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Claudia Vogelsang
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Abstract

The objective of this descriptive study was to identify and describe those motivations for individuals who chose to enter into the military. Motivations are important to understand as they provide insight into the values and needs of individuals. These values and needs impact an individual's Person-In-Environment fit.

The study utilized an online survey to which 76 veterans or service members responded. The online survey collected demographic data such as age, gender, race and branch of service. The questionnaire then asked participants to rank a list of enlistment motivations noted in previous studies (Griffith, 2008; Woodruff, Kelty & Segal, 2007)on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 4 (very) in levels of influence.

The most influential enlistment motivations reported were educational benefits, patriotism, and the opportunity to travel. Previous literature categorized motivations into two categories: institutional or individual (Griffith, 2008; Woodruff, Kelty & Segal, 2007). However, ecological theory (Brofenbrenner 1994, DeHoyos 1989) implies that motivations are much more complicated than either of those categories suggests, being influenced by the interactions of the developing person and their environment on a large range of ecological levels.

Propensity for Military Enlistment: A Descriptive Study of Motivations

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2013

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This thesis is dedicated to the members of the A Co 229th MI Battalion, C Co 102nd MI Battalion and the 209th MI Co. Whether you know it all not, you all still support and inspire me.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The topic of interest for this study is the identification of the many possible motivations for enlistment into the armed services. In the fiscal year (FY) of 2009, 287,483 individuals were enlisted in the armed services. This number reflects active duty, reservists and National Guard enlistees (Power, n.d). Along with the large number of individuals entering the armed services for the first time, are over 17,000 social workers working with the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Department of Defense (Fedscope, March 2010). It is clear that enlistees are a large population in need of a variety of services.

This research topic is very relevant to social work. Each year, 200,000 soldiers enlist in the military and over 400K USD is spent annually by the Department of Defense on advertisement (Kleykamp, 2006; Kosar, 2012; Reichart, Kim & Fosu, 2007). The results of some studies have shown that soldiers who reported being more inclined to enlist are also more likely to report institutional motivations for enlisting (Griffith, 2008).

This study is a descriptive in design focusing primarily on collecting quantitative data related to which motivations have the biggest impact on individuals who chose to enlist in the military. The data was collected through an online questionnaire posted on SurveyMonkey. It was the assumption of this researcher that military enlistment is influenced by an individual's ability to have their needs met by their community. If a family or community is unable to meet the needs of an individual, military enlistment is much more likely. The military may therefore act as an individual's surrogate family.

According to Ecological Systems Theory, a person is embedded in their environment, known as Person-In-Environment (PIE) (Dybicz, 2009). By understanding that both the

individual and the environment represent two different systems which interact, one can recognize the influence that the environment has on the individual. This influence manifests in many ways; employment, education, health just to name a few. Unlike other organisms, however, human beings are able to exercise self-determination and may choose to adapt by changing their environments. Depending on one's circumstances (i.e money, education, skills, residence, transportation, ect.) this is more easily said than done. One of the easiest and fastest ways of changing one's environment is through military enlistment.

Ecological theory requires us to look at the parts of an integrated system both individually as well as how they work in relationship to the whole and its functioning. Developmentally, person-in-environment system states should evolve to become "differentiated and hierarchically integrated" states (Wapner, 2000 pg. 7). Features of the PIE system state include three aspects of the person as well as three aspects of the environment. The "person" features include: physical (e.g. biology, health, etc.), intrapsychological (e.g. stress, mood, etc.), and sociocultural (e.g. roles). Environmental features are identified as: physical (e.g. natural or man-made, geography, etc.), interpersonal (e.g. friends, co-workers, family etc.), and sociocultural (e.g. rules and regulations).

Joining the military requires a certain amount of development for the individual as well as adjusting to a new environment. Motivations for joining the military become important to understand, as they are indicators of a person's expectations and goals and are often value driven. These goals can be quite closely connected an individual's person-in-environment (PIE) transitions. Ecological Systems Theory and PIE both emphasize the importance of causality on an individual's actions and reactions to their situations (Dybicz, 2009). Learning the motivations behind military enlistment may be important to practitioners working with service members or

veterans for many reasons. First of all, this information may enlighten us as to what influences are important to our clients. For example, if an individual enlists because of the influence of family members, this may indicate that family values are important to this client. Second, it may give us insight to what is lacking in environments. By understanding what the military helps to provide veterans and service members, practitioners will be able to better inform and serve their clients.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Before we can begin to understand why individuals choose to join the armed services, we must first have an understanding of who joins. The following is a brief overview of the historical make-up of the military from the American Revolution until today. Only after we know who comprises the military can we take a look at the institutional as well as individual motivations that prompt enlistment.

A Historical Perspective

Early American history. During the American Revolution, the military was comprised, unsurprisingly, of mostly Whites. A predominant number of colonial enlistees were Irish or German immigrants or first generation Americans. In fact, nearly 25% of all soldiers were of Irish decent due to recruitment strategies directly targeting them (Lutz, 2008). Many states even had all-Irish or all-German battalions fighting for them. It is estimated that nearly 13% of all of Pennsylvania's forces were German. The Civil War largely saw this movement continue.

During this same time, African Americans were officially not allowed to join the military (Lee, 2009; Lutz, 2008). However, after the British army started to offer freedom to any Black that fought for them, General Washington changed his mind and allowed free Blacks to enlist. It still remained illegal for Blacks to enlist in individual state militias.

The War of 1812 continued this trend of prohibiting Blacks from joining the military. However, once again this prohibition was set aside in times of need. It is estimated that nearly 3,000 African American men served in the war of 1812. This pattern would be seen again during the Civil War, where over 200,000 Black men would fight alongside (Baily, 2011; Lutz, 2008) White men in the Union Forces - enough to warrant the creation of four all Black units.

However, it was not until the Militia Act of 1862 that African Americans were allowed to join a state militia. One year later the Conscription Act of 1863 would include African Americans (Lee, 2009; Lutz, 2008).

It was not until the War of 1812 that Latino Americans were known to participate in the American Militaries. The full scope of their participation is, however, unknown. This is due to the fact that the Department of Defense did not begin to track the involvement of Latinos in the military until after the Vietnam War (Lutz, 2008). Still, it is estimated that approximately 18,000 Latinos fought in the Civil War split evenly between the Union and Confederate forces. It is known that all-Mexican Cavalry units participated in both California and Texas.

World Wars I and II. During World War I, the military continued to be largely segregated (Baily, 2011; Lutz, 2008). Individuals who identified as Black or Latino were mostly assigned to menial support tasks. Although there continued to be four all-Black units, none of them were deployed to Europe. Discrimination further disadvantaged minorities by not promoting them. This meant that there were few officers of color. Instead, even so called all-minority units were led by White officers, many who actively and openly discriminated against their own troops. Though the practices during World War I is unclear, during World War II Latino's were segregated into units depending on their precise skin tone. Lighter toned individuals were assigned to White units, while those with a darker skin tone were assigned to units reserved for Blacks (Baily, 2011; Lutz, 2008).

Immigration continued to be a predictor for Whites who joined the military. Throughout American history, military participation has helped to expedite the granting of citizenship and all the rights that come from it (Lutz, 2008). In this era, immigration shifted from Western Europe

to Southern and Eastern European areas. During World War I, America was allied with Italy, which may help to account for the fact that Italian immigrants comprised 12% of the Army.

Jewish immigrants were also an integral part of the military. Nearly 97% of the 200,000 Jewish members of the military were immigrants or the children of immigrants; 75% of whom were from the Russian Pale (Lutz, 2008). However, shortly after World War I, immigration quotas were created that severely curtailed the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Despite the fact that immigration from Southern Europe had drastically slowed and that our allies had changed, ethnic Italians continued to represent the largest single ethnic group of White soldiers during World War II. Their numbers are estimated to be half a million. Approximately 500,000 Latino's also served in World War II, however this number is based largely on the recorded surnames of all enlisted soldiers. While Latinos continued to be segregated based on their skin tone, the 65th Infantry Regiment was created at this time and was the first All-Puerto Rican unit (Baily, 2011; Lutz, 2008).

Almost a full million Blacks served in the Army during World War II (Lutz, 2008). This population comprised nearly 9% of the Army's numbers, more than any of the other services. Blacks also comprised 4% of the Navy and 2% of the Marine Corp. The proportions of Blacks in the military continued to grow during and after World War II. As soon as six months after the war, 17% of all new recruits were Black. However, in the civilian sector aged 18-37, Blacks only accounted for 11% of the population. Added to the influx of new recruits, fewer Black services members were discharged after the war, possibly related to Blacks reporting higher satisfaction rates with military life than their White counterparts (Lutz, 2008).

Towards the end of the second world war the military started to experiment with de-segregation. In 1948 Truman signed into law Executive Order (EO) 9981, which outlawed segregation. This change was significant, as a previous order outlawed racial discrimination, but this was the first time that segregation was defined as form of discrimination as pertaining to the military. This law would also mark an important time in Black civil rights as Truman is quoted, "Black civil rights as a matter of national security".

Korean war and Vietnam. The Korean War was the first war fought in American history under the new integration policy. The desegregation of the forces was considered a great solution to the personnel shortages the military was facing (Lutz, 2008). However, de-segregation was not complete. For example, the 65th Infantry Regiment was still operating as an All-Puerto Rican unit. It was not until Vietnam that the 65th Infantry Regiment was either disbanded or integrated.

During the Vietnam era, draft conditions came under scrutiny for racial inequality. Because college enrollment allowed individuals to defer being drafted minorities and individuals in lower socio-economic classes made up the largest numbers of troops sent to Vietnam. Despite the racial inequality shown in the draft, Blacks still tended to re-enlist more often than Whites (Lutz, 2008). It was not until 1973 that President Nixon signed into effect the All Volunteer Force (AVF).

A Modern View

The year prior to the formation of the AVF, Blacks made up 11% of all military forces. Afterwards, it was accurately estimated that the proportion of Blacks would continue to grow. By the mid 1980's, Blacks accounted for 30% of all troops. It was postulated that the reason for this was that there were no motivations for middle class Whites to enlist (Baily, 2009;

Klyekamp, 2006; Lutz, 2008; Teachman, 1993). During the 1990's numbers show that Latinos were under-represented in the military. Of those that volunteered for military service, the vast majority were assigned to combat units and trained to handle weapons. Very few Latinos were trained in more technical jobs such as communications.

Since 2001, Lutz (2008) has estimated that the rate for Black enlistments has been declining, while Latino enlistments have been increasing. However, in both the Black and Latino population propensity to serve has been shown to be decreasing at a faster rate than with White youths. In 2002, Black representation in the military dropped to approximately 22%. By 2006 the percentage of Blacks dropped to 17.3%, and of those 21.1% served in the Army while 70.2% were White, 6% unknown race, 5.6% other minorities and 1% multiracial. Latino's were not identified racially at then, however 10.2% identified as being ethnically Hispanic. Most Hispanics also chose to enlist in the Army as opposed to other branches of service (Lutz, 2008).

Immigration also continues to be a factor in military enlistment, as they comprised nearly 5% of service members, 66% of which were naturalized citizens, in 2008. Military service continues to be a tactic to expedite citizenship procedures. Since September 11th, 2001, individuals have been granted citizenship while serving in the military totaling 37,350 service members and veterans (Lutz, 2008).

According to Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan and O'Malley (2000), African-American men are most likely to consider military enlistment, followed by Hispanics and lastly by White men. Women show similar patterns, but with much weaker statistical correlations. Additionally, people from the south are also more likely to consider military enlistment, especially within the African-American population. In this study by Bachman et al., individuals from rural areas are more likely to consider military enlistment, but the authors also caution that this result is not

consistent with earlier findings. Research shows that individuals from single-parent families are more likely to consider military enlistment.

The analysis by Bachman et al. (2006) may show that rather than any of these individual variables, socioeconomic status may be a key overall variable contributing to military enlistment. It is a limitation of the Bachman study that it does not address the socioeconomic status of the participants, though many of the stated ones, such as coming from a single parent family, are highly correlated with low economic status. Many of the populations identified as more likely to join the military are historically marginalized (Miller & Garran, 2008). For example, African-Americans on average have one eighth the net worth of Whites, largely due to historical and institutional racism.

Women in the Military

Often times the military is considered a man's occupation. At times it is said that women do not possess the necessary temperament to be successful in the military. Specifically, women are seen as lacking leadership skills such as the ability to make decisions easily, self-confidence, competitiveness and independence (Boldry, Wood & Kashy, 2001). In addition to these lacks, women are often assumed to be emotional, kind, helpful and gentle. These more "feminine" traits are considered detrimental to a successful military career.

Despite these stereotypes and assumptions, women are the fastest growing population of military service members. Women account for 14% of all active duty soldiers, 15% of the national guard and nearly 18% of reservists. Female troops represent 11% of soldiers serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) (Boldry, Wood & Kashy, 2001). Although the number of female soldiers is growing, women still report feeling as though they are not part of the military community. Celebrations and commemorations are

universally seen as being for the men who served their countries. Women also report feeling less supported by their communities and by society at large.

When serving in the military there is arguably a strong stigma for anyone to receiving care, particularly psychiatric care. Additionally, women report feeling concerned that if their children require mental health care it will have negative implications for their career. Female veterans report feeling unsure about the quality of health care services received through the VA, including feeling unwelcomed which may partially account for the 40% of women who report needing psychological services but not receiving them (Boldry, Wood & Kashy, 2001).

The number of women who do not have faith in the military and veteran health care systems is alarming and more so when examining the increasing risks women are put in. The number of women who have come under mortar or artillery fire is equal to 40%. About 12% of women report having moderate direct combat experience in spite of policies in place to specifically prevent women serving in combat roles (Boldry, Wood & Kashy, 2001). These risks are on top of the normal biological risks of women in the military, namely health concerns over menstruation. Menstrual irregularities can be due to stress, increased exercise, diet or a combination of the three. Over 98% women cadets in the US Military Academy and 80% of all recruits have some form of iron deficiency. Iron deficiency can result in fatigue, low motivation and depression symptoms, which may work against a woman to re-enforce the negative perceptions of women in the military already discussed (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2011).

Women in the military are nearly twice as likely to be sexually assaulted as their civilian counterparts and 22% of female service members *report* being sexually traumatized in some way. Nearly 80% of women report experience "sexual stressors", such as harassment, assault or concerns with sexual identity. Nearly 65% of female soldiers report a diagnosis of Eating

Disorder NOS compared to 35% of civilian women with the same diagnosis. Sadly, they are also three times more likely to commit suicide (Boldry, Wood & Kashy, 2001).

Military women are more likely to have experienced multiple types of childhood trauma when compared to military men and civilian women (Boldry, Wood & Kashy, 2001). Exposure to childhood trauma has been associated with risk-taking behavior and impaired risk recognition (Fritch, Mishkind, Reger & Gahm, 2010). One could argue that, especially in these tumultuous times when it is not uncommon for military enlisted to serve several consecutive deployments to Afghanistan or Iraq, that there is a significant risk to join the military. Furthermore, the inability to successfully assess the risk in a combat situation can be detrimental, even fatal, to not only the individual but those who must rely on their battle buddy. To date, 6,081 United States soldiers have died during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (icasualties.org).

Research further indicates that individuals reporting traumatic childhood or adolescent events and relatively low levels of combat exposure have a higher prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Cabrera, Hoge, Bliese, Castro &Messer. 2007; Fritch et al. 2010; Owens, et al., 2009). However, not all studies agree to the extent. Some studies show that reported high levels of trauma experienced in childhood result in lower the severity of PTSD symptoms after combat exposure (Cabrera et al, 2007, Owen et al. 2009). This may be a result in increased resiliency and the early development of coping skills.

Institutional Motivators

The results of some studies have found that soldiers who reported being more inclined to enlist are also more likely to report institutional motivations for enlisting (Griffith, 2008). However, not all studies agree on what institutional motivations entail. According to Woodruff, Kelly, and Segal (2007), *institutional motivations* include patriotism and the desire to serve. One

finding of this study also identified the challenge of service as an institutional motivation. A second study done by Eighmey (as sited in Griffith, 2008, p. 231) identified 7 distinct motivational themes: fidelity, risk, family, benefits, dignity, challenges, and adventure. Of those seven, fidelity, risk and family were identified as institutional motivations and defined as such: *Fidelity* is defined as faithfulness to goals and like-minded individuals (Griffith, 2008, p. 231). *Family* includes not only the desire to be near family, but also to have the approval of the family. *Risk* was defined as the willingness to make personal sacrifice.

Johnson and Kaplan (1993) also identified motivations that by these definitions could be considered institutional motivations. The first is the transformation of boys to men. Culturally, joining the military and going to war has long been a rite of passage for young men. Nothing was mentioned about a similar rite of passage for women, which historically did not serve in the military. A second motivation identified by the Johnson and Kaplan study was for the politically and socially oppressed to be able to enter a more mainstream social role. This could explain why individuals from a racial minority background or impoverished individuals are more inclined to join the military.

Both fidelity and patriotism may explain enlistment trends precipitated by events considered to be threats to national security. Such events include the bombing of the USS Maine in 1898, the Lusitania sinking in 1918, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and most recently the attacks of September 11th, 2001. When the threat is clear, then enlistment tends to increase. However, modern conflicts have continually shown less defined events and goals. As a result, those conflicts have had less support from the general public. During the draft, the lack of public support had interesting effects on enlistment, as individuals would voluntarily enlist in the

reserves so as not to be drafted into active duty. As a result of this trend, nearly all reserve components were filled to capacity by the end of Vietnam (Griffith, 2011).

Neither of these studies (Griffith, 2008; Woodruff, Kelly & Segal, 2007) identified economic trends as an institutional motivation. However, the fact is that when unemployment is high people are more likely to consider military enlistment (Griffith, 2011). When viewed as an occupation, the military must be able to compete with the job markets. Furthermore, the military is often perceived as a more just meritocracy than either the civilian market or the education system. One assumed cause for the over-representation of Blacks in the military is that Blacks are afforded less educational opportunities and have higher unemployment rate. However, if this were true, then it does not account for the fact that Latinos are under-represented, despite facing many of the same hardships. Latinos are also more likely to report higher levels of inclination to enlist than either Blacks or Whites, which begs the question of why they fail to enlist.

Individual Motivators

Because the military has to compete with the civilian job sector, more and more incentives have had to be offered. These incentives tend to show up more under individual motivators. Legitimate careers and economic stability are often great influences for individuals to join the military Johnson and Kaplan 1993). Along with the career and economic stability often comes an increase in social status.

In the 1970's and 80's college-bound youths became the target of recruitment strategies. Educational assistance was one of the first incentives created for the AVF to take advantage of. Between 1992 and 2001, the rate of tuition rose faster than the average family income in 41 states and financial aid packages have failed to keep pace. This results in more and more debt being accrued by college students (Kleykamp, 2006). The military is sometimes viewed as an

option for individuals who have yet to make up their mind between work or school (Johnson and Kaplan 1993).

Individuals who come from larger families are also more likely to enlist, especially if the family income is low. This reason for enlistment might be attributed to the family having to spread resources thinner than in a smaller family which may have the same net income. Though test scores, grades and high school ranking are more likely to determine college enrollment, those who score high in these areas are also more likely to join the military than to enter the workforce directly.

There are several studies (Bechman et al, 2000, Griffith, 2008, Griffith, 2011, Kleykamp, 2006) which have shown that individuals are more likely to enlist in the military service if they have a family member who served either formerly or currently at the time of their enrollment. Two theories for this include the transition of values and norms of service from parent to child, or the access to information about benefits that might be unavailable without family exposure to the military. The question of how influential living in a military community, such as those found near military bases, might be is still unanswered (Kleykamp, 2006).

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological systems theory was first introduced in the 1970's by Urie Bronfenbrenner and emphasizes the interactions between people and their environments. This theory surmises that the environment affects a person's development and relies on two propositions (Brofenbrenner 1994). The first proposition states that human development takes place through complex and reciprocal interactions between a person and the people, objects, and symbols in their environment. These interactions are called *proximal processes* (Brofenbrenner 1994, DeHoyos

1989). The proximal processes occur regularly and over an extended time in order to have a lasting effect on the development of an individual.

The second proposition states that the form, power, content and direction of the proximal processes vary. The variations are due both to the development of the individual as well as the environment in which the processes are taking place. The *ecological environment* is a set of five nested structures: microsystems, mesosystems or mezzosystems, exosystems, macrosystems and chronosystems. These different levels of systems interact dynamically, forcing people and their environments accommodate each other through change, negotiation and compromise (Brofenbrenner 1994). The extent to which the individual and the environment are able to accommodate each other is referred to as *goodness of fit*.

Microsystems are the interpersonal relationships experienced. These interpersonal relationships are the most basic of the symptoms and occur in the person's immediate environment. These interactions have effects on the developing person's personality and other characteristics.

Mesosytems refer to the interactions between multiple microsystems, such as the effects parental relationships might have on their children, or in a military unit how the relationship between the commanding officer and the executive officer affects the enlisted personnel. These processes can be more generalized to the two or more settings which the individual inhabits at different times, for example home and work and how they affect each other.

Exosystems include systems that do not actually contain t the individual. Though these exosystems do not actually contain the person, they have a direct influence on the systems the individual does inhabit. For example, the home life of a superior officer will affect the lower

ranking members of his unit or events in the lower enlisted barracks which affect officers. The *macrosystem* includes overarching systems such as culture and government.

The concept of a chronosystem was not part of the original framework of ecological systems theory. The *chronosystem* describes the changes or consistencies of characterstics of both the individuals and the environment over the course of time. For example, the military as an environment and the way wars are fought has changed considerably even over the course of a single generation from Vietnam to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Person-in-Environment (PIE) fit has been linked to psychological and physical well-being and is a psychological event which requires the individual to be cognizant of his or her match to the environment and relies at least in part on the person's perceptions of his or herself and the perceptions of the environment (DeHoyos 1989, Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Lambert, Shipp 2006). These perceptions along with the values developed by the individual through the interactions of the five ecological systems already discussed, help to inform an individual's motivations and decision making.

The military operates on all levels of the Ecological Systems Theory framework. A soldier, especially while on active duty, is literally forced into numerous microsystem relationships in the form of teams, squads and platoons. On a mesosystem level the military operates as the workplace, school and often literally becomes home, whether in the barracks for single lower enlisted individual, on base housing for officers or soldiers with spouses or children, or homes purchased through a VA loan. The military can be seen to operate on an exosystem level for security reasons, such as when operations meetings are discussed in private which determine the mission for the ground soldiers. On a macrosystems level the military is a tool of the government and often the subject of great political debate. Other governments look and

assess the strength of our military forces and take action accordingly depending on if they are friend or foe. The values of our culture can be seen by how our military is used and funded. How large should our military be, how much funding should it receive? These values can be seen to change throughout the chronosystem level through the support or lack thereof for military conquest (i.e WWII vs Vietnam War vs OIF/OEF). Because motivations are a determining factor in understanding PIE fit, it becomes increasingly important to understand why an individual would want to join the military which as demonstrated has such great influence on a person and their development.

Summary

Many people choose to enlist in the military every year. These individuals come from all different types of backgrounds. They represent all races, and ethnicities, are male and female. The come from all parts of the country and represent all socio-economic classes. Just as the population mak-up of the military is diverse, so are their reasons for enlisting. Previous literature has identified two main categories of motivation and influence: institutional and individual. However, ecological systems theory gives us another way of looking at how motivations are developed. Ecological systems theory and person-in-environment stress the importance of understanding motivations as they can influence how well one can adapt to and from a military environment and combat readiness.

In order to have a better understanding of why people join the military this research study was presented. Using an ecological systems framework, the study asked participants to identify certain demographic data in order to get a basic understanding of what environmental influences might impact the respondent. Participants were then asked to rate previously identified motivations on a scale from not at all to very influential or to identify new motivations.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The topic of interest for this study is the identification of the many possible motivations for enlistment into the armed services. Learning more about the motivations behind military enlistment may be important to practitioners working with service members or veterans for multiple reasons. First of all, added information may enlighten social workers as to what influences are important to our clients who are service members and veterans. For example, if an individual enlists because of the influence of family members, this motivation may indicate that family values are important to this client. Second, it may give us insight to what is lacking in environments. By understanding what the military helps to provide veterans and service members, practitioners will be able to better inform and serve their clients.

The best design for this study was a descriptive study, as the goal was ultimately to gain a representative sample that reflected the military and veteran population. Because not much research has been done on this topic, the design was also somewhat exploratory by nature. This study was designed to make veterans and service members reflect on the reasons why they first joined the military. Because the reasons why participants joined the military may have changed over time, this study was considered retrospective.

This study focused primarily on collecting quantitative data related to which motivations have the biggest impact on individuals who chose to enlist in the military. The data was collected through an online questionnaire posted on SurveyMonkey. The survey utilized closed ended questions to gather pertinent descriptive data of the participants such as branch of service, race, and gender. The survey also used a series of likert scales to allow participants to rank

identified motivations on a scale of zero (not important) to five (very important). Participants were given the opportunity to use dialog boxes in order to explain their reasoning or to list motivations that were not previously identified. It is the assumption of this researcher that military enlistment is influenced by an individual's ability to have their needs met by their community. If a family or community is unable to meet the needs of an individual, military enlistment is much more likely. The military may therefore act as an individual's surrogate family.

Sample

Participants were selected based on their status as either an active service member or a veteran. To be included in the survey, respondents had to identify that they were 18 years of age or older and were either a veteran or current service member of military services. The sample was found using snowball sampling and online recruitment on Facebook and other online forums such as Craigslist. Initially, email was used to contact individuals that were known to the researcher as meeting the inclusion criteria. By utilizing email, the researcher was able to illicit a more substantial response rate. Individuals from the initial convenience sample were then asked to pass the recruitment information (Appendix A) along to individuals who met the inclusion criteria and who they thought would be willing to participate in the study. This electronic flyer was circulated in online groups through Facebook that were especially dedicated to service members and veterans.

A minimum of at least 50 participants were needed. It was hoped that diversity would exist within the sample based on the underlying characteristics of the military recruit and veteran sample pool, which does have some race/ethnicity diversity, though less with regard to female gender. Given the number of veterans and service members who were able to participate in the

study, as well as the easy accessibility of public forums online dedicated to this population, it

was possible to recruit the minimum sample required. However it was difficult to find a diverse

sample that reflects the make-up of the military and its veterans.

Ethics and Safeguards

Informed consent was obtained from all participants and was included at the beginning of

the online survey (Appendix B). Participants were not able to complete the survey without

agreeing to the informed consent. Informed consent was given through clicking on the "Next"

button after reading the informed consent policy. Participants had the option of choosing "Exit

Survey" if they did not want to participate in the study after reading the informed consent. All

participants of this study were of an age to be considered an adult. Participation in the online

survey was completely voluntary. Participants were able withdraw from the survey at any time

prior to submitting their survey. Participants were informed during the informed consent process

that withdrawal from the study would be impossible after they submitted their completed survey

due to the anonymous nature of Survey Monkey. Participants were offered a final opportunity to

withdraw immediately before submitting the completed survey.

Confidentiality. The data was collected through Survey Monkey and exported to an

Excel file for analyses. All data collected through Survey Monkey remained anonymous because

email and ip addresses were removed before the responses were transferred to the Excel file. All

identifying information was deleted from the final report and any quotations used carefully and

in such a way as to remove potentially identifying information. All data collected through

surveymonkey.com was encrypted to ensure anonymity. Participants were not asked to give

personal or identifying information about individuals other than themselves. However, since the

survey utilized free text boxes, it was possible that individuals could put identifying information

in their replies. Any identifying information was removed prior to analysis. No outside

individuals for conducting analyses other than my research advisor and the statistical analyst at

Smith College, who handled only anonymous survey data, were utilized.

As mandated by Federal regulations, all data will be kept for a minimum of three years or

until it is no longer needed. All data will be kept in a secured lock box until it is no longer

needed, at which point it will be destroyed.

Risks and benefits. Risk to the participants was kept minimal. However, it is important

to note that for some participants historic emotional and psychological memories which may be

difficult to deal with may have been brought up. A list of supportive resources including mental

health referrals was provided to all participants at the end of the survey (Appendix C). Given

that military personnel often fear being stigmatized if they access mental health services, a

special effort was made be to provide online and confidential resources for participants. .

Participants had the benefit of sharing their stories and participating in the development

of knowledge which may be helpful to increase the understanding of others. There was no

financial or material benefit for participating in this research.

Voluntary participation. Participation in this research study was completely voluntary.

Aside from two questions which screened participants for inclusion criteria, participants were

able to skip any question they were uncomfortable answering for any reason. Participants were

able to withdraw from the survey at any time prior to submitting the survey. Incomplete surveys

were filtered out during analysis.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting any data, an application was submitted to and approved by the Smith

College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (Appendix D).   The survey

was open for data collection for approximately 45 days through surveymonkey.com, a secure, online survey site that is approved by the Smith College School for Social Work HSRC. Responses from all surveys were collected electronically.

Instrument. The data for this research was collected through an online mixed methods survey (Appendix E). The survey utilized close-ended questions to elicit demographic characteristics (e.g. race, gender and age) and pertinent descriptive data from participants, such as what branch and component of the military they served in. A series of Likert scales was utilized to allow participants to rank both institutional motivations (e.g. patriotism and family approval) and individual motivations (e.g. educational benefits, economical security) identified through previous studies. Dialog boxes to allow participants to explain their answers or to identify other motivations were also provided in the survey.

Participants were recruited primarily through email and recruitment posts on public forums such as Facebook and Craigslist. An initial convenience sample of 12 was recruited through email. This initial sample was then encouraged to pass along the recruitment flyer and survey link in a snowball sample. When entering the site, participants were immediately screened for inclusion criteria. Anyone who did not meet inclusion criteria were exited from the survey at this time. All participants who met inclusion criteria were then taken to the informed consent page where they had to agree to the terms of the informed consent before moving on to the survey. Participants were able to contact the researcher prior to completing the survey via email; however only three participants did so. The most common questions asked prior to taking the survey was to clarify if officers were encouraged to participate as the survey used the specific language of "enlist". This language was not intended to exclude officers but was an oversight of the researcher and officers were encouraged to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

The data in this study was exported from a SurveyMonkey.com in the form of an Excel database and then analyzed by a research analyst employed by Smith College School for Social Work. During this analysis, four surveys were discarded for not meeting inclusion criteria. The data was then set up in a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) format to aid in analysis. Questions 16 and 19 were asked on a Likert scale and were recoded zero (not influential) through four (very influential) for consistency. Frequencies were run for all variables and descriptive statistics such as mean, mode, median and range were included for age.

Lastly demographic variables were cross tabulated with questions 16 and 19. After being cross tabulated the responses to questions 16 and 19 were condensed into three categories: Not at all or a little influential, somewhat influential, and a lot or very influential. This was done for easier comparisons between demographic groups and allowed for greater pattern recognition. Open ended questions were analyzed by the researcher for like themes and then compared to the responses already given by respondents.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The following chapter is a presentation and analysis of the survey sample responses about why people choose to join the military. Demographic data was collected in order to help determine if there are any patterns of why certain groups enlist for military service. A list of fifteen previously identified possible motivations were given to participants to rank how influential these motivations were to their decision making process when considering joining. Participants were then offered a chance to identify further motivations not already listed. The degree to which these motivations influenced individuals was then analyzed based on various demographics, namely: age, race, gender, class and military background.

Demographics

Of the 76 respondents, the vast majority, N=67 (88.2%), identified as White. Identified Hispanics accounted for N=3 (3.9%) of participants, as did individuals who identified as mixed race. Asians, Blacks, and Pacific Islanders each accounted for N=1 (1.3%) of the sample. Veterans account for 50 participants (65.8%), while 26 participants (34.2) stated that they were still serving in the military. Approximately 80 percent (N=61) identified as male and 20 percent (N=15) female. Three-quarters of the sample (N=57) said that at the time of their enlistment they had family members or close friends who were also in the military.

At the time of joining the military, 68.5% of participants (N=52) were 20 years of age or younger. The mode, with 31.6% of all responses (N=24), was 18 years of age at the time of enlistment. The mean age was 19.6, while the median age was 19 at the time of enlistment. The youngest identified age was 17(N=7), the oldest was 30 (N=1). Seven participants did not

indicate their age at the time of enlistment. One survey was removed from the database due to an obvious incorrect response

Most participants (56.6%, N=43) lived in a suburban setting at the time of their enlistment. Urban and rural settings were equal with 18.4% of respondents (N=14) identifying their neighborhoods as such. One person reported that he was living in base housing at the time of their enlistment, while another respondent identified that he moved frequently. Three individuals did not respond to this question. For socio-economic status (SES), most respondents (N=41, 53.9%) said their family would fall into a middle SES. Eighteen (23.7%) identified as lower SES, eight (10.5%) from a high SES and three (3.9%) were unsure. Six participants did not answer.

Army service members and veterans accounted for over 47% (N=36) of respondents. Air Force service members represented almost 27% (N=18), Navy 13% (N=10) and Marines nearly 12 percent (N=9). Three participants elected not to answer which branch of service they joined and three participants selected that they had experience in multiple branches of service. Nobody who participated in this survey answered they were members of the Coast Guard. Individuals who served in the regular component, meaning non-reservists or guard members, numbered 55 (72.4%). Reserves and National Guard accounted for 18 (23.7%) and 14 (18.4%) participants respectively. Fourteen individuals (18.4%) had experience in multiple components of the military.

Why Do People Join the Military?

The most commonly reported motivation to enlist was "Educational Benefits". Over 70% (N=56) of all respondent said that educational benefits were at least somewhat influential, with 53.9% (N=41) of all respondents reporting that educational benefits were a lot or very influential.

Figure 1: Infuence of Educational Benefits
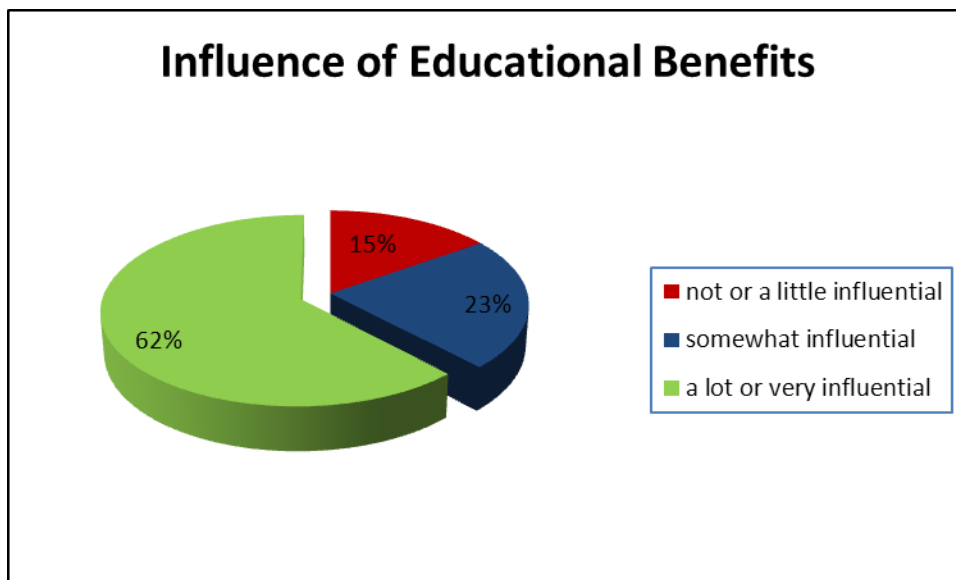
Both patriotism and opportunity to travel had 64.4% (N=49) of responders rating both motivations as somewhat influential or higher. However, 37 (48.7%) participants ranked patriotism as a lot or very influential as compared to opportunity to travel which only received 34 (44.7%) responses of a lot or very influential (see figures 1-3).

Figure 2: Influence of Patriotism
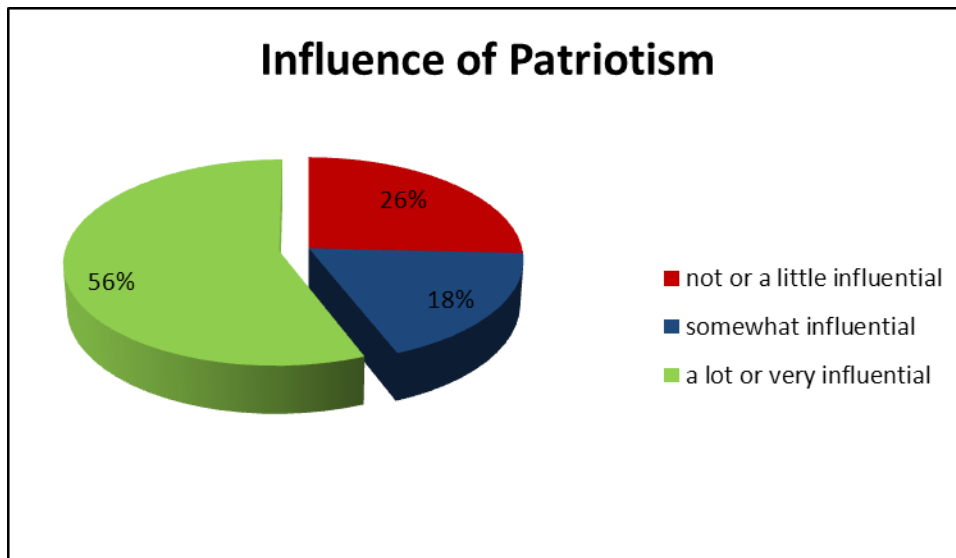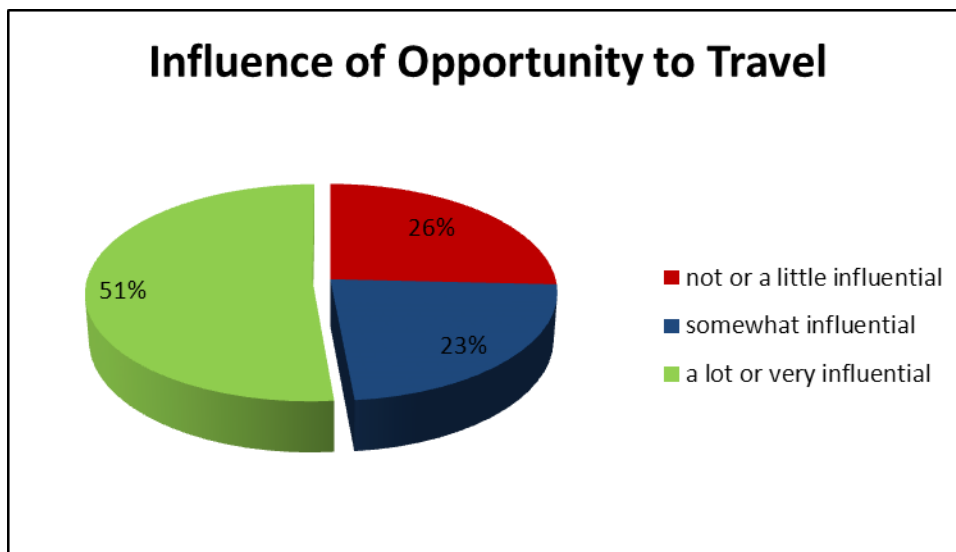
Alternatively, both military ads and speaking to a recruiter received the lowest overall rankings of possible motivations. Military recruitment ads received nearly 70% of respondents (N=53) saying they were not at all or only a little influential. Speaking to a recruiter fared little better, receiving 60.5% of respondents (N=46) saying the process of speaking to a recruiter was not at all or only a little influential to the decision to join the military (see figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4: Influence of Military Ads

Influence of Recruitment Military Ads

- not or a little influential
- somewhat influential
- a lot or very influential

1%
16%
83%
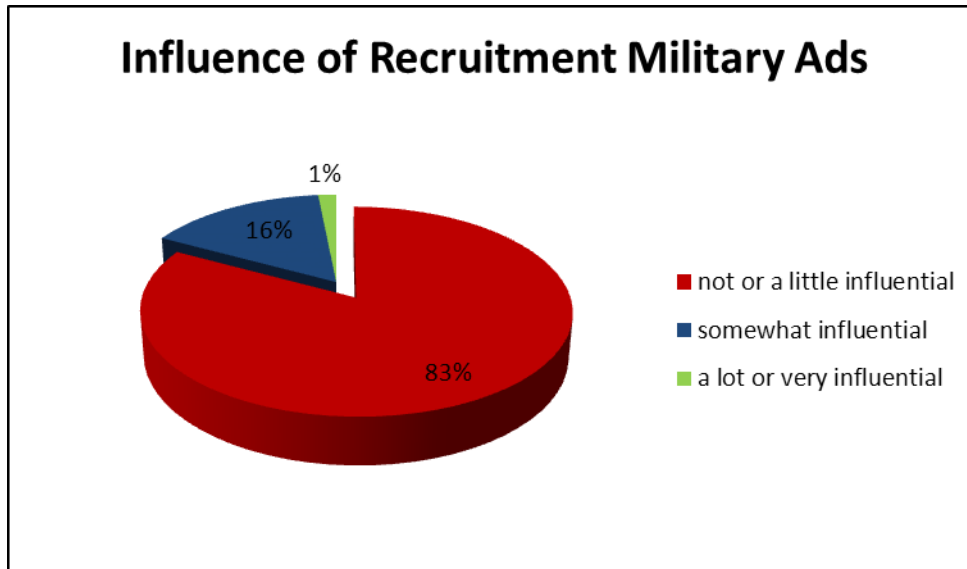
Figure 5: Influence of Speaking to a Recruiter

Influence of Speaking to a Recruiter

- not or a little influential
- somewhat influential
- a lot or very influential

14%
15%
71%
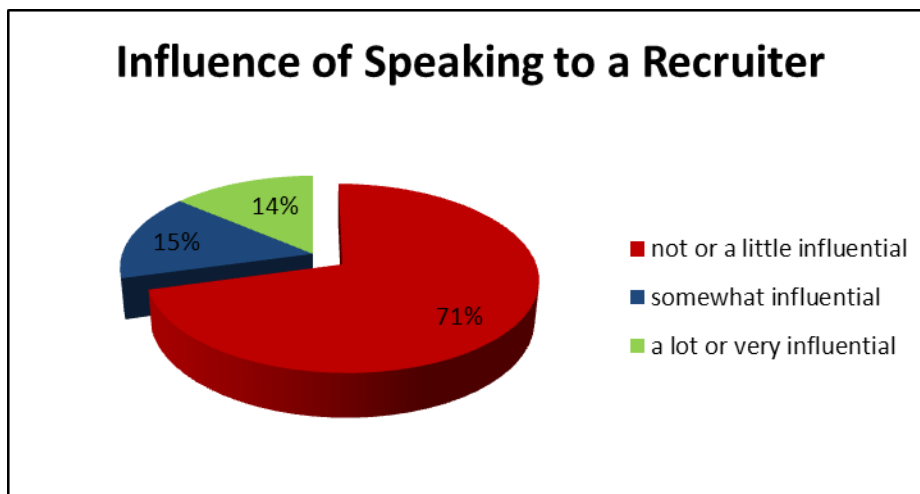
All participants were given the opportunity to explain their ratings and responses to how influential each identified motivation through an open ended text box. A little over one third of respondents (N=28) did so. In the open responses, the most common theme was financial assistance. Ten participants (13.2%) made some reference to financial assistance often in connection with education, a lack of opportunities available to them in their communities, or job security. This is somewhat inconsistent with the overall findings, where lack of opportunities

and economic stability were rated very low (see figures 6 and 7), however this could be the result of who chose to answer this question.

Figure 26: Influence of Economic Stability

Economic Stability

33% 49% 18%

- not or a little influential
- somewhat influential
- a lot or very influential
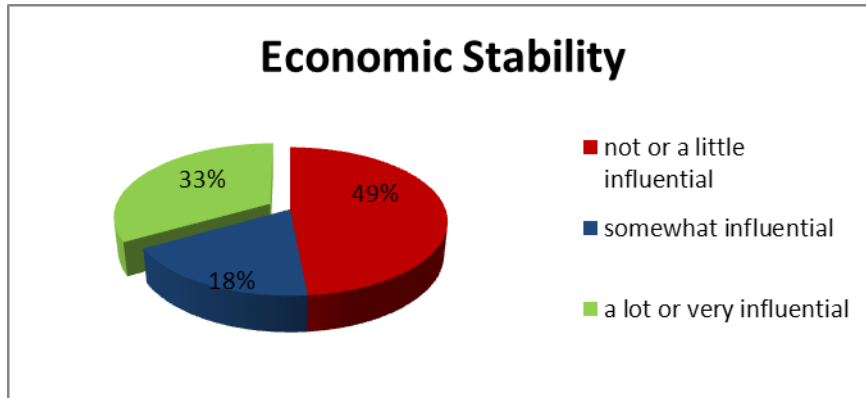
Figure 37: Influence of Lack of Opportunities

Lack of Opportunites

17% 12% 71%

- not or a little influential
- somewhat influential
- a lot or very influential
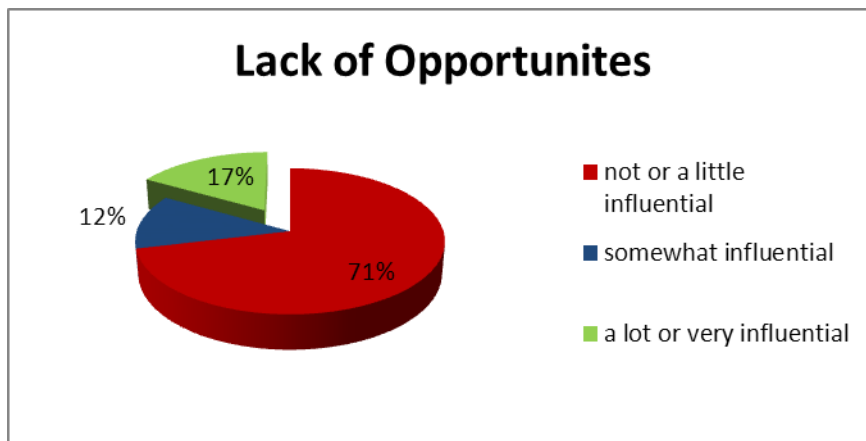
Motivations by race. Due to the low response rate of individuals of color, the sample was split into two groups: White and People of Color. Throughout both groups, the overall trends of high response rates for educational benefits, opportunities for travel and patriotism remain consistent. Job training was rated as somewhat motivational or higher by 87.5% of individuals of color (N=7). Belonging to a community was rated as somewhat influential or higher by 75% of individuals of color (N=6). The influence of family members or close friends was rated highly by both individuals of color (75%, N=6) and Whites (62.5%, N=36) (see figures 8, 9, and 10).

Figure 48: Influence of Job Training by Race

Job Training

■ race non-white   ■ race white

a lot or very influential — 50.0% / 32.8%

somewhat influential — 37.5% / 27.6%

not or a little influential — 12.5% / 39.7%
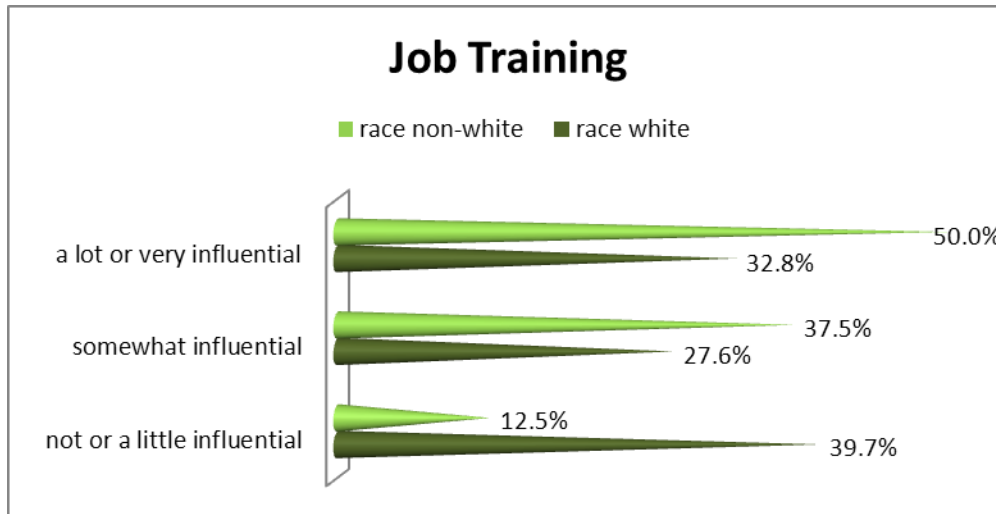
Figure 59: Influence of Belonging to a Community by Race

Influence of Belonging to a Community

■ race non-white   ■ race white

a lot or very influential — 50.0% / 29.3%

somewhat influential — 25.0% / 17.2%

not or a little influential — 25.0% / 53.4%
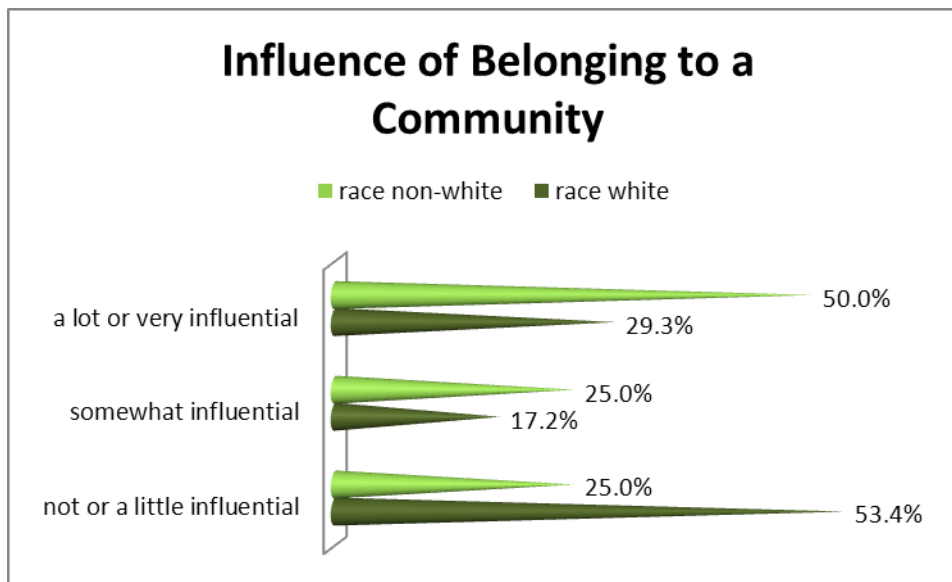
Figure 6~~10~~: Influence of Family and Friends by Race

Influence of Family and Friends

■ race non-white ■ race white

a lot or very influential: 62.5% / 41.4%

somewhat influential: 12.5% / 20.7%

not or a little influential: 25.0% / 37.9%
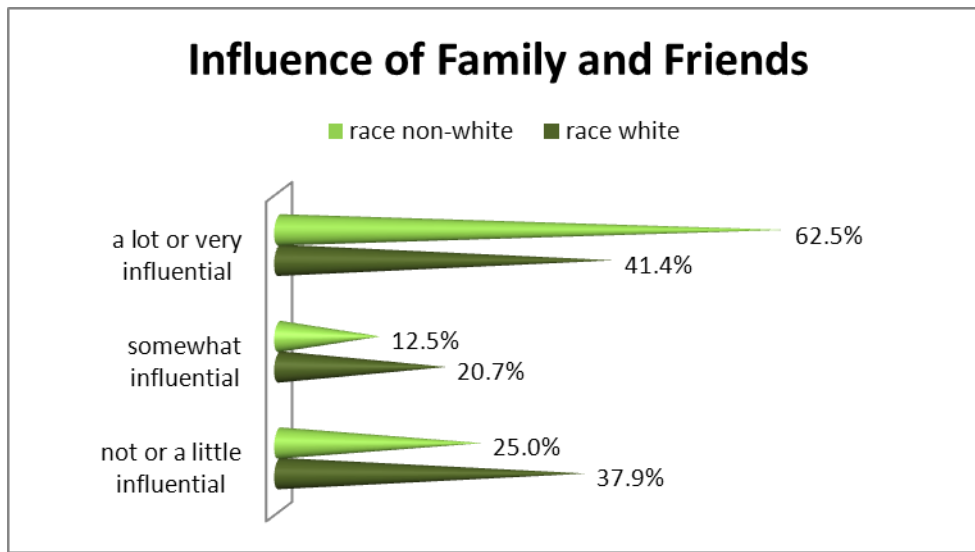
Motivations by gender. Given the overall findings, it is unsurprising that both men and women rated educational benefits, patriotism and the opportunity to travel very highly, however there were some slight differences. While roughly 85% of men (N=44, 84.6%) and women (N=12, 85.7%) rated educational benefits as somewhat influential or higher, 78.6% of women (N=11) rated educational benefits as a lot or very influential as compared to 57.5% of men (N=30) who rated educational benefit similarly.

Women also marginally reported that the opportunity to travel was more influential than men. Eight women (57.1%) rated the opportunity to travel as a lot or very influential to their decision to join while an even 50% of men (N=26) rated opportunity to travel the same. Men were slightly more likely to rate patriotism as a lot or very influential with 57.7% (N=30) compared to 50% of women (N=7).

Men and women were very similar with their rankings of belonging to a community, structure and discipline and military recruitment ads. Belonging to a community was ranked as somewhat influential or better by 50% of both men and women (Men N=26, Women N=7). Structure and discipline was ranked a little higher. Eight women (57.2%) and 55.8% of men

(N=29) ranked structure and discipline as a lot or very influential. Again, considering the overall statistics, it is unsurprising that military ads were reported to be the least likely to influence enlistment decision. Twelve women (85.7%) reported they were only a little or not influenced by military ads. For men, 82% (N=41) stated that recruitment ads were little to not influencing.

Women reported being more influenced by receiving health care benefits than men (see figure 9). Over 64% of women polled (N=9) reported the health care benefits were at least somewhat influential as compared with the 47.1% of men (N=24) who ranked health care benefits equally.

Figure 11: Influence of Health Care by Gender
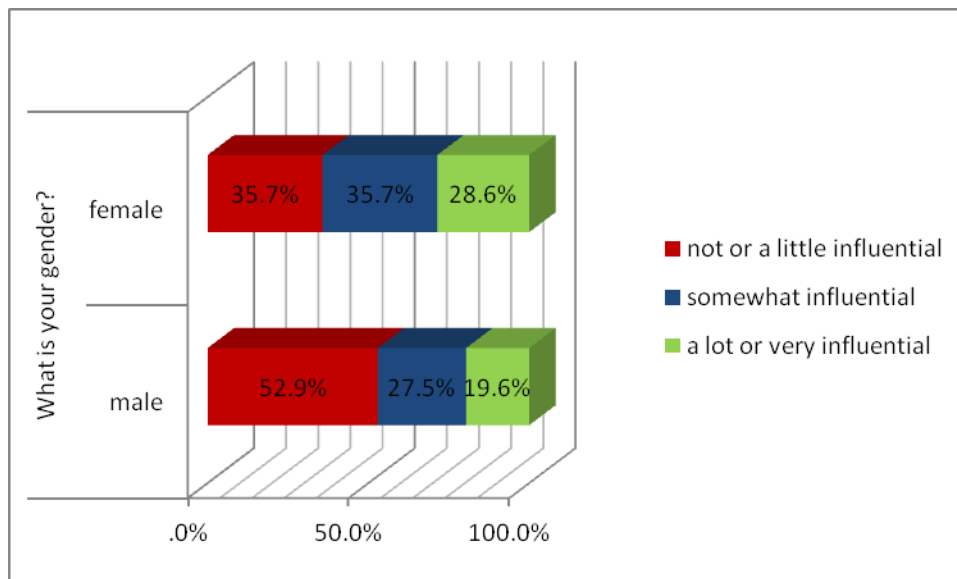
Women were also much more likely to state that job training was important to their decision to enlist in the military with 85.7% (N=12) ranking job training as somewhat influential or higher. Conversely, only 57.6% of men (N=30) ranked job training likewise (see figure 12). Women were significantly more likely (42.8%, N=6) to say that escaping a home situation compared to men (31.4%, N=16) (see figure 13).

Figure 12: Influence of Job Training by Gender
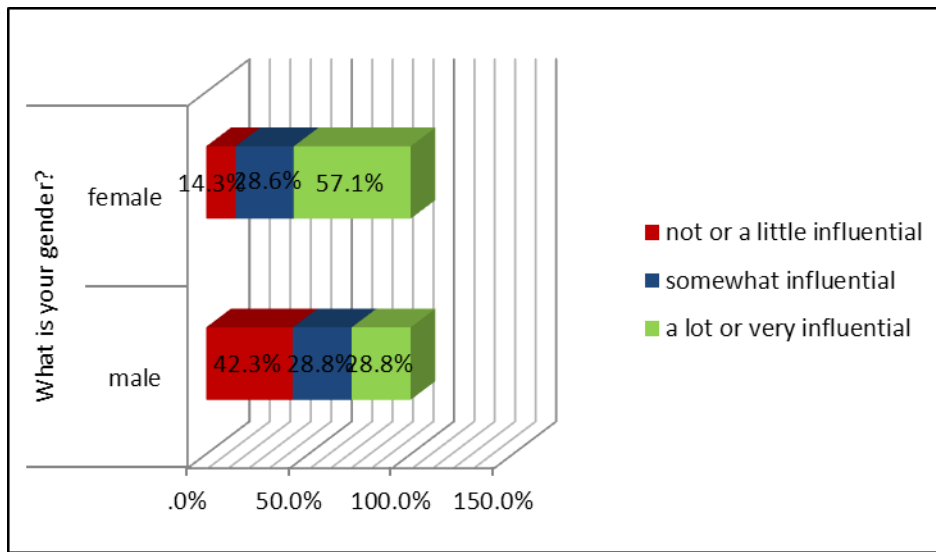

**Figure 13: Influence of Escaping Home by Gender**
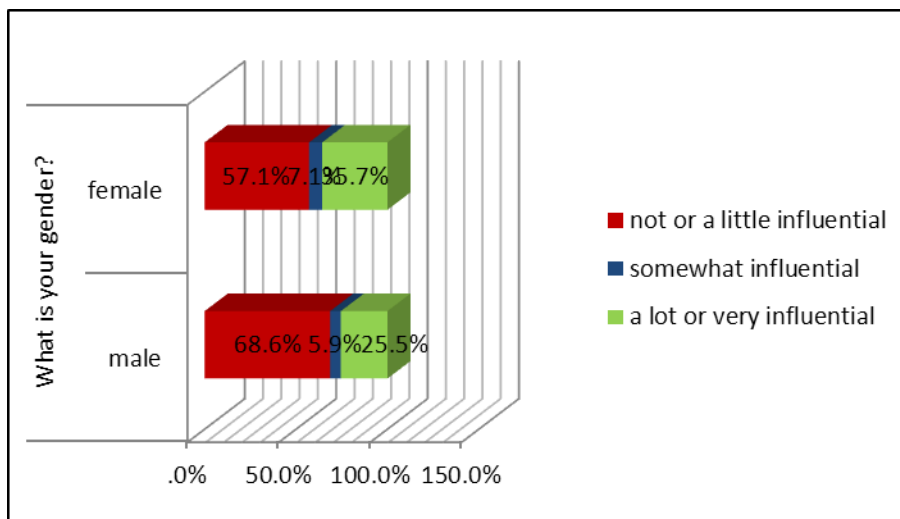
Though speaking to a recruiter received poor ratings of influence overall, half of the women (N=7) sampled say that speaking to a recruiter was at least somewhat influential to the decision making process of joining the military. On the other hand, only 23.5% of men (N=12) say the same (see figure 14). Six women (42.9%) also stated they were influenced by a lack of other opportunities. This is in comparison to thirteen men (25%) who also were inclined due to a lack of opportunities.

Figure 14: Influence of a Recruiter by Gender
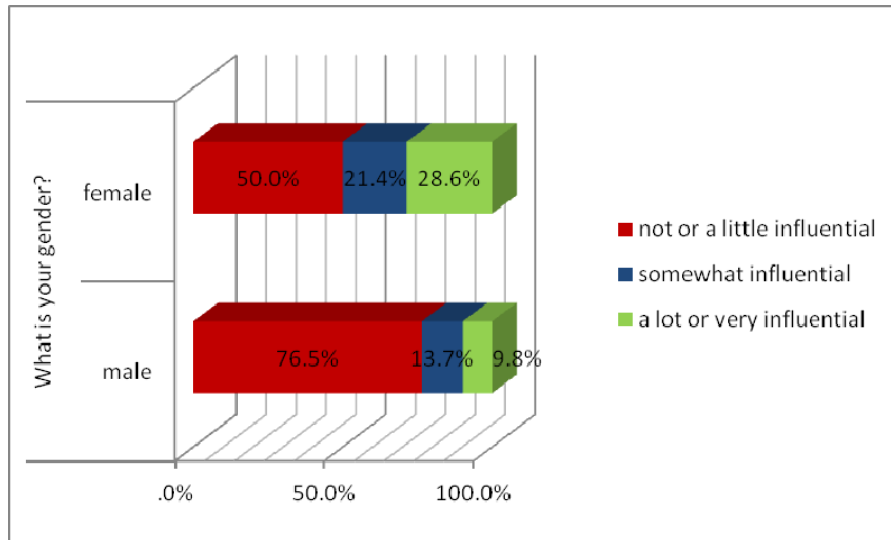
Men were notably more likely to identify physical training as somewhat influential or higher. Fifteen men (28.8%) went so far as to say that physical training was a lot or very influential to their choice to enlist. This is compared to only two women (14.3%) who rated physical training as a lot or very influential (see figure 15).

Figure 15: Influence of Physical Training by Gender
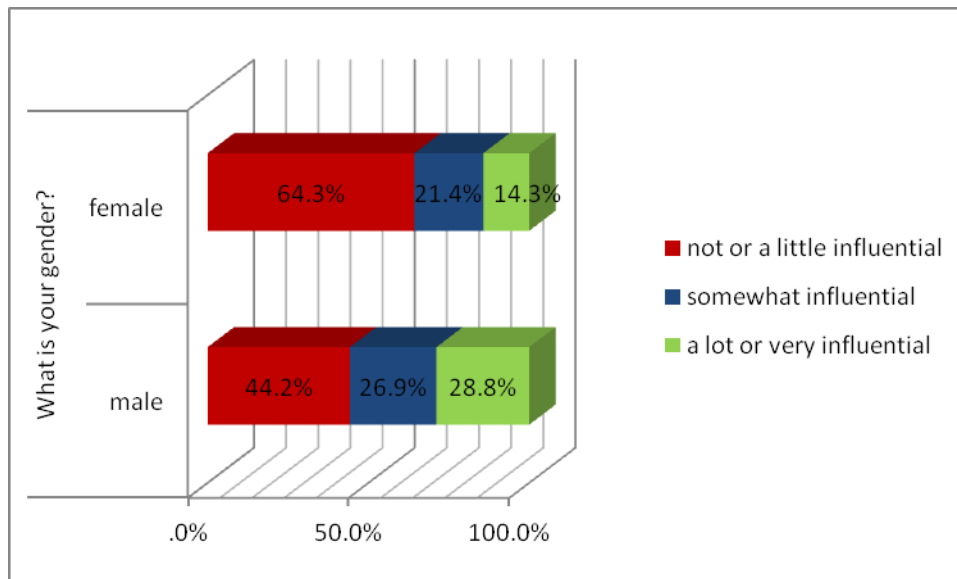
Motivations by age. For the purposes of age comparison, the sample was split into two groups: age 21 and younger and those aged 22 and over. These ages correspond with the age the individual was at the time of their enlistment, not the age at the time of participating in this survey. Individuals who did not report their age are not included in this section.

The most common motivations reported by individuals aged 21 or younger at the time of their enlistment were (in ascending order): opportunity to travel, patriotism and educational benefits (see figures 16, 17 and 18). Opportunity to travel was rated as somewhat influential or better by 73.6% (N= 39) of individuals in this age group. Three quarters of this group (N=40) stated that patriotism was at least somewhat motivational, with over 58% (N=31) reporting patriotism as a lot or very motivational.
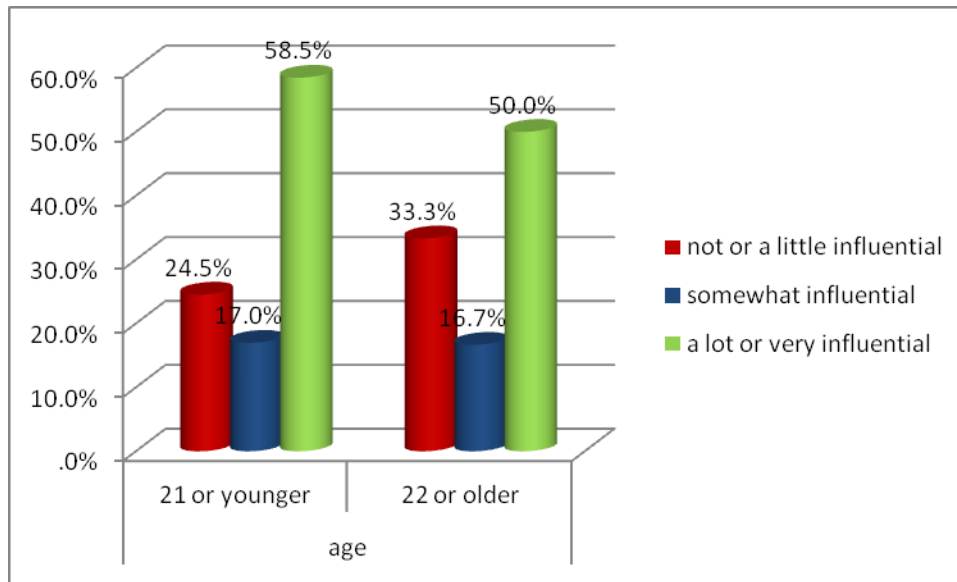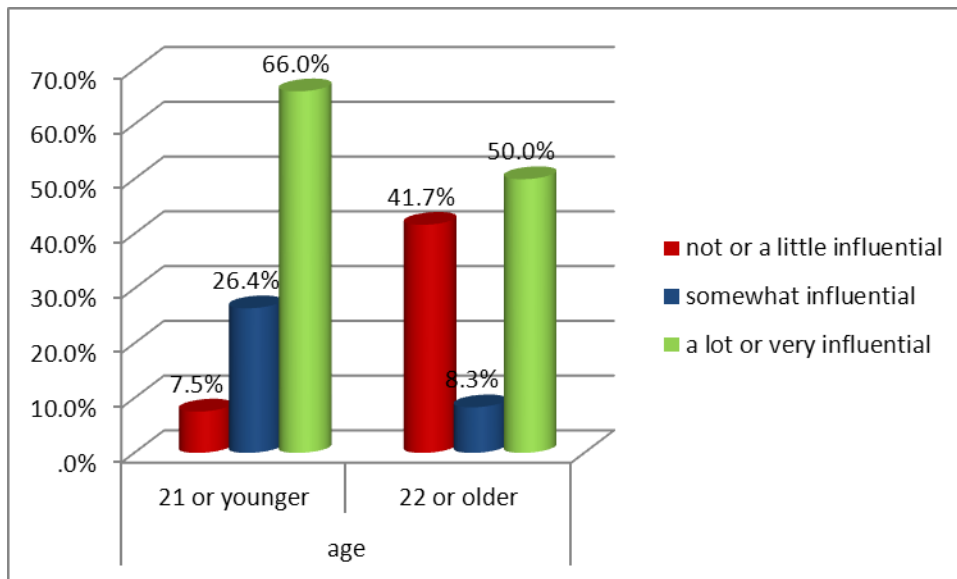
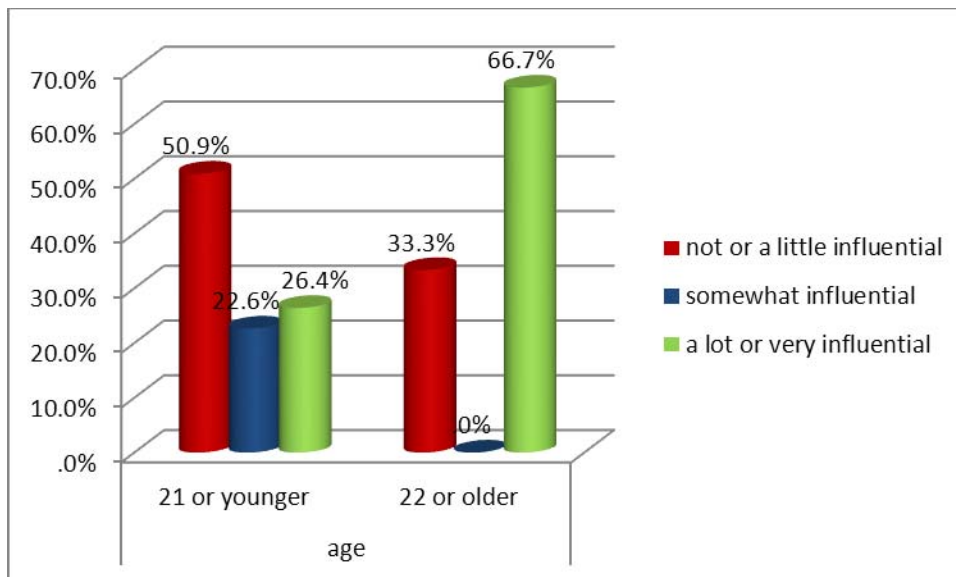**Figure 16: Influence of Opportunity to Travel by Age**
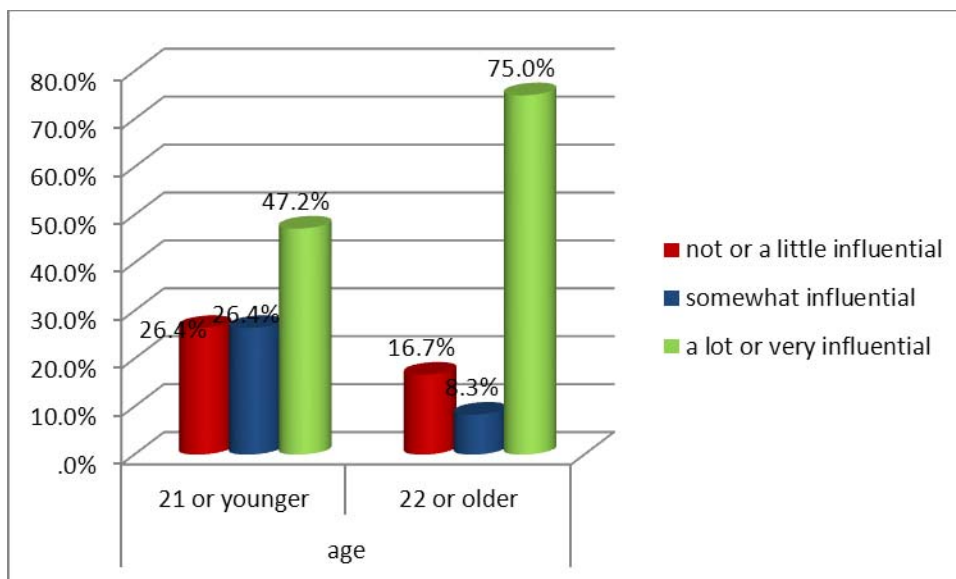
Figure 17: Influence of Patriotism by Age

Figure 18: Influence of Education Benefits by Age

Educational benefits was by far the most common response for individuals who enlisted at the age of 21 or younger, receiving over 90% of this group claiming educational benefits were at least somewhat influential. Two thirds of those 21 years or younger (N=35) stated that educational benefits were a lot or very influential to the decision to enlist in the military. Comparatively, individuals who enlisted aged 22 or older were much less likely to be motivated

by educational benefits. Only 58.3 of respondents aged 22 or older said that educational benefits

were at least somewhat motivational.

The most commonly reported influences from individuals aged 22 and older were:

opportunities for travel, patriotism and economic stability (see figure 19). Opportunities for

travel the highest rated influence: 83.3% (N=10) rated opportunity to travel at least somewhat

influential. A full three quarters of this group (N=9) reported ranked opportunity to travel as a lot

or very influential. Patriotism was reported to be somewhat influential or higher by 67.7%

(N=8) by this age group. Economic stability was rated as a lot or very influential by 67.7% of

individuals aged 22 or higher (N=8). In contrast, only 26.4% (N=14) of those in the 21 and

younger age group said the same.

Figure 19: Influence of Economic Stability by Age

Motivations by socio-economic status. The overall strong influence of educational

benefits and the opportunity to travel continues when the sample is divided by SES. However, it

is interesting to note that the influence of educational benefits actually decreases with SES (see

figure 20). Individuals who reported that their family of origin at the time of their enlistment

were in a high SES bracket also unanimously (N=7) reported that educational benefits were at least somewhat influential. Nearly 85% of individuals from middle income families reported likewise, while only 76.5% of participants from lower income families reported the same.

Figure 20: Influence of Educational Benefits by SES
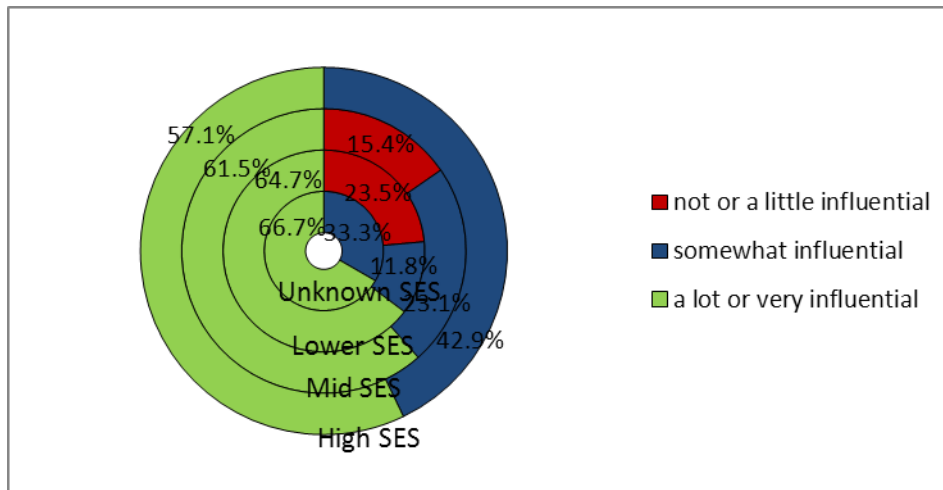
Somewhat unsurprisingly, participants reported an inverse correlation with the influence of lack of other opportunities. Again, individuals from a high SES background were unanimous (N=7) in their replies, stating that a lack of other opportunities was not or only slightly influential to their decision to enlist. Nearly 77% of the individuals from a middle SES (N=30) reported they were slightly or not at all influenced by a lack of other opportunities. Only 47.1% of individuals from a lower SES (N=8) bracket reported likewise (see figure 21).

Figure 21: Influence of Lack of Opportunities by SES
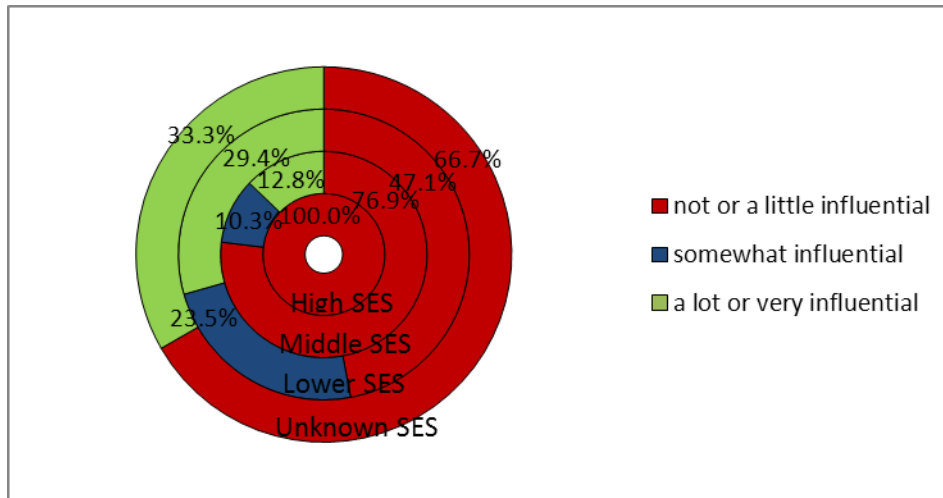
Summary

It is clear that the most influential motivations rated during this study were: Educational

benefits, opportunity to travel, and patriotism. Along with these identified motivations was an

underlying theme of financial assistance, particularly in the form of job opportunities and

security which was repeated in the open ended responses. Participants were given the

opportunity to identify any other influences and motivations not already rated in the survey. A

little under half (N=37) chose to do so. Many of the self-identified motivations were parallel to

those already identified in the survey such as the influence of family and friends or educational

benefits. These responses served to reinforce the overall findings. However, there were a few

stand-out responses. At least one individual identified that he or she joined to escape an abusive

home. Three individuals responded similarly about the military being a "rite of passage" and

wanting to be "challenged" in war.

Overall, the military seemed to meet most individuals' expectations. This is particularly

true of those who said that educational benefits, patriotism or the opportunity to travel was

influential to their choice to enlist in the military. In all three of these categories, 90% of those

who said they were influenced by educational benefits or patriotism said they were at least

somewhat satisfied that their expectation was met (N=56).

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this descriptive study was to identify the motivations for individuals to enlist in the military. The motivations of an individual to join the military can influence their Person-in-Environment (PIE) fit, indicating how well a person is able to assimilate and adjust to the military. Poor PIE fit can have a direct adverse effect on the combat readiness of a soldier, being detrimental to commitment to the military organization, psychological and physical well-being.

The major sections of this chapter are as follows: 1) key findings, comparing the findings of this study with those of previous literature; 2) implications for social work practice for clinicians working with service members and veterans; and 3) limitations of the study and recommendations for future research into the motivations of joining the military.

Key Findings

The three most common and highest ranked motivations in this study were: educational benefits, patriotism, and opportunity to travel. Previous literature that explored motivations for enlistment, of which only three were found, categorized motivations into two basic groups: institutional motivations and individual motivations. Institutional motivations were considered those motivations that express goals or values held by the collective group. These collective motivations serve as a uniting influence of the institution in question. Individual motivations were influences which served to better the individual and usually had a material benefit of some kind to the individual.

Griffith (2208) found that people with institutional motivations were more likely to enlist. However, in the course of the current study two of the three most influential motivations would be classified as individual motivation: educational benefits and opportunity to travel. Of the most commonly mentioned motivations, only patriotism would be defined as an institutional motivation (Bechman et al 2000, Griffith 2008, Johnson and Kaplan 1993, Kleykamp 2006, Woodruff, Kelly and Segal 2006). One way to explain the discrepancy between the previous literature and the current study is that motivations cannot simply be categorized as institutional or individual. It may be more useful to consider a perspective more in tune with Ecological Systems Theory.

During this study, there was no direct communication between the participants and the researcher. It is therefore difficult to assess the meanings of any one motivation identified by a respondent. However, ecological systems theory would suggest that motivations are the manifestation of needs and values. These needs and values are the result of countless interactions between the developing person and their many system levels over the course of their lives (Breffenbrenner 1994). As an example, neither study (cite) define economical motivations as institutional. Motivations such as educational benefits or opportunity to travel are largely considered to be individual financial motivations, though it can be argued that education and travel are institutionally motivated as well.

Education. Education is valued on many system levels, the most obvious being micro- and meso- systems (individual and family). Education in the United States is also a macro-level value (political and cultural). This value is witnessed through the mandated education system for children enrolled in primary school through high school, as well as yearly comparisons of test scores both nationally and internationally. Education is clearly valued in the military, not only

through the awarding of G.I Bill benefits, but also through promotions of rank and higher pay. However, the financial strain of increasing tuition rates puts additional stress on individuals to find ways to make higher learning affordable. The idea that educational benefits are common motivations for enlistment is consistent with previous studies (Johnson and Kaplan, 1993;Kleykamp, 2006).

  Opportunity to travel. Previous literature did not mention opportunity for travel specifically as a motivation. However, by the Griffith (2008) and Woodruff, Kelty &Segal (2007) definitions of individual motivations, it is likely that opportunity to travel would be considered an individual motivation by most researchers as the individual is likely seen as receiving a material benefit. The opportunity to travel may also be considered as more than micro- and meso- systems motivations. The opportunity to travel may indicate a curiosity about other cultures and ways of living. This curiosity may suggest that those individuals value openness and acceptance of others. While there is undeniably an individual benefit to being able to travel, such as the ability to relax or the fulfillment of seeing new things, for some it also reflects a more valued action.

  Patriotism. Patriotism is usually considered self-less service, and therefore an institutional motivation. Previous literature examined patriotism as a motivation and postulated that patriotism is responsible for influxes of enlistment during times of war (Griffith, 2008; Woodruff, Kelty & Segal, 2007). This phenomenon can be seen throughout history after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the September 11th attacks. However patriotism can also be a way for an individual to feel better about his or herself. This feeling better could manifest by allowing an individual to make favorable comparisons to persons he or she feels do not embrace the value of patriotism.

Additional Findings

      Gender. Besides the most basic findings of the importance of educational benefits,

patriotism and the opportunity for travel there were several interesting findings when cross

tabulating the motivational findings with demographic data. One of the more interesting of these

is the influence of recruiters reported by many women in the study. Though the influence of

recruiters received very low overall ratings, nearly half the women in the study stated that talking

to a recruiter was at least somewhat influential. This phenomenon may be the result of men

having made the decision to enlist prior to speaking to a recruiter. The influence of the recruiter

is likely less pronounced for men because they may tend to have a better understanding of what

military service means for them. Historically, it is more acceptable for men to serve than for

women (Boldry, Wood and Kashy 2001). Also through the portrayal of the military through the

media, such as television, movies and news, men may likely have a better idea about the roles

they will play while serving. Conversely, women most likely have more questions which need

answered prior to signing a contract of military service.

      A second interesting finding that was highlighted by gender lines is the influence of

health benefits. About 2/3rds of women said they were at least somewhat influenced by health

benefits compared with less than half of men who said the same. This is interesting because

according to Boldry, Wood and Kashy (2001), women are more skeptical of the health benefits

offered to them by the military and Veterans Affairs. Preference for health benefits could be the

result of pre-enlistment preconceptions and post-enlistment experiences and women becoming

disenchanted with the health benefits offered to them after enlistment. This may indicate that

health services in the military and in the VA are still strongly directed towards meeting the needs

of men more so than women.

Socioeconomic status (SES). According Bechman et al,(2000) individuals from lower income families are more likely to enlist. However, in this study half of all respondents indicated they were from a middle income family. These responses may be the result of mis-information and/or mis-conceptions about their own families. No definition of income brackets was provided to the respondents and the data relied completely on the participant's recollection and self-awareness of which bracket best described their family situation at the time of enlistment.

An unexpected finding through analysis of SES was that income at the time of enlistment was crosstabbed with the influence of educational benefits. Prior to this study, it was assumed by this researcher that individuals from lower income families would be more likely to join for educational benefits than those who came from higher economic backgrounds, who would need less financial support to attend college. This hypothesis was supported somewhat by the Kleykamp (2006) study which stated that individuals from larger low income families were more likely to enlist due to fewer resources to spread to all children. However, in the course of this study the reverse was found to be true. This reversal begs the question of why this trend was found in this study. Perhaps it is related to the expectation to attend college? Those who have more resources that were able to be dedicated to college tuition may grow up with the idea that college attendance is expected of them; whereas those who do not have the financial resources may give up on the idea of attending institutions of higher learning and then report a smaller degree of influence.

Another reason for this interesting statistic is there may be an ideological difference between those who enlist to complete a term of service versus those who view military enlistment as a career. It is a limitation of this study that the survey did not ask any questions

regarding the influence of career military service which the researcher suspects would provide interesting insight into the motivations of individuals who chose to enlist, particularly across SES brackets. Previous literature also did not look into the differences between individuals who enlisted for one term of service versus those who enlisted with the intent of becoming career soldiers.

Recruitment ads. The seeming lack of influence of military ads was somewhat surprising considering the amount, approximately 400K USD annually, spent by the Department of Defense on advertisement(Kosar, 2012; Reichart, Kim & Fosu, 2007). This lack of influence is also somewhat incongruent with findings of this study, such as the overwhelming influence of education benefits. Considering the targeted recruitment of college aged youth by the military and the DOD's emphasis on the educational benefit during the 80s and 90s, it is surprising that recruitment held such small influence. Certainly some individuals would have learned about such benefits through word of mouth or from family and friends who served in the military, but undoubtedly most individuals who owned a television during this time saw advertisements which lauded education benefits. It is likely that these ads had more influence on individual's decision to enlist than most people realized. In future studies it could be beneficial to follow up with how participants learned about such motivating aspects such as benefits for education, health care, home loans and job training for specific jobs.

Implications for Social Work Practice

As previously mentioned, over 200,000 individuals enlist in the military each year. It is surmised that individuals who join the military do so, at least in part, because their environments do not meet all of their needs adequately. These needs can include financial security or the ability to practice their values fully. A person is embedded in their environment, however

joining the military is typically a quick and relatively easy process to change one's environment, though new recruits may not fully understand the many systemic levels of impact that the military has.

The military is a high risk environment. Even in times of peace there are still training exercises designed to challenge soldiers and train them for potential combat situations. Due to the risks involved in military service it becomes increasingly important to understand why people chose to join. Motivation can be seen as defining a need or a value of an individual. If these needs are not being met, or if the actions the military asks of a soldier are perceived by the individual to be counter to their values this will result in poor PIE fit for the soldier. As previously mentioned, poor PIE fit can result in diminished combat effectiveness, impacting the developing person's decision making, psychological well-being, and physical well-being. This in turn puts not just the soldier, but those around him or her as well, in greater risk.

It is the clinician's responsibility to assess PIE fit. The clinician is supposed to be a safe individual for a soldier to confide in. However a military clinician's first duty is to the mission. If a soldier is not fit for duty it is the clinician's duty to either get that soldier ready or to remove that soldier from the risk. It may benefit the clinician to understand why the soldier joined the military in the first place in order to help increase a soldier's combat readiness by helping the client reconcile perceptions of need and values with the perceptions he or she holds of the actions and environment, thus improving their PIE fit.

Clinicians who are working with veterans may find it useful to know the motivations to join the military as well. Often there is a period of adjustment from military life back into civilian life. Understanding what needs and values the military helped to fulfill will aid the clinician in understanding the client and support his or her re-acclimation into a civilian lifestyle.

Recommendations for Future Research

      Limitations and biases

      One of the major limitations of this study was the snowball sampling process. Due to this process, the sample achieved is not truly representative of the make-up of the military. This is especially true for racial diversity, which this study failed to achieve.

      Another limitation of the study was the anonymous nature of the online survey. This made it difficult for participants to ask clarifying questions unless they knew me personally. I did have some individuals question whether or not officers were able to participate in the study due to the language of "enlist" being used. This language was an oversight in the design of the survey and officers were never meant to be excluded by the researcher. The anonymous online survey also made it impossible to ask follow up questions to the participants which would have allowed for more insight to the importance of the responses gathered.

      Lastly, it is important to point out that the study is a retrospective account of the participants' motivations of why they joined the military. This design was chosen in order to simplify inclusion criteria as well as to make sure that all respondents were of legal adult age. However, some respondents were citing motivations for a decision they made over 40 years ago. Over time, memory may have faded or motivations may have changed.

The concept for this research design came from my personal military experience. As a veteran I wondered if other soldiers and veterans shared my motivations for joining the service. I was particularly interested in learning about individuals who used military service as a way to escape a home situation as I did. I would have enjoyed following up with the individuals who were motivated by escaping a home situation. Though escaping a home situation did not receive a large response rate, I felt somewhat validated that 22 individuals did state that this was at least

somewhat motivational for them to leave the military and believe this response rate warrants further investigation in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the future, I believe the study would benefit from being reproduced but with a more qualitative design which would allow the researcher to explore the meaning behind certain motivations. By conducting a qualitative study, the researcher and participants will be allowed to explore the definition of each motivation as it pertains to them individually, as well as to assign meaningful interpretation as to what values or needs those motivations express. To be able to follow up with participants would be incredibly insightful and educational to clinicians working with service members and veterans as they learn to adjust between a military environment and a civilian lifestyle.

This study could also be repeated with those individuals who have not yet entered into military service, but are considering it. To repeat the study at this stage may reveal more accurate motivations for enlistment, as these thoughts are current and more acutely felt by the individual. Finally it would be interesting to branch out this study to include individuals whose careers include paramilitary forces such as police, fire fighters and EMTs and see if motivations for working in these fields are similar to those who join the military.

Summary

In summary, there are many motivations for joining the military, the most common of those being educational benefit, patriotism and an opportunity to travel. Other themes of financial security and support were garnered through analyzing open ended responses. These results are consistent with previous research into institutional and individual motivations. However, these and other motivations cannot simply be characterized as institutional or

individual. The motivations identified in this study are the result of needs and values developed through the interactions between a developing person and their environments on micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono- systems levels throughout their lives.

Since these motivations are reflective of needs and values, they have a direct impact on a soldier's ability to adjust and assimilate between military and civilian life. Understanding these motivations will aid the clinician in supporting the client during this time of adjustment and increase PIE fit.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Materials

Are You a Veteran or Service Member?

Why Did You Enlist?

I would like to invite you to participate in an annonymous survey. The purpose of the survey is to learn what motivates people to enlist in the armed forces.

Participants will be required to agree to the terms provided in a consent form and take a survey. Total participation time is approximately 15 minutes.

The study is being conducted by Claudia Vogelsang, a veteran and candidate for the degree of MSW, studying at Smith College School for Social Work.

If you would like more information, please contact me: Email: cvogelsa@smith.edu

To go directly to the survey, click the following link or copy and paste the

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Thank you for your interest in this survey. Before you may take this survey, please answer the following questions to make sure you meet the requirements of participation.

1. I am at least 18 years of age.

◉ Yes

☐ No

2. I am a veteran or service member.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Welcome

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in taking my survey. This survey is designed to assess individuals' motivations to enlist in military service. It is expected the survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.
There is no "right" answer to any question; I am interested only in what has actually been true for you. The data I collect will be used for the completion of my MSW thesis, and possible future publications or presentations. Before being able to take the survey, you will be asked to read and agree to the informed consent policy. Please click on the next button to enter the survey.

Next

Informed Consent

Dear Participant,
I am a Graduate student at the Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a study to explore which factors influence military enlistment. In order to do so, this study will attempt to identify which social factors have the strongest influence. Some factors have been identified in earlier research as often being strong motivations for enlisting. I am interested in your own personal motivations for enlisting, and hope you will agree to participate in my survey. The data I collect will be used for the completion of my MSW thesis, and possible future publications or presentations. I hope my findings may help to inform social work practice and policy, as well as those of the military.

I would like to invite you to participate if:
♣ you are at least 18 years old;
♣ you are either a veteran or service member already.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online anonymous survey. It is expected the survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Most questions will ask you to rate factors that have been identified as influential by others and to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 how important these have been in motivating you to enlist . There is no "right" answer to any question; I am interested only in what has actually been true for you. There will be comment boxes provided for each item so that you will also have the opportunity to fill in your own, self-identified, influences on your decision to join the military.

There is minimum risk in participation. However, there may be questions on the survey that may bring up emotional memories which are difficult. A list of resources including online confidential mental health referrals has been provided to you at the end of the survey. You will have the benefit of sharing your stories and participating in the development of knowledge which may be helpful to increase the understanding of others. There is no financial or material benefit for participating in this research.

Your responses to the survey will be completely anonymous. There is no way for anyone to match your answers to your identity. Survey Monkey removes all respondents' email addresses before sending the rating scale responses to the researcher. Because of this, I will not be able to change or remove your survey answers once you have submitted them, as I will never have a way to identify which participants gave which answers. You have the right to leave the survey at any time prior to submitting your completed survey. To do so, just exit out of the window. Once you withdraw from the survey, your answers and all information pertaining to you will be deleted. However, you may choose not to answer any particular question without exiting from the survey as a whole.

If you have any concerns about your rights or about any aspect of the study, please call me at ((XXX) XXX-XXXX or the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974

BY CLICKING THE "NEXT" BUTTON BELOW YOU ARE INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION ABOVE AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY. IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO GIVE YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SURVEY, PLEASE USE THE "EXIT SURVEY" BUTTON LOCATED AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN NOW. PLEASE PRINT A COPY OF THIS INFORMED CONSENT FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS.

Thank you for your participation,
Claudia Vogelsang

Prev | Next

Appendix B

Survey Materials

SURVEY QUESTIONS

3. What age range to you fall in?

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-45

☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65

☐ 66+

4. I am currently

☐ A service member

☐ A veteran

5. What is your race?

☐ Asian

☐ Black

☐ Hispanic

☐ Native American

☐ Pacific Islander

☐ White

☐ Mixed Race

Other (please specify)

6. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Transgender

☐ Intersexed

Other (please specify) [_____]

7. What branch(es) of the military have you served in?
Choose all that apply.

☐ Army

☐ Navy

☐ Marine Corps

☐ Coast Guard

☐ Air Force

8. Why did you choose that (those) branch(es)?

[text box]

9. What component(s) of the military have you served in?
Choose all that apply.

☐ Regular Component

☐ Reserve Component

☐ National Guard

10. Why did you choose this (these) component(s)?

[text box]

If you have served multiple enlistments, please answer the following questions as it relates to you FIRST enlistment. Thank you.

11. What was your age at the time of your enlistment?

[text box]

12. At the time of your enlistment, which best describes the neighborhood you grew up in?

○ Urban

○ Suburban

○ Rural

Other (please specify) [_____]

13. At the time of your enlistment, which geographical location best describes where you lived?

[   ]

Other (please specify) [   ]

14. At the time of your enlistment, which category best describes your socioeconomic status (SES)?

◌ High SES

◌ Middle SES

◌ Low SES

◌ Unsure

15. At the time of your enlistment, did you have family members or close friends who were veterans or service members?

◌ Yes

◌ No

Please rate the following on how influential these motivators were to you when making your decision to enlist in the military on a scale of 0-4. Zero being not influential at all to 4 being among the most important influences.

16. How Influential were the following on your decision to enlist in the military?

	0 Not Influential	1 A Little Influential	2 Somewhat Influential	3 A Lot Influential	4 Very Influential
Patriotism/To Serve My Country	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Family or Friends are in the Military	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Educational Benefits	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Opportunity to Travel	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Job Training	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Health Benefits	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Economical Stability	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Escape Home Situation	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Physical Training	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

	0 Not Influential	1 A Little Influential	2 Somewhat Influential	3 A Lot Influential	4 Very Influential
Structure and Discpline	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To Belong to a Community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking to a Recruiter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military Recruitment Ads	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Other Opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drafted or Expected to be Drafted	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Please use this space to explain any of your responses to question 16.

18. What other motivational factors influenced your decision to enlist in the military? Please Explain.

19. How well did military service address your primary influences? (Please Note: The option of being drafted was removed for the purposes of this question).

	Not at all	Very Little	Somewhat	A Lot	Very Much
Patriotism/To Serve My Country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family or Friends are in the Military	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational Benefits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to Travel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job Training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health Benefits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not at all	Very Little	Somewhat	A Lot	Very Much
Economical Stability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Escape Home Situation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physical Training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Structure and Discpline	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To Belong to a Community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking to a Recruiter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Military Recruitment Ads	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Other Opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Please use this space to explain any of your responses to question 19.

Referrals
Please print this page for your records.

For Veterans
For the 24 hour Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)
To find a Vet Center near you call 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387) or follow the link below
http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/
Or see your Primary Care Physician

For Service Members
For the deployment helpline at Walter Reed Medical Center (800) 796-9699
For information to help trauma survivors and their friends and family call (800) 495-4957
Military OneSource
A Military OneSource consultant can provide a brief assessment and referral to mental health professionals across the country for six free counseling sessions. To contact a Military OneSource consultant call 1.800.342.9647 or follow the link below for international calling instructions.
http://www.militaryonesource.mil

For Civilians

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's 24 hour toll-free crisis hotline (800) 273-TALK (8255)
The NAMI organization operates at the local, state and national levels. Each level of the organization provides support, education, information and referral and advocacy. To find your local NAMI follow the link below.

http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Your_Local_NAMI&Template=/CustomSource/AffiliateFinder.cfm

Or see your primary care physician

End Of Survey

Thank you for your participation in this survey. By clicking done, you will be submitting your answers. After submitting, neither you nor I will be able to change your answers. If there are any answers you would like to change, please use the previous page buttons to navigate through the survey. Again, thank you for your participation.

| Prev | Done |