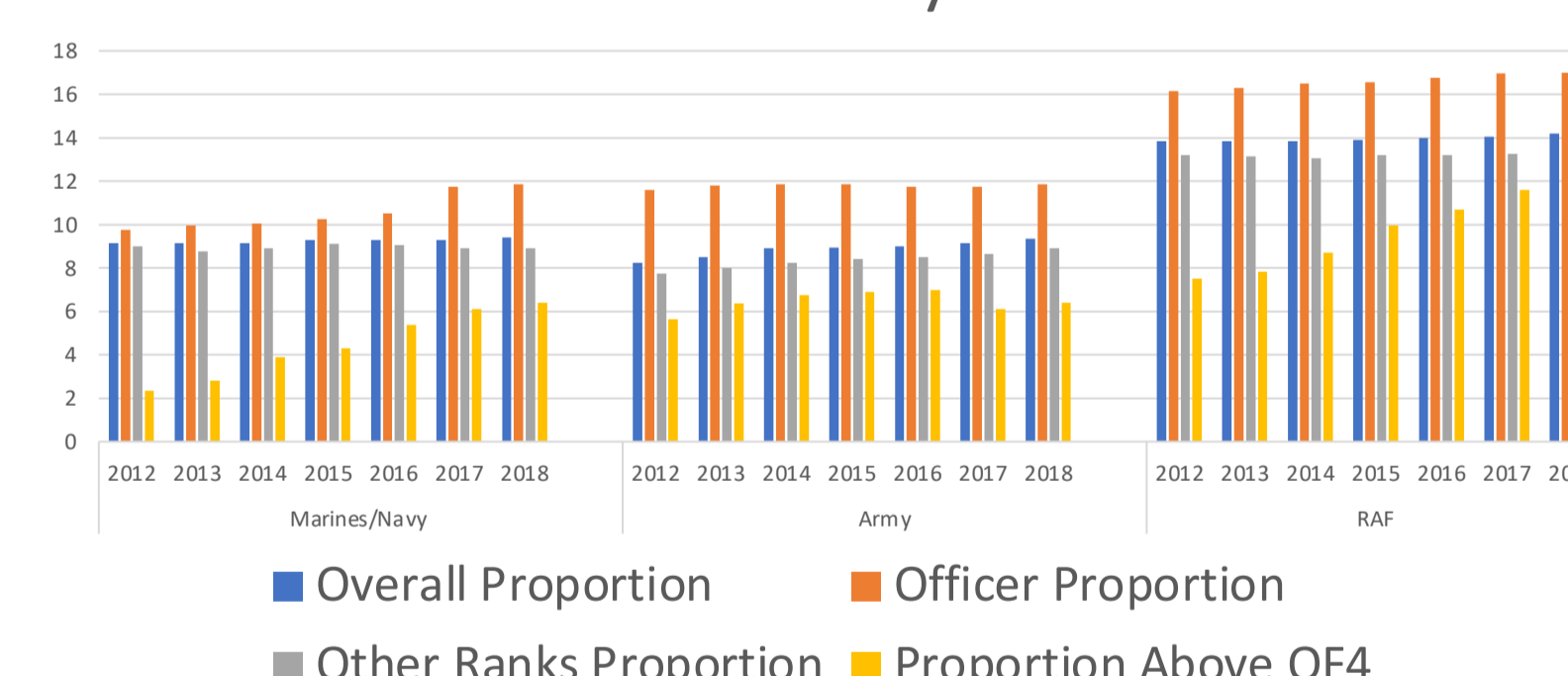


Image 2 by Graeme Main

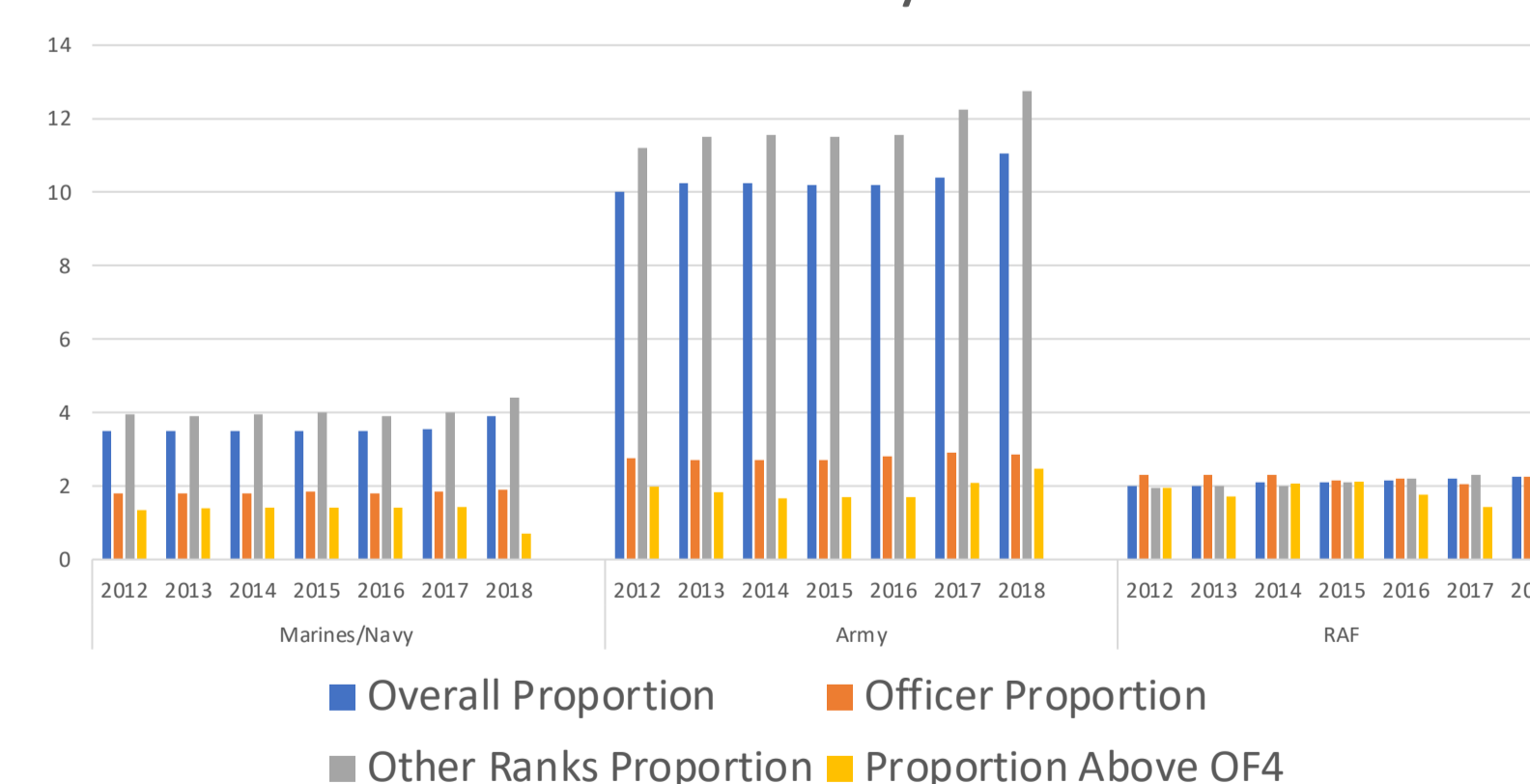
Differential Attrition

Graph 1 showing Male Vs Female outflow rates was calculated by first finding the outflow rate for each service (outflow per year divided by total strength for the year) and then averaged to create a tri-service rate. Females were found to have a lower Attrition rate than men. Graph 2 representing BAME Vs White outflow rates which were calculated in the same way as Male Vs Female outflow rates. BAME personnel were found to be less likely to attrite than White personnel. When comparing between nations, it is essential to account for the differences in the time periods between the UK data and the existing literature. The existing literature is largely based on the data of recent recruits. Whereas, the UK data is made up of all personnel.

Proportion of Female personnel within Military



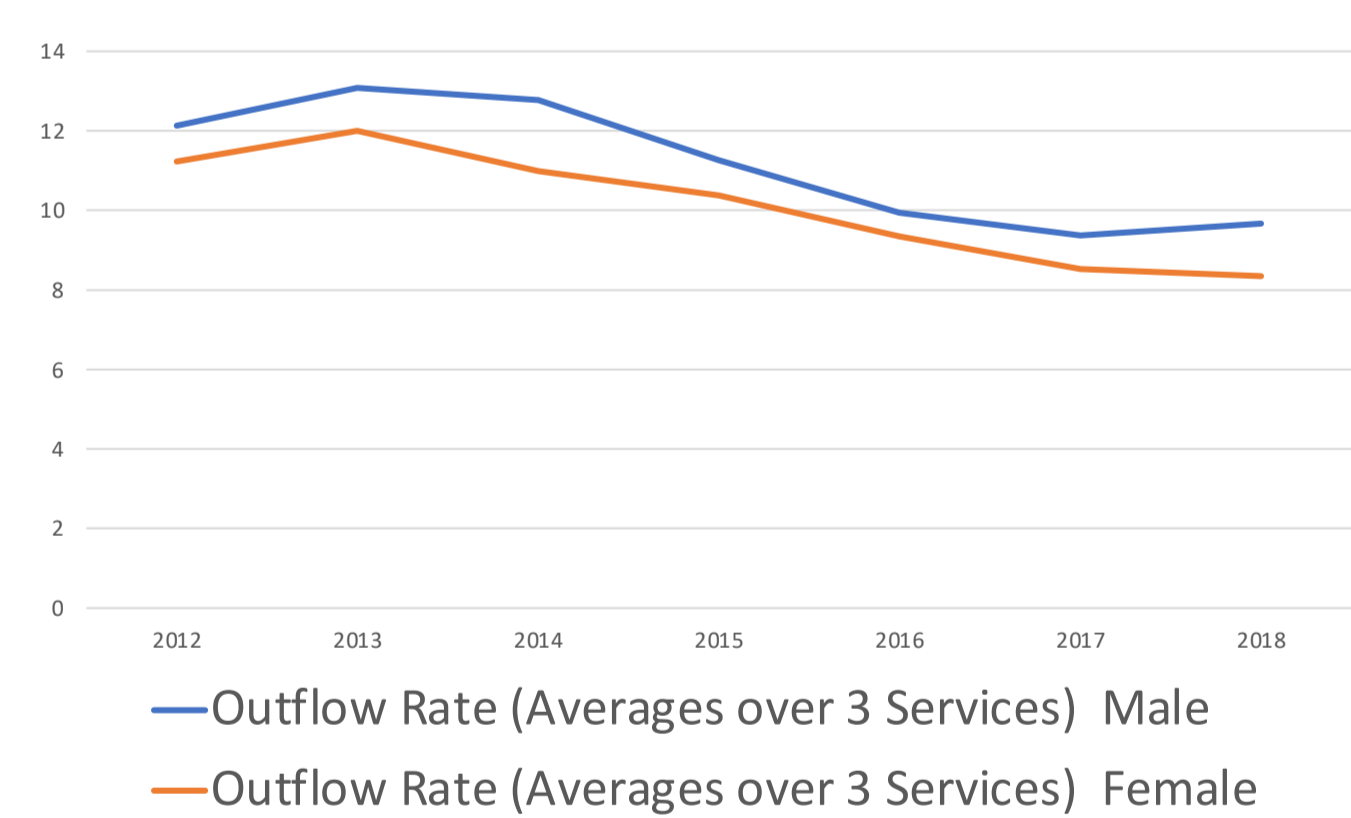
Proportion of BAME personnel within the Military



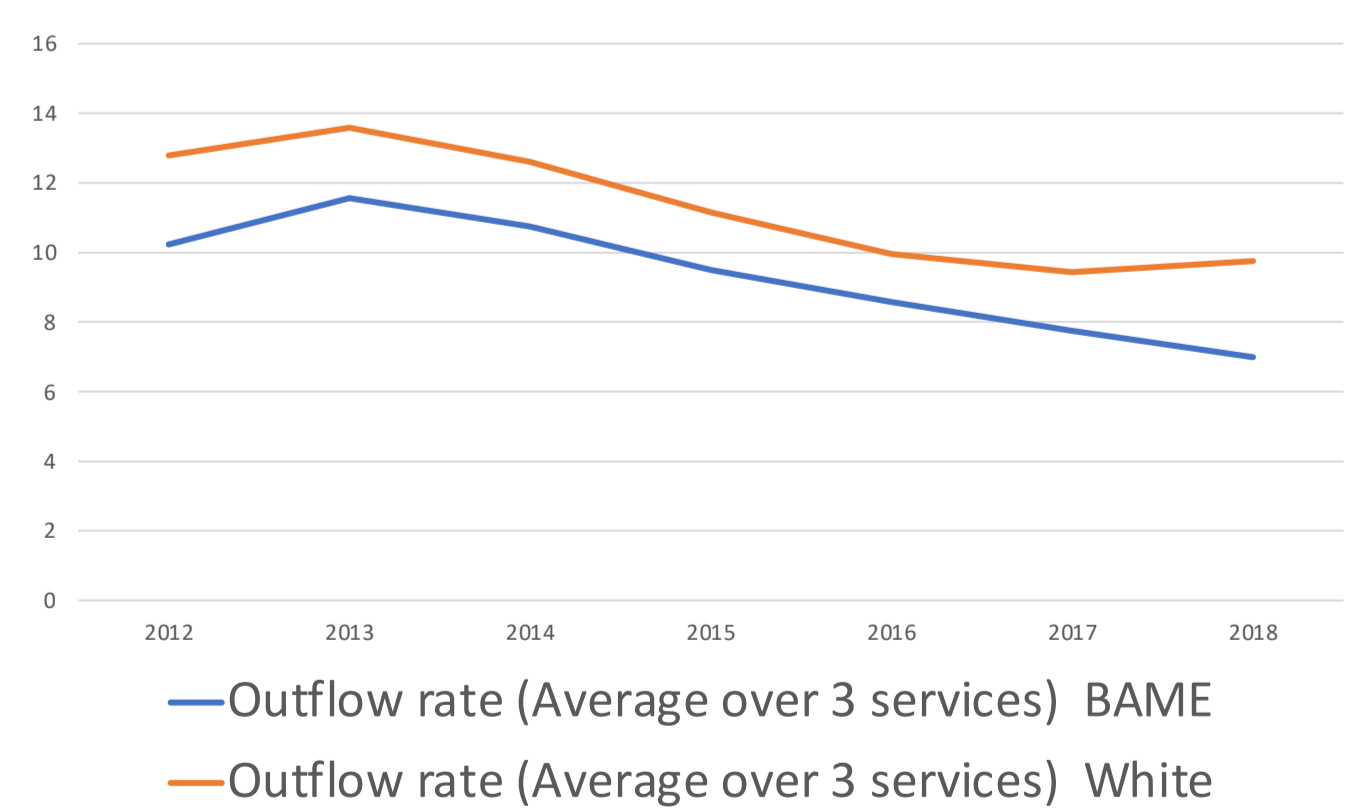
Rank Findings

As can be seen on Graph 3, Females are over represented in the officer ranks. Whereas, on Graph 4 you can see that BAME persons are overrepresented in the other ranks. So since both BAME and Female personnel have lower outflow rates than White and Male personnel respectively, but their rank distributions follow rather different patterns. It can be observed that rank has little explanatory power in terms of outflow and therefore other characteristics should be considered. Confidentiality issues prevented me from accessing individual data which left me unable to conduct the regression analysis which I planned. Following on from what I have found with the effect of ranks on outflow, I would recommend that future research seeks to find the characteristics which are responsible for these differences in outflow rates for Female and BAME personnel.

Male Vs Female Outflow Rates



BAME Vs White Outflow Rates



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