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WHAT INFLUENCES A RECRUIT FROM NEW JERSEY OR NYC BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-27 YEARS OLD TO JOIN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE IN POST 9/11 AMERICA?

by
Lisa M. Martz

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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What Influences a recruit from New Jersey or NYC between the ages of 18-28 yrs to join the Unites States Air Force in Post 9/11 America?
2006
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This study examines who or what influences a military recruit from New Jersey or New York City to join the United States Air Force in Post 9/11 America. Knowing what influences recruits for enlistment could help ensure the Air Force is targeting the right influencers and incorporating the most effective communications methods into its recruiting strategy. The study will also look into whether the events of 9/11 affected the decision to join the Air Force.

Recruits were asked to participate in data collection for the research through a survey sent electronically via email. Responses were tabulated using Microsoft excel software. The author also conducted, six personal interviews to generate further discussion on this topic of recruiting and its influencers.

Findings indicate that the top three influences in a recruit's decision to join the Air Force are in this order: tuition assistance provided by the Air Force, a sense of duty of serving the United States, and familial influences. The events of 9/11 affected a little less than half of the respondents as a strong influence to join the Air Force, and guidance counselors, teachers and coaches were among the least to influence the recruits.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF GRAPHS

Chapter 1

Introduction

The mission of U.S. Air Force recruiting is to recruit quality men and woman with the right skills, at the right time, in the right numbers to sustain combat capabilities of America's Air Force. More than 1,800 enlisted and officer recruiters are located in more than 1,400 recruiting offices throughout the United States. Business principles such as sales training and advertising are used to market the U.S. Air Force as a challenging opportunity for young Americans.

Over the last decade, and especially in the past four years, America's Airmen have responded to dramatic changes in their capabilities in terms of personnel and materials that affect the capacity to fight a war and the world security environment. The Air Force is engaged in military activities around the world at levels higher than at any time during the Cold War. Honorable Michael L. Dominguez and Lieutenant General Richard E. Brown state that to prevail in a dangerous and ever-changing world, the Air Force has completely transformed from a heavy, forward-based presence designed to contain the Soviet Union and allied communist governments into an agile expeditionary force, capable of rapidly responding on a global scale, with tailored forces ready to deal with any contingency. Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, that transformation has taken on an even more urgent and accelerated pace to respond to the world situation as well as the domestic security environment (Dominguez and Brown, 2004).

A key principle of the Air Force is to attract competent personnel to assure readiness and operational effectiveness. The Air Force places emphasis on recruiting people between the ages of 18 to 28 years of age, with no prior military service, into one of more than 150 enlisted career opportunities. The Air Force Recruiting Command said it is looking for qualified individuals who are mentally, morally and physically capable of handling the sophisticated systems and equipment of today's highly technical air and space force (U.S. Air Force Recruiting Website, 2005).

Joining the military is a choice that an individual makes among a host of career alternative courses. The decision to enlist is usually evaluated against further education, civilian employment, marriage and family, or a combination of these things. A party other than the recruiter, such as a parent, teacher, or peer, often influences the decision. Positive influencers for the military are very important to the Air Force, because recruiters have a role in making the all-volunteer force successful. If recruiters are unsuccessful, they could subject the country to an alternative that many are opposed to, mandatory service.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify what, or who, influences recruits from New Jersey or New York City to join the Air Force in Post 9/11 America. Knowing these key factors in enlistment could help ensure the Air Force targets recruits with the right influencers and incorporating the most effective advertising methods into its recruiting strategy. Furthermore, the study attempted to identify whether the events of 9/11 affected recruits decisions to join the Air Force.

Three hypotheses form the basis of this thesis:

2

H1: *The decision to serve is affected by the individual's motives and attitudes for enlisting, for example, ability to finance further education or to have an experience of which one can be proud of.* The choice to pursue employment with one organization rather than another is certainly partly cognitive in nature, but it is also likely influenced by beliefs, attitudes, and affective state.

In studying articles and scholarly journals related to the topic, the researcher found correlations with the increase of enlistments and the advances in pay, benefits, and bonus incentives over the past several years. Many people join the military because the military offers employment prospects superior to what they could obtain in civilian life, including training benefits and educational benefits. Richard Stark from The Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington said the motivation for most young people to join the military is for the educational opportunity, the opportunity to learn a skill, and to be part of something larger. Several testimonies on the Air Force Link demonstrated the sense of pride that often influences recruits to serve in the military. Technical Sergeant William Koger said, "I serve for all those who serve with me, who served before me and who will serve after me. There is a sense of pride that you can't understand unless you have served your country, and I am proud to say that is the driving force in my life" (Air Force Link, 2005).

H2: *Parents, guidance counselors, and peers are the three greatest influencers in a recruit's decision to join the Air Force.* Researchers have found that the perceived *trustworthiness* of a source of information influenced the level of agreement with certain ideas. Parents, guidance counselors and peers have great credibility with recruits and they are sometimes able to persuade an individual to join the Air Force.

The researcher found various secondary research sources on parents who do not wish for their children to join the military because they may go to war. In fact, A Department of Defense survey conducted in November of 2004 shows that only 25 percent of parents would recommend military service to their children, down from 42 percent in August 2003 (Cave, 2005). However, recruiting continues to do well from parental influencers because it is hereditary in the sense that family members have served in the military. Retired Major General Robert Scores believes that often times a young kid is brought up either with the expectation or some familiarity with the military and tends to follow in the footsteps of their older relatives (Conan, 2004). Senior Airman Tiffany Woods said, "I serve because a member of every generation of my family since the Civil War served, why should I be any different? I serve because I am proud of my family business" (Air Force Link, 2005).

Guidance counselors are large influences because their role is assisting students with all their post-secondary options, including the military. Guidance counselors help direct students on career paths after high school. Students depend on these individuals for knowledge and guidance. Guidance counselors can also be influential in allowing the military to test the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) in their school. This benefits both the students and the military. It is a valuable tool for the military to find prequalified applicants and a valuable source for students, because it matches their interests and aptitudes with civilian careers as well. It is another tool that can help them find their niche and see what careers might be suitable for them.

Research shows that targeted peer recruitment can be one of the most effective means of marketing. Its success can be attributed to the fact that current enlistees are

current customers, and are close in age to the prospective recruits. They usually give factual accounts when discussing joining the military. According to the official Air Force Recruiting Website, The Air Force Recruiting Command encourages all who pride themselves as a member of the world's greatest air and space team to tell others about what it means to be an Air Force member and refer quality applicants to recruiters whenever possible (Air Force Recruiting Website, 2005). By sharing Air Force opportunities with potential airmen and helping tell the Air Force story, recruits have credibility with their peers and the Air Force may gain a qualified recruit to join the Air Force.

H3: *The events of 9/11 strongly influence those from New Jersey and New York City to join the Air Force.* The researcher studied recruits who are joining the Air Force from New Jersey or New York City. The researcher asserts that many of these people were affected by 9/11 because of the close proximity of the attacks. There is a good chance that they either know someone personally or through another who died or was injured in the attacks or had a hand in helping during and/or after the attacks.

Much of the literature found in researching this topic shows that Americans' trust and confidence in the military has soared since 9/11. The research concluded that incredible patriotism prompted by the attacks on 11 September 2001 surged the Air Force's growth. Colonel Michael L. Jones thinks that this generation of recruits is less self-centered than they were 10 years ago and that they want to make the world a better place (MacQuarrie, 2005). Second Lieutenant Kevin T. Alley said, "In my hometown, I worked with a great group of junior high school kids at my church. I serve so that they can grow up worrying about normal things like who to sit with at lunch or what to wear

to school. I want them to grow up never having to worry about terrorism or another 9/11" (Air Force Link, 2005).

Delimitations

The researcher has several limitations in conducting this research. The first was that the results of this study were limited to New Jersey and New York City recruits. Recruits across other regions of the country were not studied. A nonprobability sample was used due to the convenience of the readily accessible subjects. The population for this study was limited to people who had enlisted in the Air Force in the past twelve months or these candidates who where currently applying. This did not allow the researcher to compare those who joined the military immediately following 9/11 to those joining now. However, it did give the researcher a more accurate study of present day recruits, which will benefit current and future recruiting strategies.

Procedure

The first step in the procedure of this study was to find relevant research information to test the hypotheses of this thesis. In order to do this, the researcher used Rowan University's library database of scholarly articles and journals. The researcher used findings related to this topic to build Chapter two of this thesis.

In order to construct chapter three, the researcher sent surveys through email to recruits from New Jersey and New York City who joined the Air Force post 9/11 and were waiting to leave for basic training. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with applicants currently in the process of applying to the Air Force. The researcher used both of these instruments to test the validity of hypotheses of this thesis.

Results are presented in charts, graphs, percentages, and the researcher's response to the outcome was also analyzed.

Terminology

Recruit- a newly engaged member of the military force, especially one of the lowest rank or grade

Recruitment- to strengthen or raise (an armed force) by enlistment

Enlistment- to enter the armed forces

Persuasion- communication intended to induce belief or action suasion

Cognitive Process- the performance of some composite cognitive activity; an operation that affects mental contents; "the process of thinking"; "the cognitive operation of remembering"

Influencers- people who produce an effect on by imperceptible or intangible means; sway

Advertising- the activity of attracting public attention to product or business, as by paid announcement in the print, broadcast, or electronic media

Survey- to examine as to condition, situation, or value; to appraise; to query someone in order to collect data for the analysis of some aspect of a group or area to determine and delineate the form, extent, and position of by taking linear and angular measurements and by applying the principles of geometry and trigonometry to view or consider comprehensively

Interview- a formal consultation usually to evaluate qualifications (as of a prospective student or employee) a meeting at which information is obtained (as by a reporter, television commentator, or pollster) from a person

<u>Post 9/11 America</u>- fighting a war on terrorism and putting many young Americans on the front line of attack against identified terrorists

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The researcher conducted a review of related literature to fully comprehend what already exists in the area of military recruitment. The literature review was accomplished through Rowan University Campbell Library in electronic database and search engines such as Google and Yahoo. Some of the key words explored were "influence on enlistment," "persuasion theory and recruiting," "vocational socialization," "social influence," "parental influence and career development," "interpersonal communication and influence," "recruitment and credibility," "family factors and influence on career choice," "teachers and influence on student career choices," and "career development theory." Few articles were found that specifically referred to studies on what actually influenced recruits to join the military, and none on the United States Air Force in particular. But, some closely linked topics were discovered.

Individual Career Choice and Theory

The impact that career development has on an individual is long-term and immeasurable. Some researchers said that vocational choice is influenced by four factors: (1) the reality factor, (2) the influence of the educational process, (3) the emotional factor and (4) individual values (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma Theory, 1951). Starting in preteen and ending in young adulthood, individuals pass through three stages: fantasy, tentative and realistic. In the fantasy stage, the child is free

to pursue any occupational choice. Through this process the child's preferred activities are identified and related to future career choices. Beginning in the preteen years and continuing through high school, the process is in the transition process in which the adolescent begins the career choice process and recognizes the consequences and responsibility of that choice. The realistic stage, spanning from mid-adolescence through young adulthood, has three sub-stages: exploration, crystallization and specification. In the exploration stage, the adolescent begins to restrict choice based on personal likes, skills and abilities. In the crystallization stage an occupational choice is made. This is followed by the specification stage where the individual pursues the educational experience required for achieving his or her career goal (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma Theory, 1951).

Other researchers believe that individuals are attracted to a particular occupation that meets their personal needs and provide them satisfaction. John Holland's theory is grounded in what he calls modal personal orientation or a development process established through heredity and the individual's life history of reacting to environmental demands. Holland's theory rests on four assumptions (Holland's Career Typology, 1959):

1. In our culture, persons can be categorized as one of the following: realistic (linked with preference for outdoor and physical work), investigative (linked with thought and creativity), artistic (disliking structure and requiring intense involvement), social (linked with communication and helping others), enterprising (linked with power and needing management behaviors) or conventional (linked with high structure, self-control and low interpersonal demands).

2. People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles.

3. Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment

A study related to career alternatives was conducted by Bromley Kniveton to explore students' motivations when considering their careers, while taking into account the variables of birth order and gender. The researcher employed questionnaires and interviews given to students drawn from eight schools, all of which were co-educational. The sample consisted of 384 young people, 174 males and 174 females of whom 174 were-first born and 174 last-born. The age range was 14-18 years.

The questionnaire was used before the interview to gather the background information, starting with gender, birth order, and family. The researcher asked the following open-ended questions, "Have you an actual job in mind?" If so, "What is it?" and "Who was most influential in helping you select the job/follow the career path you are aiming for?" The author also asked questions requiring use of a Likert scale. Space was given to students to expand on any of their responses. During the interview section the researcher reviewed the questionnaire and asked trigger questions such as "Can you tell me a little about why you have put the items in the order of priority you have"?

Holland examined the data from the point of view of the whole sample and then subdivided in terms of birth order and gender. The study revealed that parents are shown to have a greater influence than teachers on influencing children toward different career alternatives. Same sex parents are most influential (mother/daughter and father/son), followed by the opposite-sex parent (mother/son and father/daughter). With birth order, the eldest son or daughter influences the youngest. Teachers came third and fourth in the list in all cases.

The study revealed that males place realistic and physical characteristics at the top and females place them at the bottom. With respect to females, artistic orientation appeared higher on the list than it did for males. With regard to birth order, the youngest places realistic/physical far higher on the list than do the eldest. The ranking of motivations for selecting a job is fairly similar for males and females. The two main factors are money, which males prioritize, and enjoying the work itself, which females prioritize. Another gender difference is the relatively high ranking of helping others. Females ranked this higher than males.

The Social Cognition Career Theory (SCCT) proposes that career choice is influenced by the beliefs the individuals develop and refine through four major sources: a) personal performance accomplishments, b) vicarious learning, c) social persuasion and d) physiological states and reactions. SCCT also attempts to address issues of culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context and unexpected life events that may interact with and supersede the effects of career-related choices (Lent, Brown and Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory, 1987). How these aspects work together in the career development process is through process in which an individual develops an expertise/ability for a particular endeavor and meets with success. This process reinforces self-efficacy or beliefs in future continued success in the use of this ability/expertise (Lent, Brown and Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory, 1987).

As a result, people are likely to develop goals that involve continuing involvement in that activity/endeavor. Through an evolutionary process beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout adulthood, individuals narrow the scope to successful endeavors to focus on and form career goals and choices.

What is critical to the success of the process is the extent to which individuals view the endeavor/activity as one at which they are successful and offers valued compensation. The contextual factors come into play by influencing individual perceptions of the probability of success. If the person perceives few barriers the likelihood of success reinforces the career choice; but if the barriers are viewed as significant there is a weaker interest and choice actions (Lent, Brown and Hackett's Social Cognitive Career Theory, 1987).

A SCCT study was conducted at two different colleges (one large university and the other a small technical college) by two semi-independent research teams to identify the perceived bases for career choices, factors that enabled and deterred them in implementing their choice options and methods they had used to cope with choice barriers. The results showed the following: financial concerns constituted the most frequently mentioned choice impediment, with negative social/family influences as second; nearly all participants mentioned social support or encouragement (e.g., from friends, from family members) as a critical support factor; moderate frequency included personal strengths and role models/mentors as support factors. These results suggest that decision makers do view barriers as relevant to their efforts to select and implement career paths and that certain factors, such as financial obstacles, might be underrepresented in currently available barrier measures (Lent, Brown, Talleyrand, and McPartland 2002).

Through the social learning theory, which examines psychosocial influences on behavior, individuals can contribute to the understanding of career motivations. Some of the major constructs of the social learning theory that could be addressed in this thesis are

environment, situation, expectations, observational learning, reinforcement, and self-efficacy.

1. Environment - factors that are physically external to the decision maker

2. Situation - the individual's perception of the environment

3. Expectations – anticipated outcomes of a behavior or participation in a program

4. Observational learning – behavioral acquisition that occurs by watching the actions and outcomes of others' behavior

5. Reinforcement – responses to a person's behavior that increase or decrease the likelihood of the behavior's reoccurrence

6. Self-efficacy – the person's confidence in performing a particular behavior (Klein and Sondag 3).

Social influence can be largely integrated with an individual's career choice. Social identity is the assumption that society consists of social categories based on nationality, race, class, occupation, sex and religion. The social identity theory (SIT) proposes that people form social identities based on these categories, which, in turn, influence affect and behavior (Grice, Paulsen, and Jones 22).

Another theory used to describe vocational choice is Behavior Decision Making (BDM). Vocational choice is a very complex process that can extend over a relatively long period of time. Henry Sauermann, professor at Duke University, said one could argue that first aspects of career decision making emerge which a child dreams of becoming an astronaut, teacher, or just like mom. Yet, the strength of BDM perspective lies in focusing on the motivational and cognitive issues that arise in the phase where the decision maker has a set of alternatives (occupation or jobs) from which a choice has to be made (Sauermann 274).

The BDM model entails two major processes, the selection of a decision strategy in light of certain choice goals of the decision maker and the construction of preferences given certain characteristics of the decision task and context. Choice goals determine which decision strategy the decision maker selects to combine and evaluate information on the alternatives in order to determine the best alternative. Different strategies require different amounts of information, and strategy selection may therefore be constrained by informational limitations. To some extent, the decision maker can acquire additional information in the course of the decision process; how much and which information is acquired depends on the choice goals the decision maker pursues. The social context plays an important role in the decision process in that significant others may try to influence choice goals and often provide informational inputs to the decision (Sauermann 277).

Each alternative in the choice set is characterized by a set of attributes. Attributes include, for example, pay, social status of occupation, degree of autonomy, amount of social interaction, importance of creativity, and anticipated positive and negative emotions on the job. The information on the attributes of occupations and jobs is provided in different forms, such as personal communication with relatives and acquaintances, printed materials, or through television (Sauermann 278).

The decision maker, in order to assess the attributes and alternatives, uses preferences. Sauermann considers two functions of preferences: First, preferences describe the transformation of the level of an attribute into some measure of value (evaluation). For example, how good or bad is a salary of X dollars? Second, if the evaluations of attributes are aggregated in the decision process, preferences are used in

weighting the values according to the relative importance of the attributes (weighting). For instance, pay might receive a larger weight than the expected amount of coffee provided free of charge by the employer. If an attribute is considered irrelevant for the decision, its implicit weight is zero and it is excluded from further analysis (Sauermann 279).

Preferences are reflected in concepts such as personality types, interests, and work values. With respect to changes of preferences over time, several researchers emphasize the importance of social influences. When making a decision, the decision maker does not always know his or her preferences; in fact, a lack of preference information has been identified as major cause indecision on vocational choice (Sauermann 279).

The BDM model describes decision strategy selection based on choice goals. Decision strategies describe how information on attributes and preferences are combined in order to select an alternative. For example, one strategy is to carefully evaluate and weight all the attributes of the various options, to form an overall score for each option, and to select the option with the highest score. An alternative, much simpler strategy would be to select the option that is best on the most important attribute. Decision makers have been shown to select different decision strategies, depending on their individual goals as well as situational factors (Sauermann 281).

According to the theory of reasoned action, there is a relationship between intentions to engage in behavior and the actual behavior that occurs later. Similar to the behavior decision-making theory, individuals are seen as making systematic and rational use of the information available to them before they decide whether to engage in a particular activity. Intentions are depicted as capturing the motivational forces that

influence whether a behavior occurs, including the attitude toward the behavior, perceived social norms, and the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Powell and Goulet 1620).

The research has generally found that, as the theory of reasoned action suggests, people tend to act in accordance with their intentions when they have control over their own behavior. Powell and Goulet found that applying the theory of reasoned action to the recruitment process, there is a relationship between individuals' intentions to engage in the behavior of pursuing an employment relationship with another party and their actually engaging in behavior (Powell and Goulet 1621).

Familial Influences on an Individual's Career Choice

Vast amounts of literature exist on the influence parents have on their children's career development. Research has demonstrated a relationship between several dimensions of family-of-origin and career development. For example, family characteristics, such as parental employment, education, and nontraditional attitudes, are positively related to career development. Career development is affected by family relationships, whether parent-child, sibling, or the family as a whole. The idea expressed by Kassin and Bratcher is that "family is the primary and, except in rare instances, the most powerful emotional system we ever belong to, which shapes and continues to determine the course and outcome of our lives (Kassin and Bratcher, 1982, 88).

Many parents view themselves as central figures in their children's career development and tend to want to play an active role. In turn, children expect their parents to be important influences to help them with career planning. Palmer and Cochran said, "A child's career plan is not just his or her plan. It would be more accurate to call it a

family plan, given parents' contributions of resources, finances, advice, personal support, and contacts, among other things"(Palmer and Cochran 75).

Research supports the influence of parental expectations and aspirations on the career decisions and aspirations of their children. These expectations lay a foundation for parents' behaviors and interactions with their children, which then indirectly or directly influence choices they make in the future. A 1998 Sylvan Learning Center report indicates that parents and children's views about career aspirations are more compatible than incompatible. When adolescents perceive their parents to have high educational expectations for them, adolescents are likely to have higher expectations for themselves (Taylor, Harris, Taylor 2).

Parental support and encouragement are factors that have been found to influence vocational outcome. For instance, the attitudes and behaviors that children adopt toward work may be the result of what parents say. Parents convey their influence on children through interactions such as conversations and through their reactions (both verbal and nonverbal). This affects what children think, say, and perceive about various careers (Taylor, Harris, Taylor 2). Using semi-structured interviews with 20 students involved in an internship program at a large midwestern university, Fisher and Padmawijaja (1999) found that adolescents on successful career paths had encouraging parents (i.e., high in availability, guidance and advice, acceptance, and autonomy granting or giving their children the freedom to choose a career) with high educational expectations (i.e., an expectation for and valuing of high education and high professional goals) (Kassin 8).

A study was conducted by the university career services at UNC-Chapel Hill University to examine parental perceptions of their influence. Four hundred ninety three

parents of incoming freshman completed a four question survey during summer orientation. The study yielded the following results: In rating their perceptions of their influence, 38.5 percent of parents responded that they do not have much influence on career decisions. An even greater percentage of parents, 45.4 percent, believe they should have very little influence on career decisions. Parents overwhelmingly ranked themselves as the most influential figures in their children's career development and decisions. The only other group mentioned fairly consistently was teachers, followed by counselors. Most parents in this study (72.2 percent) feel career choice should be based on a combination of the job market and the student's interests/abilities. Results of this study on perceived parental influence on career development of adolescents suggests that parents may feel nobody except the *self* can impact career development (Taylor, Harris and Taylor 5).

Research suggests that life decisions and planning appear to be easier when made in context of a relationship with a supportive, trustworthy family member or significant other (Chope 1). Bowlby's theory of attachment (1982), drawn from family systems theory, gave permission to career counselors to explore the influence of family members and other "close attachments" in decisions about career and life planning. Another perspective to this theme perceives that family's concepts of rules and boundaries, beliefs, values, traditions, and myths are among the most influential systemic issues likely to affect one's career. Rigid rules can keep the system closed, preventing family members from new experiences and growth. Likewise, certain rules of order that the family places upon money, religion, prestige, status, and service reflects family rules,

19

values and myths; these may be the most important variables to be considered when young people make decisions about career choices (Chope 1).

Chope wrote that in order to further understand the role of the family in career decision making in the 21st century, two new factors must be recognized. The first factor is the huge revolutionary changes in the structure of the family. He notes that traditional patterns of work and family don't fit into the older norms and theoretical underpinnings of career choice. The number of two-earner families is vastly increasing, as well as the number of gays, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender families. Further, there are single adults raising children in record numbers. More than a few parents are raising children in their second and third marriage or relationship. With this revolution, other dilemmas have emerged as people move beyond their traditional defined roles as providers. The second factor is how interpersonal relationships play an important role in the social contexts that include work. Chope advocates bringing the role of relationships in making decisions about human behavior and career choice by calling for a "validating approach to work and relationship issues" (Chope 2).

Additional research on parenting and career development, proposes that early childhood experiences play an indirect role in shaping later career behavior. Roe, an early theorist, suggested that parent-child relationships influence personality orientations and the development of psychological needs; vocational interests and choices are some of the ways in which individuals try to satisfy those needs. This research led to parenting styles and the affect it has on a child's career development. Parenting styles are broad patterns of childbearing practices, values and behaviors. The four types of parenting styles are:

1. Indulgent (more responsive than demanding)

2. Authoritarian (highly demanding and directive but not responsive)

3. Authoritative (both demanding and responsive)

4. Uninvolved (low in responsiveness and demandingness) (Kerka 1)

The authoritative style balances clear, high expectations with emotional support and recognition of children's autonomy. Studies have associated this style with self-confidence, persistence, social competence, academic success, and psychosocial development. Authoritative parents provide a warm family climate, set standards, and promote independence, which result in more active career exploration on the part of children (Kerka 1).

Kerka describes another concept that encompasses parenting style as family functioning and includes such factors as parental support and guidance, positive or negative environmental influences, and family members' interaction styles. Family influence has a greater influence on career development than either family structure (size, birth order, and number of parents) or parents' educational and occupational status. Parental support and guidance can include specific career or educational suggestions as well as experiences that indirectly support career development, such as family vacations, provision of resources such as books, and modeling of paid and nonpaid work roles. The absence of support, guidance, and encouragement can lead to floundering inability to develop and pursue a specific career focus. Lack of support can also take the form of conflict, when a parent pressures a child toward a particular career and may withdraw financial and emotional support for a career path not of the parents choosing (Kerka 2).

Family functioning also includes the response to circumstances such as poverty, alcoholism, marital instability, and illness or death of family members. Sometimes an individual may respond to a stressful or negative family environment by making hasty, unreflective career choices in an attempt to escape or survive. On the other hand, critical life events can spur a transformative learning experience that may shape a career and life direction (Kerka 2).

Ketterson and Blustein conducted a study that demonstrated secure parent-child relationships are associated with progress in career decision making, affirmative career self-efficacy beliefs, and career planfulness. Their study found that students who have secure attachments to parents engage in greater levels of environmental and self-exploratory activity. They conclude that secure, comfortable relationships are critical in helping students take the risk necessary in exploring new settings and roles (Kerka 2).

The question of differences in individuals' ability to make successful career transitions has also been explored. Another study used an ecological systems perspective to show how development is influenced by relationships with others and with the environment. Their interviews with youth and adults identified a proactive family interaction style that significantly contributes to career readiness. Proactive families are categorized by the following:

1. Well organized, cohesive and expressive

2. Speak their mind and manage conflict positively seek out ways to grow

3. Sociable and make decisions through democratic negotiations

4. Encourage individual development

5. Emotionally engaged (Kerka 2).

Outside Influences on an Individuals Career Choice

Role models, peers, teachers and counselors can also expand person's ideas about what careers people pursue and can increase the likelihood of a nontraditional choice. Gati and Saka refer to research conducted by Lewis that found a positive relationship between adolescents' age and their decision-making capabilities. This included increased awareness of the risks and implications involved in making a decision, seeking more advice from adults or peers, and awareness of the implications of receiving advice from someone with vested interest (Gati and Saka 332).

According to the symbolic interaction perspective, an individual's self-concept arises during the course of social interaction with persons referred to as "significant others", that is a person's sense of identity is influenced by opinions, attitudes, and communications of specific individuals who become identified as important sources of information. People who function as significant others may have substantial influences on the life plans of youth a (Peterson, Stivers and Peters 417).

Some research indicates that adolescents become more attentive to the expectations of a diverse set of persons beyond the family (e.g., peers and teachers) as they establish wider social contacts in the larger community. It also indicates that youth tend to be selective about the specific significant others with whom they consult, depending on the particular issue of concern. Peers, for example, seem to have the greatest influence on personal or *lifestyle* issues such as friendship choices, dating relationships, and styles of dress. In contrast, parents still tend to have the greatest influence on the educational and occupational plans of youth (Peterson, Stivers and Peters 418). Several findings indicate that career counselors and career educators should

shift the focus from the individual to the family system; develop a new and richer view of parent involvement and help families become more proactive in the children's career development.

A study conducted by Kristin Perrone at a large southeastern college on the influence of role models and career decidedness indicated that role-model supportiveness and role-model relationship quality contributed significantly to the career decidedness of these college participants. Four hundred and five participants (280 female and 125 male) from undergraduate psychology classes at a large southern university were given a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-type item that measured the quality of the relationship between the participants and role model. The mean for role-model supportiveness was 3.37 and the mean for quality of the role-model relationship was 4.26; indicating that participants generally felt supported by, and had a high quality relationship with, their role models.

The most commonly cited role models were parents, especially the same-gender parent. The study suggests that role models can influence career indecision in a variety of ways. First, the individual must identify with a role model. Second, individuals must seek to build a high quality relationship with the role model. Role models may influence modelees' career indecision, not only by direct modeling and imitation, but also by offering support and fostering a healthy relationship with the modeled (Perrone 1-4).

Recruiting Influences and Tools

A military does not exist without people and there are many tools that recruiters use to influence individuals to enlist. The amount of rapport and credibility necessary to convince potential recruits to enter into such a major commitment is the key feature that

distinguishes recruiting research from that of most profit oriented sales research. Relatively little published research in the open literature is available in recruitment marketing (Morey and McCann 1199).

Military advertising plays a huge role in the recruiting process. Morey and McCann describe advertising as the initial impact on a recruit. The role of the recruiter is to close the sale. Of the total amount spent on advertising, a certain amount of it is allocated to national advertising agencies for a national campaign to increase awareness and generate leads; the balance of the advertising budget is used mainly for local advertising purposes. The outcome of this spending involves four measures: the number of leads generated, the number of enlistment contracts signed by high school graduates, the number of non high school graduates contracts and the number of shipments to basic training centers. The leads are formal inquires and requests for more information utilizing coupons from magazines or direct mail campaign, toll-free telephone calls which results in a recruit meeting with a local recruiter and often enlisting in the military (Morey and McCann 1200).

Television accounts for more than 50 percent of The Department of Defense's advertising expenditures. The military also relies heavily on radio, magazines, and newspapers. Previous econometric studies of military advertising support the view that advertising has been effective in increasing the numbers of high-quality enlistments (i.e., high school seniors or graduates who score in the upper half of the Armed Forces Qualifications Test (Dertouzos and Garber xi).

Studies show that broadcast media (over-the-air and cable television and radio) operate more through emotional responses than do the print media (magazines and

newspapers). The timing of the advertising in terms of where a young person is in the process of deciding whether to enlist may be very important for effectiveness. Emotional responses to broadcast advertisements might take the form of positive images of the military several months, if not years, before a youth must decide on his or her first career step after high school. In addition, emotional responses might have quite immediate effects; for example, on youths who have already discussed options with recruiters and may trigger enlistments within the same month as the advertisements is experienced or during the next few months (Dertouzos and Garber xiii).

Cognitive dissonance theory is often used in recruiting. Cognitive dissonance theory assumes that beliefs are related either in a state of consonance or dissonance. A state of consonance is characterized by consistency. Dissonance is marked by inconsistency or discomfort. The more mental discomfort that exists, the more a person is willing to change towards something that makes them comfortable. That is where the recruiter uses his or her persuasion tactics. The dissonance that is proposed is the introduction of information that causes the recruit to evaluate his or her attitudes regarding military benefits, rewards, work level and service culture in such a way that they are persuaded that the benefits in the military are more or as attractive as those outside the military (www.ou.edu 2005).

Several researchers found that recruiter's behavior affects applicants' perceptions of the organization. Social influence theory suggests that when an agent has interpersonal influence (as the recruiter may have), certain behaviors by the agent will increase that agent's influence. Agent behaviors that exhibit expertness (e.g., competence), social attractiveness (e.g., likeability, warmth), and trustworthiness (e.g.,

credibility) are expected to positively influence the receiver and give the agent more power or influence over the receiver (DeBell, Montgomery, McCarthy and Lanthier 203). In a survey conducted with 105 students following their campus recruiting interviews, Harm and Thornton found that recruiter "listening skills" were significantly related to applicant willingness to accept a job offer. Consistent with critical contacts theory, the researcher also found that this relationship was even stronger when the applicant viewed the recruiter as a representative of the company (DeBell, Montgomery, McCarthy and Lanthier 204).

Personal experience and brand contact is one of the most influential methods for reaching young people. If recruiting is going to meet its goals with highly qualified individuals who perceive the brand's value, the value has to be there. Research on customer-based brand equity indicates that by creating unique, favorable brand image in consumers' minds, organizations can increase the likelihood that their products or services will be chosen over similar products and services. Some researchers have argued that similar processes may affect job seekers' decisions during recruitment so that organizations with strong brand identities would be preferred to shoes with weak or negative brand identities (Collins and Stevens 1121).

Consumers can generalize the brand equity concept to recruitment contexts in which job seekers confront issues similar to those faced. As consumers do with products and service, job seekers form beliefs about potential employers; these beliefs provide the basis for decision about whether to pursue or accept employment offers. Collins and Stevens suggest that,

> "If such beliefs, which we call employee brand image, are similar in structure and impact to product brand images, the recruitment researchers may gain insight into

the relative effectiveness of various recruitment practices by examining analogous dimensions of employer brand image and product brand image and the marketing activities known to affect those dimensions" (Collins and Stevens 1122).

Additional research indicates that an organization's marketing mix increases customer based brand equity because it raises awareness, generates favorable attitudes, and strengthens associations between the brand and desirable attributes (Collins and Aaker 1122).

In today's environment, setting an organization apart from the competition is essential to attracting the best employees. One approach to this issue is to use the resources already available. The companies own employees can often be the best recruiters and they do not have to be those that are getting paid extra funds to actually recruit. The verbal exchange of positive information about a business's products and services has a considerable impact on its success. Word of mouth is a pervasive and very influential form of communication. It involves a constant exchange of information across a wide spectrum of individuals and influencers (Lee and Dubinsky 22-33).

Chapter III

Research Design

All recruits in the Air Force Delayed Entry Program (DEP) in New Jersey and New York City were asked to participate in the quantitative study. The study did not include recruits who were leaving for basic training before February 1, 2006 and were unavailable to participate. The researcher contacted recruits that entered the Air Force from New Jersey and New York City in the past three years through email to participate in the first qualitative data collection. Applicants processing through the New Jersey and New York City Military Entry Processing Stations (MEPS) were asked to participate in the qualitative data collection for the research.

Instruments

Quantitative

The quantitative survey instrument was designed to gather data on what and who influences recruits from New Jersey and New York City to join the Air Force in Post 9/11 America. In addition, it sought to find out whether the events of 9/11 affected the recruits decision to join. All research questions and hypotheses were explored.

The researcher used a three-part email survey. The first part explored people (i.e., parents and teachers) who may have influenced the recruit's decision to join the Air Force and then other factors like the events of 9/11 and the current War on Terrorism.

Ten, five-part Likert scale questions were used to determine the degree to which

participants agreed or disagreed with provided statements. The ratings were as follows:

1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=undecided, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree

Questions in the second section focused mainly on open-ended questions to help

explain why these influences' were such a big part of their decision. Participants were

asked two YES or NO questions on relatives serving in the Air Force and effects of 9/11,

with space provided for additional comments. The third and fourth questions were open-

ended with hopes that the participants would elaborate on the role the military should

play on fighting terrorism and why they chose the Air Force over the other branches of

service. The fifth question asked them to rank the top five influencers in their choice to

join the Air Force.

The third part, consisting of eight questions, sought demographic information:

age, gender, race, and experience with military and recruiting tools. These answers

provided important variables to analyze the population.

Qualitative

The first qualitative research instrument was used to analyze marketing data for

fiscal year 2005 and to decipher influencing trends and see if those trends correlate with

the researcher's hypotheses. The data was reviewed through the Air Force Recruiting

Information System (AFRISS) through survey question/answers inputted by recruiters in

New Jersey and New York City on what brought each applicant to the AFRISS office.

The second qualitative research instrument was designed to gather additional

information on applicants currently processing to join the Air Force. Six, thirty-minute

interviews took place consisting of three applicants from New Jersey and three applicants from New York City. The first three personal interviews were held at the Fort Dix Military Entrance Processing Station in New Jersey and the last three were held at the Fort Hamilton Military Entrance Processing Station in New York City. The researcher conducted the actual interviews and her assistant prepped each applicant with instructions before interviews were actually conducted. Participants signed consent forms before each interview was conducted. The instrument was developed to gain the understanding of why specific people and events influenced recruits decision to join the Air Force and if and why 9/11 affected that decision in any way. Interview participants volunteered on the day they were present for processing at Air Force Military Processing Station. Each participant received a complimentary Air Force T-shirt and hat for participating in the study.

Pilot Instruments

<u>Quantitative</u>

A pilot instrument of the quantitative questionnaire was administered to a sample of six active duty members of the United States Air Force. Participants were all prior recruiters of the Air Force. The feedback was not solicited to be analyzed within the actual research, but instead, to anticipate recruit's answers based on differing characteristics and gain a thorough understanding of the decision to join the Air Force. The pilot study provided an estimated guide on how long the survey would take to complete and, based on the feedback, the researcher made necessary changes to the questionnaire.

Qualitative

The qualitative instrument design was reviewed by a Rowan University professor and the researcher's assistant, who served as a moderator during the actual personal interviews. The researcher gathered feedback and made necessary changes to the questionnaire in preparation for the actual study.

Procedures

Quantitative

Quantitative surveys were emailed to recruits in the Delayed Entry Program on November 20, 2005. A thorough explanation of the research being conducted and the importance of participation accompanied the emailed survey. Respondents were asked to return the survey either highlighted in a word document or faxed as soon as possible. On December 15, 2005 a follow up email was sent to those who received a survey but had not yet responded with a reply date of Friday, December 23, 2005.

Thirty-five of seventy-nine surveys were returned and serviceable. Twenty-seven were returned from the first email and eight from the second, therefore, 44 percent of the surveys emailed to recruits were used for this study.

Qualitative

For the first procedure, a complete review and comparison of the marketing data loaded in AFRISS was conducted from December 26, 2005 through January 10, 2006. For the second procedure, the researcher contacted several Air Force recruiters in the southern New Jersey area to schedule personal interviews with potential applicants on January 20, 2006. These interviews were rescheduled and actually conducted on March

13, 2006. The researcher contacted recruiters in the New York City area for the second set of personal interviews. These interviews were conducted on March 15, 2006. Each interview was held in a private office located at either the New Jersey or New York City Military Processing Station. Interviews took approximately thirty-minutes to conduct.

Data Analysis

The researcher used Excel software to analyze the quantitative instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to report demographic data in the quantitative instrument and inferential statistics were used to summarize the answers to close-ended survey questions. The researcher organized and analyzed answers to open-ended survey questions and interview questions to determine support for or against the hypotheses and to assist in answering the research questions.

Chapter IV

Results

Electronic Survey Results

Thirty-five of the forty-two surveys returned were usable. Seven fell out due to incomplete data. The results from the research are not applicable to the entire population, but are still valuable in gathering a generalization of what influences recruits to join the United States Air Force in the New Jersey and New York City areas. The highest percentages of the respondents were males between eighteen to twenty years of age. The next largest group was females between eighteen and twenty years of age.

Part one of the survey used the likert scale to determine what influenced the recruits to want to join the Air Force and if they saw terrorism as the biggest problem facing the United States today. Overall, males appeared mostly influenced by the opportunity of tuition assistance. The sense of duty to their country was a close second. Females overall were mostly influenced by tuition assistance and family members.

Males and females combined showed the strongest influence to come from the opportunity for these recruits to receive tuition assistance at 74.3 percent. The next top two greatest influences, between 60-65 percent, were the personal sense of duty to the country and the influence of a family member. The least to influence these recruits were coaches, teachers, and counselors all at 25.5 percent or below. The question concerning terrorism as the biggest problem facing the United States was positive at 63.2 percent.

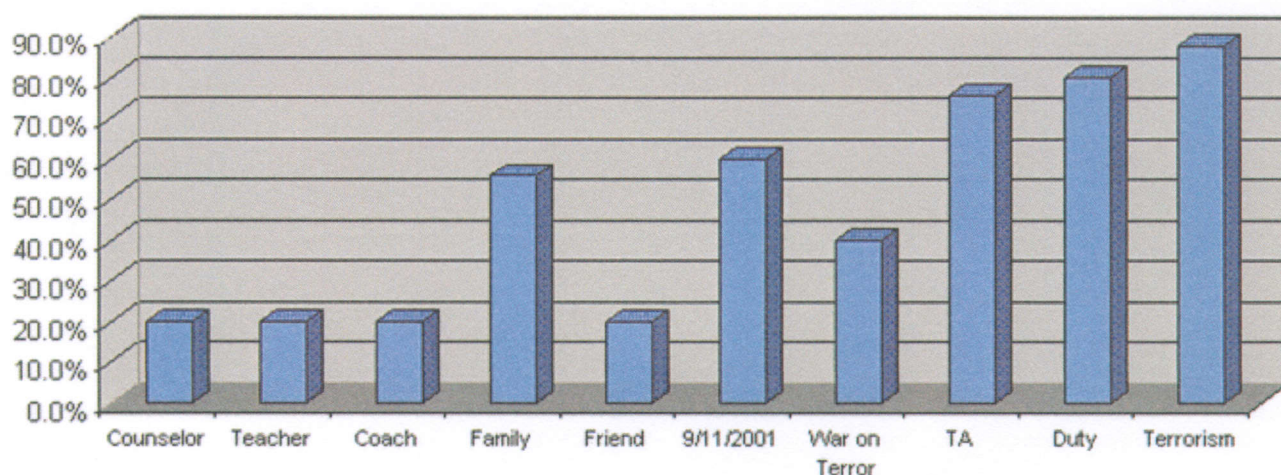| Questions	Strongly Disagree[1]	[2]	NEUTRAL [3]	[4]	Strongly Agree[5]	Overall	Percentage
Counselor	13	1	1	1	1	27	30.0%
Teacher	12	0	0	2	3	35	38.9%
Coach	15	1	0	0	1	22	24.4%
Family	5	3	2	2	5	50	55.6%
Friend	8	3	1	4	1	38	42.2%
9/11/2001	7	0	3	5	2	46	51.1%
War on Terror	7	2	2	3	3	44	48.9%
TA	0	1	2	6	8	72	80.0%
Duty	0	3	1	4	9	70	77.8%
Terrorism	2	6	3	2	4	51	56.7%

SURVEYS COMPILED — 18
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE PTS — 90

Graph #1 Males 18-20
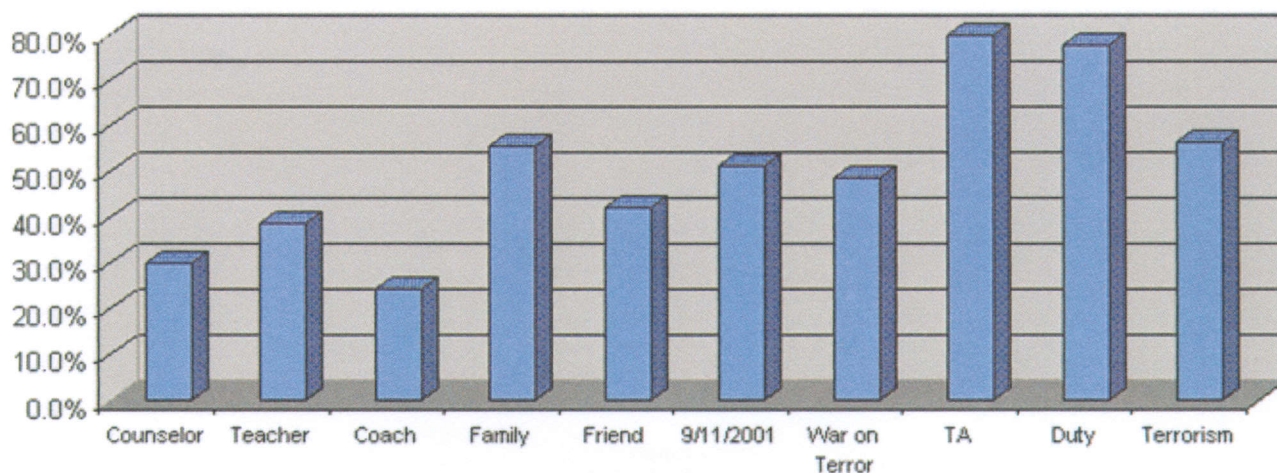
Males between the ages of 18-20 years old were the largest participants of the electronic survey. Tuition assistance was the greatest influence factor for them wanting to join the Air Force and a sense of duty toward the country came in as a close second. Influencers such as counselors, teachers and coaches were the least to influence this group.

Questions	Strongly Disagree[1]	[2]	NEUTRAL [3]	[4]	Strongly Agree[5]	Overall	Percentage
Counselor	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
Teacher	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
Coach	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
Family	2	0	1	1	1	14	56.0%
Friend	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
9/11/2001	1	1	1	1	1	15	60.0%
War on Terror	2	2	0	1	0	10	40.0%
TA	1	0	1	0	3	19	76.0%
Duty	0	0	2	1	2	20	80.0%
Terrorism	1	1	3	0	2	22	88.0%

SURVEYS COMPILED 5
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE PTS 25

Graph #2 Males 21-25

A sense of duty to the country and tuition assistance was the greatest influential factor for males between the ages of 21-25 years old to want to join the Air Force. The events of 9/11 and family were also strong factors for this group. Influencers such as counselors, teachers, coaches and friends were the least to influence this group. The War on Terrorism had a strong response of 88 percent for being the biggest problem the Unites States faces today.

Questions	Strongly Disagree[1]	[2]	NEUTRAL [3]	[4]	Strongly Agree[5]	Overall	Percentage
Counselor	7	0	0	0	0	7	20.0%
Teacher	6	1	0	0	0	8	22.9%
Coach	7	0	0	0	0	7	20.0%
Family	1	0	2	1	3	26	74.3%
Friend	4	0	2	0	1	15	42.9%
9/11/2001	3	3	0	0	1	14	40.0%
War on Terror	3	1	1	1	1	17	48.6%
TA	0	0	2	4	1	27	77.1%
Duty	2	1	1	2	1	20	57.1%
Terrorism	1	2	1	2	1	21	60.0%

SURVEYS COMPILED   7
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE PTS   35

Graph #3 Females 18-20
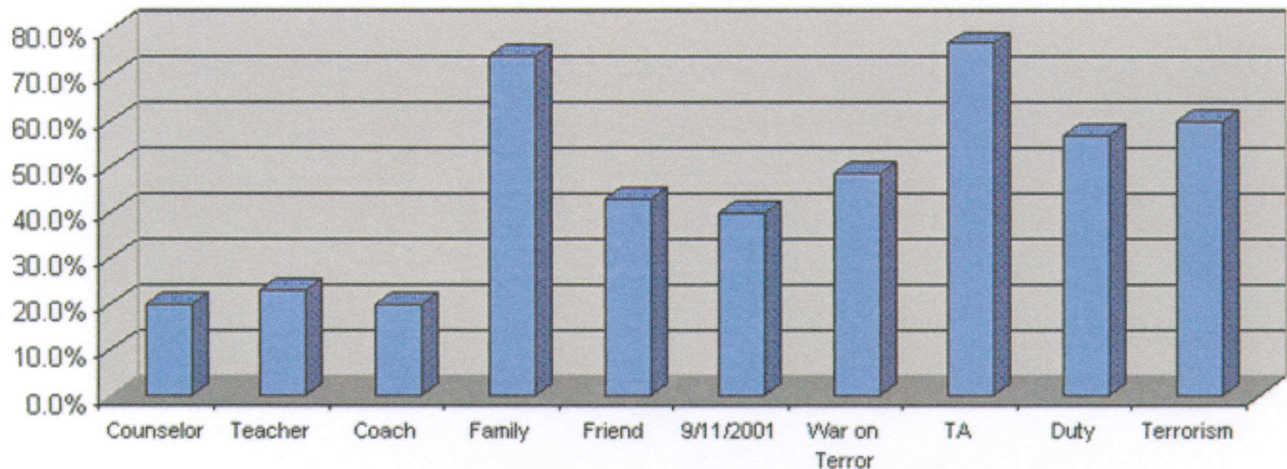
The familial and tuition assistance were the greatest influential factors for females between the ages of 18-20 years old to want to join the Air Force. Influencers such as counselors, teacher and coaches were the least reason for this group to want to join. There was a moderately high response at 60 percent from this group on terrorism being the biggest problem the United States faces today.

Questions	Strongly Disagree[1]	[2]	NEUTRAL [3]	[4]	Strongly Agree[5]	Overall	Percentage
Counselor	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
Teacher	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
Coach	5	0	0	0	0	5	20.0%
Family	2	0	1	1	1	14	56.0%
Friend	4	0	0	0	1	9	36.0%
9/11/2001	3	0	1	0	1	11	44.0%
War on Terror	3	1	0	1	0	9	36.0%
TA	1	1	0	2	1	16	64.0%
Duty	1	1	0	2	1	16	64.0%
Terrorism	1	1	2	0	1	14	56.0%

SURVEYS COMPILED 5
MAXIMUM POSSIBLE PTS 25

Graph #4 Females 21-25
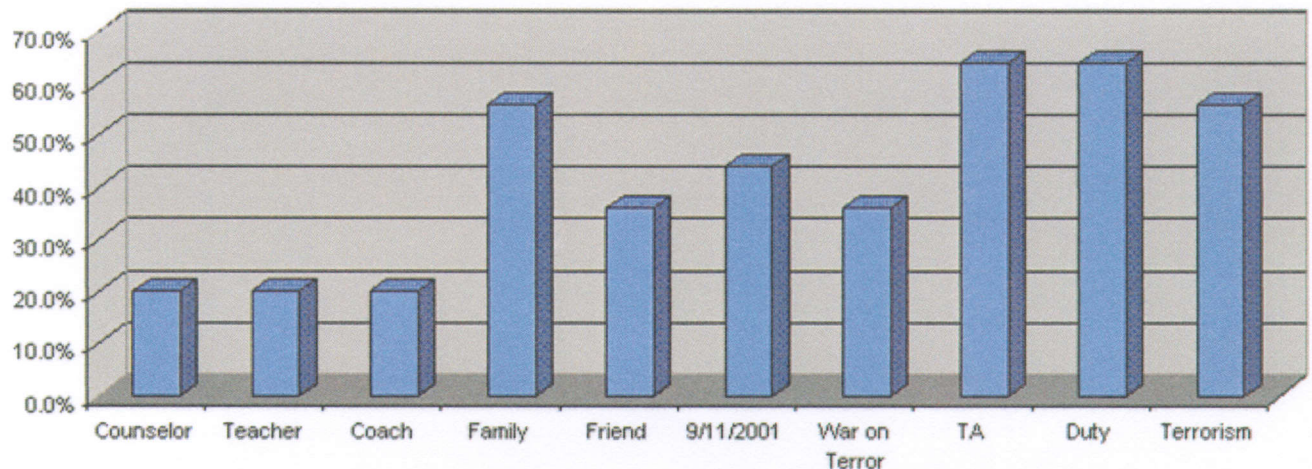
Tuition assistance and a sense of duty for the country were the greatest influential factors for females between the ages of 21-25 years old to want to join the Air Force. Family was close behind followed by the events of 9/11. The influences of friends and the War on Terror were in the middle, while counselors, teachers and coaches lagged behind as influences for this group to join the Air Force.
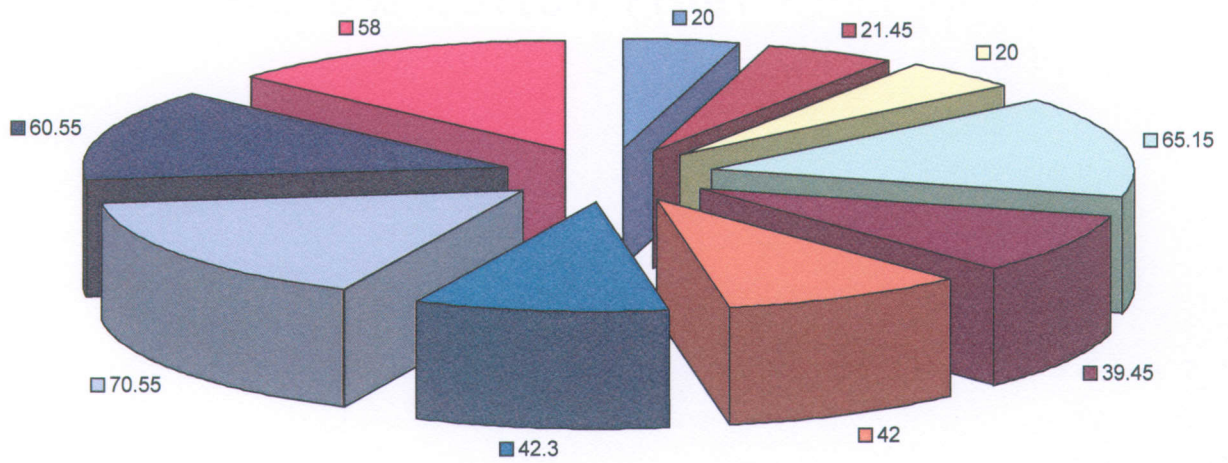
Graph #5 Male Trends

Male Trends
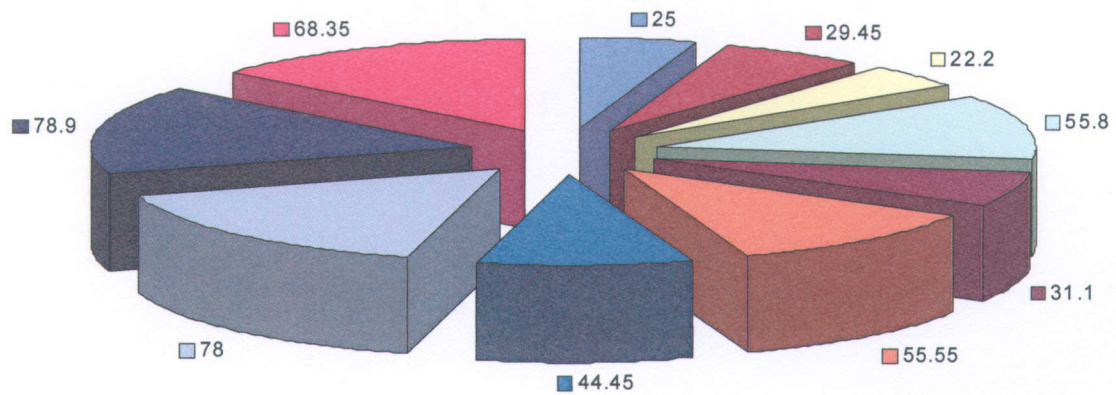
Legend: Counselor, Teacher, Coach, Family, Friend, 9/11/2001, War on Terror, TA, Duty, Terrorism

Values shown on chart: 25, 29.45, 22.2, 55.8, 31.1, 55.55, 44.45, 78, 78.9, 68.35

Graph #6 Female Trends

Female Trends

Legend:
- ■ Counselor
- ■ Teacher
- □ Coach
- □ Family
- ■ Friend
- ■ 9/11/2001
- ■ War on Terror
- □ TA
- ■ Duty
- ■ Terrorism

Values shown: 20, 21.45, 20, 65.15, 39.45, 42, 42.3, 70.55, 60.55, 58

Graph #7 Overall Trends

Overall Trends
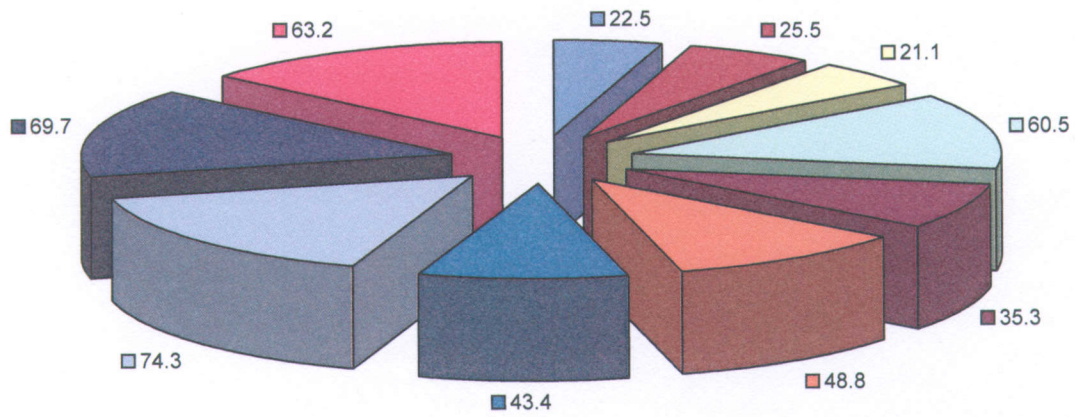
Legend: Counselor, Teacher, Coach, Family, Friend, 9/11/2001, War on Terror, TA, Duty, Terrorism

Values: 22.5, 25.5, 21.1, 60.5, 35.3, 48.8, 43.4, 74.3, 69.7, 63.2

The second part of the electronic survey used dichotomous questions in the form of yes and no responses. Space was provided to explain if the respondent answered yes. This section gave respondents a chance to respond if the events of 9/11 affected their decision to join the Air Force. Overall the effects of 9/11 had a 48.8 percent response rate as being an influence on these recruits to join the Air Force. It had little or no effect on respondents between the ages of 18-20 years old. However, those between 21-25 years old did seem to be effected by 9/11. A sample of the open-ended responses is as follows:

"The events of September 11, 2001 did influence my decision to join the armed forces. But, I had to join a branch that in my mind really stood for something. This way I could also better myself while serving my country and protect it from all who oppose it."

"We need to take out all terrorist and prevent them from doing harm to anyone."

"My father is a paramedic and served on Ground Zero. The events of 9/11 influenced me to try and make a difference and help our great nation against its enemies."

"This was an attack on our country and our people and I felt it necessary to protect both."

"The events of 9/11 made the whole country see that we, the US, have to stand up to terrorist in the world and to do that for me was to join the military."

"After 9/11 out entire country came together to unite and I felt that I would serve more of a purpose by serving my country."

"The events of September 11, 2001 sparked a strong ever burning flame in my heart and soul, a sense and feeling that I needed to participate in the United States Air Force. To do as much as I could to be a part of the solution, a part of the United States Armed Forces."
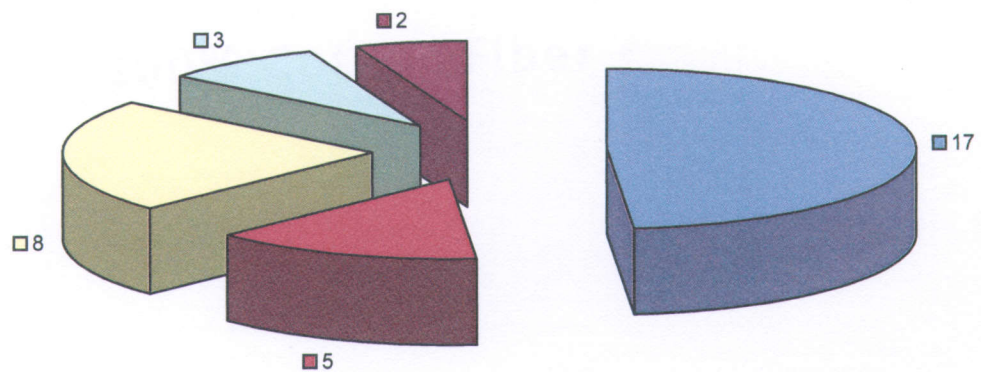
Graph #8 Age Range

Age Range
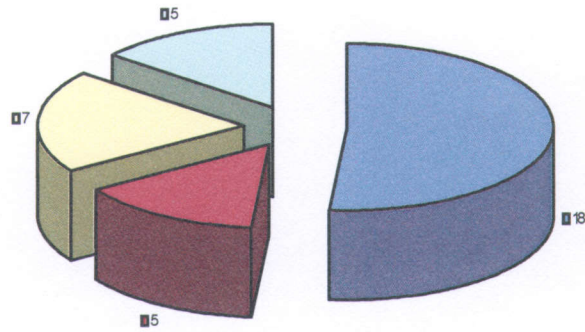
■ Male 18-20	■ Male 21-25	□ Female 18-20	□ Female 21-25

Graph #9 Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity

☐ Caucasian/White   ■ African American   ☐ Hispanic/Latino   ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander   ■ Unspecified

The third and final part of the electronic survey was the demographic data collection. The results are represented in the two previous pie charts. Males between the ages 18 and 20 were the largest group and Caucasian was the largest ethnicity of respondents.

Recruiting Marketing Analysis Results

For the first three months in fiscal year 2005, from October through December, the 314 Air Force Recruiting Squadron covering all of New Jersey and New York City received 5,861 enlisted leads entered in AFRISS. These leads were people between the ages of 18 and 28 interested in gaining information about joining the Air Force. This total number of leads encompassed all forms of advertisement, promotions, school lists and those entered by the recruiter.

The top enlisted lead sources covering this time period are listed below:

Number of leads	Source of lead
1109	School Visits
365	Recruiter Generated Mail
224	Influencer (Parent, Teacher, etc)
183	Internet (Search Engine)
173	Television Ads
168	Center of Influence (Events w/ Recruiters)
163	Telephone Prospecting
94	Booth/Career Fairs
86	Recruiter Zone Canvassing
82	Print ads
18	AF Promotional Items
3	Marketing Equipment
2	Radio Advertisement

USAF Enlisted Leads for New Jersey and NYC
(October-December 2004)
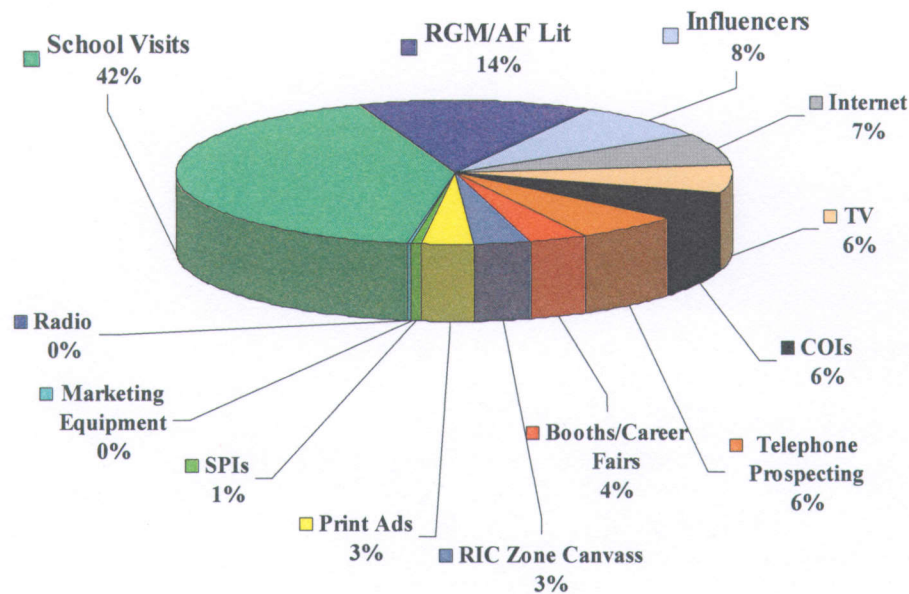
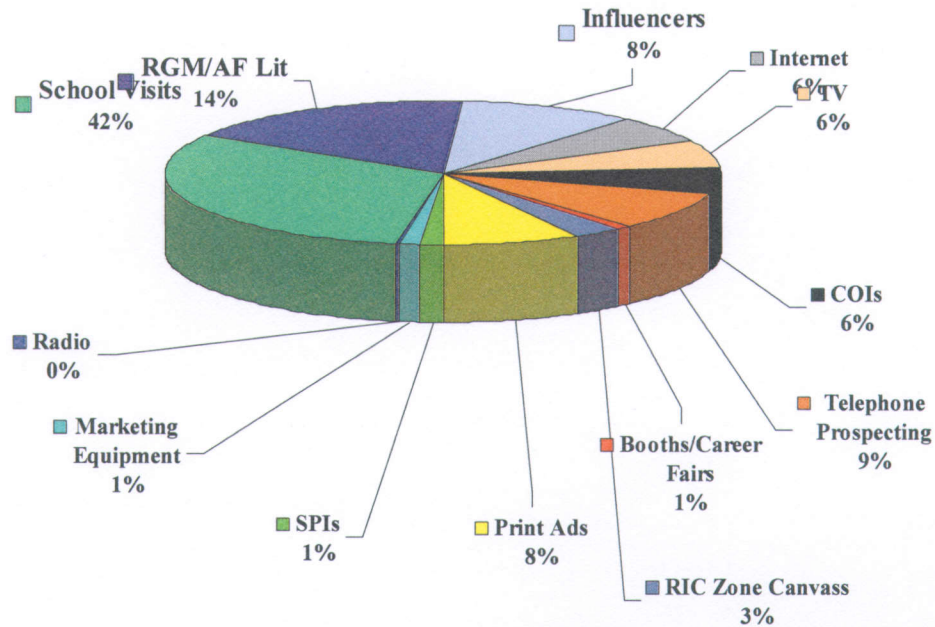**Graph #10 Leads for Oct-Dec '04**

Based on where the leads came from during this time period, the 314 Recruiting Squadron focused its marketing efforts on influencer events, student centered school visits, i.e. base tours, Center of Influence's civic leader events, community speaking engagements and explored opportunities to get literature and recruiter generated mail out in the communities.

From January through March of 2005, the 314 Air Force Recruiting Squadron

received 5,431 enlisted leads entered in AFRISS. These leads were also people between

the ages of 18 and 28 who are interested in gaining information about joining the Air

Force. This total number of leads encompassed all forms of advertisement, promotions,

school lists and those entered by the recruiter.

The top enlisted lead sources for this time period are listed below:

Number of leads	Source of lead
845	School Visits
472	Recruiter Generated Mail
279	Influencer (Parent, Teacher, etc)
235	Internet (Search Engine)
224	Television Ads
171	Center of Influence (Events w/ Recruiters)
167	Telephone Prospecting
164	Booth/Career Fairs
70	Recruiter Zone Canvassing
33	Print ads
30	AF Promotional Items
23	Marketing Equipment
10	Radio Advertisement

USAF Enlisted Leads for New Jersey and NYC
(January-March 2005)

Graph #11 Leads for Jan-Mar '05

Based on where the leads came from during this time period, the 314 Recruiting Squadron continued to focus its marketing efforts on influencer events, student centered school visits, i.e. base tours, Center of Influence's civic leader events, community speaking engagements and explored opportunities to get literature and recruiter generated mail out in the communities.
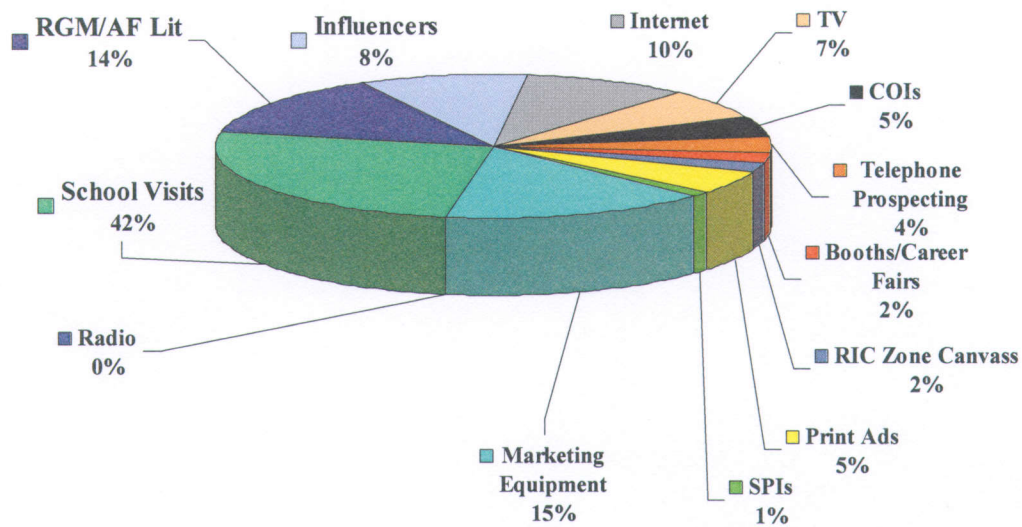
From April through June of 2005, the 314 Air Force Recruiting Squadron

received 3,267 enlisted leads entered in AFRISS. These leads were also people between

the ages of 18 and 28 interested in gaining information about joining the Air Force. This

total number of leads encompassed all forms of advertisement, promotions, school lists

and those entered by the recruiter.

The top enlisted lead sources for this time period are listed below:

Number of leads	Source of lead
613	School Visits
368	Recruiter Generated Mail
333	Influencer (Parent, Teacher, etc)
232	Internet (Search Engine)
281	Television Ads
156	Center of Influence (Events w/ Recruiters)
125	Telephone Prospecting
113	Booth/Career Fairs
85	Recruiter Zone Canvassing
54	Print ads
49	AF Promotional Items
31	Marketing Equipment
3	Radio Advertisement

USAF Enlisted Leads for New Jersey and NYC
(April-June 2005)

Graph #12 Leads for Apr-Jun '05

Based on where the leads came from during this time period, the 314 Recruiting Squadron continued to focus its marketing efforts on influencer events, student centered school visits, i.e. base tours, Center of Influence's civic leader events, community speaking engagements and explored opportunities to get literature and recruiter generated mail out in the communities.
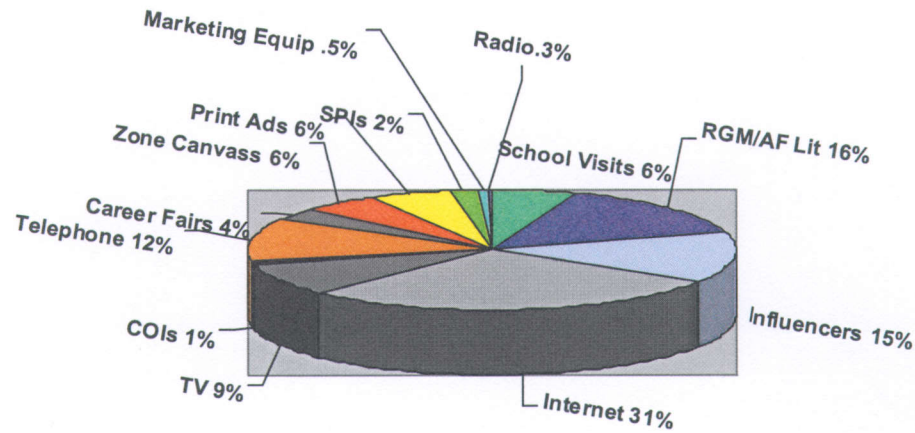
From July through September of 2005, the 314 Air Force Recruiting Squadron received 2,147 enlisted leads entered in AFRISS. These leads were also people between the ages of 18 and 28 interested in gaining information about joining the Air Force. This total number of leads encompassed all forms of advertisement, promotions, school lists and those entered by the recruiter.

The top enlisted lead sources for this time period are listed below:

Number of leads	Source of lead
667	School Visits
342	Recruiter Generated Mail
316	Influencer (Parent, Teacher, etc)
268	Internet (Search Engine)
199	Television Ads
129	Center of Influence (Events w/ Recruiters)
125	Telephone Prospecting
122	Booth/Career Fairs
75	Recruiter Zone Canvassing
45	Print ads
20	AF Promotional Items
11	Marketing Equipment
8	Radio Advertisement

USAF Enlisted Leads for New Jersey and NYC
(July-September 2005)

Marketing Equip .5% Radio.3%

Print Ads 6% SPls 2%

Zone Canvass 6% School Visits 6% RGM/AF Lit 16%

Career Fairs 4%

Telephone 12%

Influencers 15%

COls 1%

TV 9%

Internet 31%

Graph #13 Leads for Jul-Sep '05

Based on where the leads came from during this time period, the 314 Recruiting
Squadron continued to focus its marketing efforts on influencer events, student centered
school visits, i.e. base tours, Center of Influence's civic leader events, community
speaking engagements and explored opportunities to get literature and recruiter generated
mail out in the communities.

The amount of leads received continued to decline throughout the 2005 fiscal
year. A reduction in Air Force enlistment goals and a focused effort on targeting specific
career areas were major factors in the drop of leads. The 314 Recruiting Squadron
continued to make its goal of applicants entering the Air Force despite these drops. In
order to propel more leads it stressed to recruiters the need for continued contact with
influencers through whatever means necessary and emphasized the importance of

conducting more Center of Influence events with parents, teachers and community leaders.

Personal Interview Results

The researcher conducted personal interviews with six potential Air Force applicants who voluntary participated while processing for the Air Force at either the New Jersey or New York City Military Processing Station. This research added to information gained through surveys. It also allowed the researcher to ask further questions in each area to gather a more in-depth understanding.

The researcher asked the following questions and discussions were expanded from there:

1. Who in your life was most influential in your decision to join the USAF?

2. Has anyone tried to discourage you from joining the USAF?

3. Where were you on September 11, 2001 when NYC was attacked?

4. Did 9/11 have any affect on the way you feel toward the military?

5. When did you know you wanted to join the USAF?

6. What is the greatest benefit to you joining the USAF?

7. What are your thoughts on terrorism and the USAF fighting against it?

8. Do you know anyone who has served in the military?

9. What are the top three reasons you want to join the USAF?

10. If you were in charge of advertising for the USAF what would you do different?

The responses to the interview questions are summarized in the boxes below:

Frequent Responses	Infrequent Responses
- Family member were most influential in joining military - In school when NYC was attached in September 2001 - Joined because they want a better future and job security - Benefits are travel, job experience and education - Have a family member serving in the military	- Family member was most against joining the military - Benefit is discipline - Joined because of patriotism

Suggestions during the interviews to improve the advertising of the Air Force came after some prodding on what recruits would have liked. One interviewee said he would like to see more Air Force recruiters in the high schools. It was stated that the Army and Marines are at the high schools much more frequently. Another said that people need to see recruiters relate to them through something personal like sports. It was suggested to have recruiters come to football or basketball games at the high schools and community colleges. Another interviewee said their needs to be more base tours for potential recruits. It was recommended to show the advancements and technology the Air Force has so to offer so that civilians would not simply think of ground warfare when they think of joining the military.

Chapter V

Interpretations

Both quantitative and qualitative study results provided data to either substantiate or dispute the hypotheses.

H1: *The decision to serve is affected by the individual's motives and attitudes for enlisting; for example, ability to finance further education or to have an experience of which one can be proud of.*

To determine support for this hypothesis, the researcher stratified the research data specifically to recruits to determine who or what was most influential in them deciding to enlist in the Air Force. Since 74.3 percent said tuition assistance provided by the Air Force was their greatest influence and a sense of duty to their country was second at 69.7 percent, the hypothesis is supported. Individual motives and satisfactions were the largest influencers for this study. Richard Stark from the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington was right in saying "the motivation for most young people to join the military is for the educational opportunity, the opportunity to learn a skill and to be a part of something larger."

H2: *Parents, guidance counselors, and peers are the three greatest influencers in a recruit's decision to join the Air Force.*

Responses to the same questions were examined with stratified data specific to recruit's insight on what were the greatest influencers in their decision. Since family was the third

greatest influence at 60.5 percent that part of the hypothesis was supported. Males ranked

family at 55.8 percent and the females had that influence category at 65.15 percent. Many

of the respondents, male and female, had a relative in the armed forces at one time or

another. But with guidance counselors at 22.5 percent and peers at 25.5 percent, the

hypothesis as a whole was rejected. Guidance counselors help with many student's

career paths, and it is often perceived that young men and woman follow the advice of

their friends. However, these were actually the weakest influence on recruits to join the

Air Force. The analysis of the marketing data in AFRISS showed that guidance

counselors and teachers were 15 percent of the source for the leads out of the New Jersey

and New York City area. Recruiters need to continue to target them, because they will

help with getting known in the community and with prospective recruits and their

parents.

H3: *The events of 9/11 strongly influence those from New Jersey and New York City to*

join the Air Force.

The researcher believed that with the close proximity of where the attacks of 9/11

occurred that many recruits would be affected by the events and influenced to join the

military and fight against terrorism. The study revealed that 63.2 percent think that

terrorism is the biggest problem facing the United States, and 48.8 percent were strongly

influenced by 9/11 to join the Air Force. But since less than half of those surveyed were

not influenced by 9/11, the hypothesis is rejected. In fact, the researcher found during the

personal interviews that since the majority of those enlisting in the Air Force now were

only twelve to fifteen at the time of 9/11 they did not clearly understand the impact the

military could have on such situations. Many also stated that since they did not know anyone personally affected in the attacks, it was not an influence for them at all.

The researcher also explored the following research question: List the top five influencers in your choice to join the Air Force (rank order from 1 being the biggest influence). Those results are summarized below:

1. Education Tuition

2. Serving the United States

3. Stable Career

4. Family Influence

5. Peers currently serving in the military

These top influencers were also confirmed by the personal interviews conducted. Individual motivations were always first, followed by influences by family and friends.

Researcher's Suggestions

As a result of the data collection and interpretation, the researcher suggested that recruiters take a fresh approach to their recruiting and marketing efforts and look at some ideas and alternatives basked on the recruit's feedback. Tuition assistance, a sense of duty, and family influence are the top influences from this study. The researcher recommends that recruiters take this knowledge and focus their promotional and marketing efforts around these themes. Researcher also recommends that additional training be held for recruiters on the best possible ways to sell these benefits and features to recruits and their parents.

Additional research should be implemented to further examine the influences of recruits across the United States. It would be useful to find out if different populations have different interest/motivators to join the Air Force. Also, a larger sample size selected using the scientific method would give data more approximately generalized to the entire recruiting population. Furthermore, this study could serve as a basis to study and compare high school seniors who want to join the Air Force and those that do not. This may help recruiters determine what they are doing wrong and what they can do to improve.

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