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INFORMATION SEEKING ABOUT THE MILITARY BY YOUNG MEN: FINDINGS FROM THE 1989 YOUTH ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY II

Market Research Branch

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Information Seeking About the Military by Young Men: Findings from the 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study II

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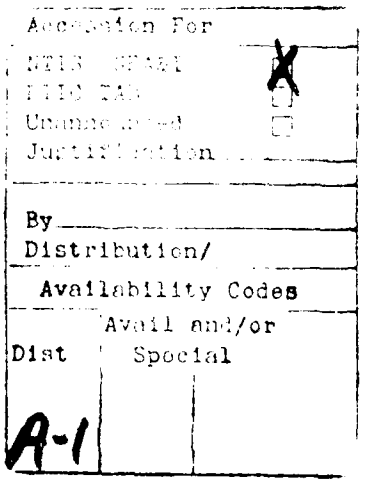

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MEG 2/1/91

This report has been prepared for the Directorate for Accession Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) under Contract Number MDA903-86-C-0066. The Research Triangle Institute has been the contractor for this study with Dale S. DeWitt and Robert M. Bre[illegible], Ph.D., serving as Project Directors.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is one of a series of topical reports for the 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study II (YATS II). YATS II is a study performed by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) under Contract MDA903-86-C-0066 as part of the Joint Market Research Program sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) (OASD[FM&P]).

YATS II is a key component of the Joint Market Research Program, which contributes to policy formulation and development of recruitment marketing strategies. The Military Services provide comments and guidance through the Joint Market Analysis and Research Committee (JMARC). YATS II provides annual data about the propensity of young men and women to enlist in the active Military Services and in the Reserve Components. It also measures awareness of military advertising, contact with recruiters, and knowledge of the financial incentives for enlisting. This report describes information-seeking activities of 16- to 21-year-old young men regarding military service.

The Project Directors for the 1989 YATS II were Dale S. DeWitt and Dr. Robert M. Bray of RTI. Barbara J. York of RTI was responsible for the sampling design, and Ronald Smith coordinated data collection at Amrigon, RTI's subcontractor, for some of the data collection. Teresa F. Gurley completed the typing and clerical requirements, and Richard S. Straw edited the report. Special thanks are due to the tireless efforts of the telephone survey staff in completing the interviews, both at RTI and Amrigon; to Cheryl Whitacre for computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) design and implementation; and to Dr. James R. Chromy for his interest and support. Of course, we are indebted to the respondents who provided the data for the study.

RTI acknowledges the efforts of individuals from the Department of Defense (DoD) in the successful completion of this study. At the Defense Manpower Data Center, Dr. Jerry Lehnus, Market Research Branch, was the principal DoD contact who provided specific direction during all stages of the effort. Bette Mahoney also provided valuable guidance on the report.

In OASD(FM&P), Dr. W. S. Sellman, Director, Accession Policy, and Captain Deborah Rogers provided critical policy guidance. Finally, we would like to thank the executive committee and members of JMARC, who provided continuing support for the study and made valuable suggestions regarding questionnaire modification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the information-seeking activities of 16- to 21-year-old men regarding military service. Data were drawn from the 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study II (YATS II), a 30-minute computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) of over 11,000 16- to 24-year-old American men and women, representing a population of nearly 14.8 million. Of the 11,000 surveyed, approximately 6,000 were men aged 16 to 21.

The principal issues being considered in this report are young men's likelihood of enlistment (propensity) in any of the Department of Defense (DoD) active Military Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps) and their specific efforts to acquire information about serving in the Armed Forces. Three information-seeking activities occurring within the previous 12 months are examined: making a toll-free phone call to any of the Services, mailing a postcard to any of the Services requesting information, and visiting a recruiting station for any of the Services. Other information-seeking activities than these exist, of course, but were not considered because data were not available for them in the current survey.

Analyses examined information seeking in terms of sociodemographic variables including age, race/ethnicity, school status, aptitude, and employment status. Analyses also assessed the association between information seeking and propensity and specifically examined the expressed propensity of information-seekers and the information-seeking activities of those with expressed propensity. Key findings for the study included the following:

- **Overall, 20% of men engaged in one or more information-seeking activities during the past year to learn about the Military.** Visiting a recruiter was the most common activity (13%), followed by mailing a postcard (10%) and making a toll-free telephone call (3%). Few men engaged in more than one information-seeking activity.

- **Information seeking varied with age.** All three activities showed a general pattern of increases with age followed by decreases, although ages varied when the behaviors peaked. Recruiter visits peaked at age 18, postcard mailings peaked at age 17, and phone calls peaked at age 19. Findings were generally consistent with a saliency hypothesis that information seeking would be higher for men who were at a decision point in their lives.

- **There was a large discrepancy between the percentages of men seeking information and those expressing positive propensity among 16- to 17-year-olds, but less discrepancy among 18- to 21-year-olds.** The younger age group was more likely to express propensity, but less likely to seek additional information, whereas the older group was less likely to express propensity, but more likely to actively seek information.

- **Whites and Hispanics reported comparable levels of information seeking. Blacks were more apt to place phone calls or visit recruiters than either whites or Hispanics, suggesting a preference for contacts that involved personal interaction.** Whites showed less discrepancy between their levels of expressed propensity and their levels of information seeking than did Blacks or Hispanics.

- **There were few differences in information-seeking activities across school status categories.** Notable exceptions include more high school seniors mailing postcards and fewer nonsenior high school students visiting a recruiter than the other school status groups. Findings offered partial support for the saliency hypothesis.

- **Information-seeking activities did not differ systematically by the differences in employment status.**

- **Higher and lower aptitude men were equally likely to engage in information-seeking activities about the Military.**

- **Information seeking was more common among men with positive propensity than among men with negative propensity.** The likelihood of engaging in information seeking increased as the level of propensity increased.

- **Few men with positive propensity engaged in information-seeking activities for any of the Services.** This suggests that there may be a need for the Services to either encourage and motivate men to gather information about the Military or determine if they have obtained it from other sources.

- **A high percentage of information-seekers expressed positive propensity.** In general, these percentages (from 55% to 66%) were as high or higher than those reported for any of the sociodemographic groups. These findings suggest that men either *already have* an interest in the Military that leads to information seeking, or the information they obtain *leads to* positive propensity.

- **Men who visited recruiters were not as interested in joining the Military as were those who mailed postcards or made phone calls.** Recruiter visits may be more likely than the other activities to pinpoint perceived unappealing aspects of military life or reveal a young man's lack of qualifications for desired placements. In such cases, men would be less likely to express positive propensity for the Military.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

This report examines the information-seeking activities of 16- to 21-year-old men regarding military service. Data were drawn from the 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study II (YATS II), a 30-minute computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) of over 11,000 16- to 24-year-old American men and women, representing a population of nearly 14.8 million. Of the 11,000 surveyed, approximately 6,000 were men aged 16 to 21.

The principal issues being considered in this report are young men's likelihood of enlistment (propensity) in any of the Department of Defense (DoD) active Military Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps) and their specific efforts to acquire information about serving in those Services. Three information-seeking activities occurring within the previous 12 months are examined:

- Making a toll-free phone call to any of the DoD active Military Services,
- Mailing a postcard to any of the DoD active Military Services, and
- Visiting a recruiting station for any of the DoD active Military Services.

Other information-seeking activities than these exist, of course, such as talking with parents, relatives, friends, or counselors; speaking with a recruiter who has set up a booth in a high school or on a college campus; reading books or magazines; or watching films, documentaries, and the like. This report does not consider these other sources, however, because data were not available for them in the current survey.

The remainder of this chapter describes modern military advertising, conceptual distinctions about information-seeking, and the report's objectives and organization.

B. Modern Military Advertising

Since the end of the military draft in 1973, military advertising has been one of the principal means for the Services to attract quality recruits. Overall, the Military Services have been successful in meeting their recruiting goals in terms of the numbers and quality of recruits. Part of this success can be attributed to the development and use of sound advertising strategies and techniques that accurately reflect the specific needs of the individual Military Services.

Each Military Service has become more sophisticated in using modern technologies and advertising techniques to transmit its message and image to specific audiences. The effectiveness of military advertising has been improved by dividing the population of potential recruits into specific market segments and targeting advertising to appeal to the goals and needs of these segments.

- **The Army** has developed a dual market concept that essentially views high school graduates as either going to college or entering the labor force.

- **The Air Force** generally divides the recruit market into multiple subpopulations such as nonprior service youth, potential officers (Officer Training School, Air Force Academy, and Reserve Officer Training Corps), physicians, and nurses. The Air Force's advertising theme builds on its use of high technologies and its high-caliber training in a very demanding electronic environment.

- **The Navy's** advertising strategy is similar to that of the Air Force in that it also divides the population and offers programs designed to appeal to individuals in different subpopulations.. The Navy's overall theme is based on providing opportunities to develop young men and women for the personal and career challenges of tomorrow in the most technologically advanced fleet in the world.

- **The Marine Corps** directs its advertising at highly motivated 16- to 19-year-old males who are interested in personal challenges and becoming a lifetime member of a close-knit group of professionals.

The Military Services use similar advertising approaches for implementing their recruiting strategies. These strategies include the use of highly competitive and experienced advertising agencies to actually develop and, with the exception of the recruiter's work "on the ground," conduct the advertising programs. These advertising agencies use the most advanced forms of media and published materials to project the Service's message and develop an interest among today's younger age groups to seek information. Military advertising also targets specific radio programs and magazines that have been determined to be popular with younger audiences as a way of attracting interest (Fountain, Bray, Sotolongo, & Waitman, 1990). With the exception of the Air Force, each Military Service also uses targeted television programs as another means of developing interest (the DoD also conducts joint service advertising on television). Finally, an important element of their advertising strategy is the use of direct mail campaigns.

The content of broadcast and direct mail advertising messages often encourages young men and women to seek additional information about the Military Services by establishing direct contact with a recruiter. This contact may be made by mailing postcards. For instance, direct mail campaigns and recruiting posters located in public places often include pre-addressed and postal free information-request cards. Furthermore, both broadcast and direct mail advertising also provide toll-free 1-800 telephone service for information-seekers. Finally, the presence and personal involvement of carefully selected and highly trained recruiters in a wide range of individual

and group activities are also a form of military advertising and personal contact. Indeed, the presence of these individuals and their participation in activities such as visits to high schools and community events constitute a very effective form of advertising and a way to develop an interest in military service among young men. The *measure of effectiveness* for military advertising is initially the level of interest generated among the targeted market segments and, ultimately, the numbers of quality recruits who enlist.

C. Information Seeking

When a young man seeks information by one of the three means being considered in this report, a recruiter will normally be assigned the responsibility of contacting and working with him. The recruiter's goal is to provide the information needed to further develop the candidate's interest in military service. This seemingly simple process can involve many steps moving from the initial information-seeking activity by the young man to responses from the recruiter and to further rounds of information giving and seeking. The goal of this report is to better understand the first part of this process--namely, to identify the prevalence of the three information-seeking activities and to assess their relationship to enlistment propensity.

To understand the connections between information seeking and propensity, it is critical to understand both the conceptual distinctions of the constructs and the nature and limitations of the measures. Conceptually, information seeking may both affect, and be affected by, changes in propensity. Propensity to enlist in a Military Service may influence a young man to seek additional information about the Military. This information in turn may further increase or decrease his level of propensity.

Information-seeking activities were reported in the 1989 YATS II survey for actions completed within the past 12 months before the survey; enlistment propensity was reported at the time of the survey. Thus, it is possible to discuss an association between the two events, but not describe the underlying causal sequence of the two events. Indeed, data from the 1989 YATS II survey do not permit an adequate assessment of the causal process between information seeking and enlistment propensity. For example, a young man may have seen a military advertisement that piques his interest and influences him to call a toll-free number for further information. As a result, he will receive a packet of brochures and be called by a recruiter, all of which might increase his propensity. The data from the survey do not indicate what caused the young man to seek information, nor do they assess what other factors may also play a role in changing his level of propensity.

Information seeking can also be used as a measure of interest, especially when related to a young man's stated intentions. Information seeking is a quantifiable activity and requires some level of effort and energy; propensity, on the other hand, is a

verbal indication of intentions to act and is subject to be changed without a similar level of effort. It is possible, therefore, that fewer men would have reported undertaking information-seeking activities than would have expressed propensity. It is also probable that those who did take the actual step of seeking information would have had a higher level of interest in military service than those who had not sought information. Given that information seeking requires varying levels of energy and effort, it is likely that there may be qualitative differences among the activities. For example, because visiting a recruiter requires more effort than mailing a postcard, a visit may be more indicative of seriousness of interest while a postcard may indicate only curiosity. Unfortunately, our data do not address these issues.

Finally, higher levels of information seeking may be viewed as an indicator of advertising success; conversely, lower levels may be reflective of advertising that has not reached the intended population. Similarly, engaging in different activities may depend upon the ability of a young man to engage in an activity. For example, a young man may not have transportation to get to a recruiting station. Also, advertising displays with postcards or toll-free phone numbers may not be readily available, for instance, in high school hallways.

D. Report Objectives

This report presents selected findings from the 1989 YATS II survey concerning information-seeking activities and enlistment propensity for the active Military Services among men aged 16 to 21. The specific objectives of this report are to:

- Assess the prevalence of the following information-seeking activities: making toll-free phone calls, mailing postcards/coupons, and visiting recruiting stations;
- Assess levels of information seeking and propensity among selected sociodemographic groups;
- Examine the propensity to enlist among information-seekers; and
- Examine the prevalence of information seeking among those with propensity to enlist.

Furthermore, because attitudes and levels of interest for military service have been shown to vary in relation to age, race/ethnicity, school status, employment status, and aptitude (Bray, Curtin, Theisen, & York, 1989; Bray et al., 1990; Davis & Sheatsley, 1985; Hosek, Peterson, & Eden, 1986; Orvis & Gahart, 1989), information seeking and enlistment propensity are described in terms of these variables.

E. Report Organization

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 describes the measurement approach for the key variables used in this report and also includes a summary of the sociodemographic characteristics of the YATS population.
- Chapter 3 presents findings of the information-seeking activities of men and their propensity by age, race/ethnicity and age, school status and age, employment status and school status, and aptitude and school status.
- Chapter 4 describes propensity and information-seeking activities for all young men and for those predicted to have higher aptitude. The analyses provided are of the information-seeking activities of those with various levels of propensity, as well as the propensity of information-seekers.

Appendix A describes the methodology used to generate the data, including the sampling design and data collection method. Appendix B contains supplementary data tables.

2. MEASUREMENT APPROACH AND YATS POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter describes our measurement approach for this report and YATS population characteristics. Measures are defined and described for composite and Service-level propensity, information seeking activities, youth aptitude, school status, and age groups. YATS population characteristics are presented including the distributions of sociodemographic variables of age, race/ethnicity, school status, and employment status. Because employment status for men aged 16 to 21 is often predicated on their school status, employment status is classified by school status.

A. Measurement Approach

1. Composite Active and Service-Level Propensity

Propensity for active military service was assessed by asking the youths a series of questions concerning the likelihood of their serving in the active DoD Services. Specifically, the youths were asked the following questions:

> Now, I'm going to read you a list of several *things* which young men your age might be doing in the next few years. For each one I read, please tell me how likely it is that you will be doing that.
>
> How likely is it that you will be serving in the _____ (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force)? Would you say
>
> - Definitely,
> - Probably,
> - Probably not, or
> - Definitely not?

Positive propensity is defined as having answered "definitely" or "probably" to any of the four Services; *negative propensity* is defined as having answered "probably not," "definitely not," "don't know," or "refuse" to any of the questions.

The Service-specific propensity items for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force form the measure of composite active propensity used in this report. Composite active propensity is defined as the most positive response given to any of the four questions measuring enlistment interest in one of the individual Services. For example, if a respondent indicated he would "probably" enlist in the Air Force but would "probably not" enlist in any of the other Service branches, he was assigned a value of "probably enlist" on the composite active propensity measure. The composite propensity

measure was formed the same as Service propensity measures: Respondents who were assigned enlistment values of "definitely" and "probably" were considered to have *positive composite propensity*, and respondents who were assigned values of "probably not," "definitely not," "don't know," or "refuse" were considered to have *negative composite propensity*.

2. Information-Seeking Activities

Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine if they sought information about the Military and, if so, through what means. Three information-seeking activities were included in the questionnaire: toll free phone calls, postcard mailings, and on-site visits to a recruiting center. The questions posed to the respondents for these three activities followed this format:

> Within the last 12 months, have you (made a toll free call/sent a postcard or coupon/visited a recruiting station) for information about the Military?
>
> - Yes
> - No.

Youths who reported they had engaged in any of the three activities were asked which Service(s) they contacted. Responses were coded in the order they were reported (first-mentioned response, second-mentioned response, and so on) and Service-specific codes were developed to indicate which of the four active Services were mentioned.

3. Youth Aptitude

Higher aptitude military recruits generally are defined as those who score in Categories I-IIIA (percentiles 50-99) on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). AFQT scores were unavailable for much of the YATS population because most had not taken the test. In this report, therefore, we define aptitude according to the predicted AFQT approach developed by Orvis and Gahart (1989), which estimates AFQT categories for youths.

Predicted AFQT categories were determined for this report by the application of a series of equations to estimate the probability that an individual would score at or above the 50th percentile on the test. Included in the equations is information such as sociodemographic characteristics, number and type of high school math courses completed, and employment history. The baseline for these equations was developed using the men interviewed during the 1976 to 1980 fall administrations of YATS who subsequently took the AFQT.

For the analyses presented in this report, those who were predicted to fall in the 50 to 99 percentiles were considered to have *higher aptitude*, while those predicted to be in percentiles below 50 were considered to have *lower aptitude*.

4. School Status

The measure of school status is a five-level variable that characterizes the educational attainment of the YATS population. The five levels are:

- *Postsecondary students*--high school graduates who are currently enrolled or are planning to enroll in a college or vocational school;
- *High school graduates*--those who have received a high school diploma but are no longer students;
- *High school seniors*--students currently enrolled in the 12th grade;
- *Nonsenior high school students*--students not yet in their senior year; and
- *Noncompleters*--those who did not, or will not, graduate from high school and are currently not enrolled in any school (this category includes those with GED or ABE certificates).

The definition of school status for this report is identical to that used in previous YATS propensity reports (e.g., Bray et al., 1990).

5. Age Groups

Each respondent was asked to give his age. For discussion purposes in this report, the 16- to 21-year-old respondents have been divided into two age groups:

- *Younger age group*: 16- and 17-year-olds, and
- *Older age group*: 18- to 21-year-olds.

Previous analyses of YATS data have indicated that it is important to tabulate other variables, including socioemographic variables, along these age categories (e.g., Bray et al., 1990). Throughout this report, these two age groups are compared as to their information-seeking activity levels.

B. YATS Population Characteristics

The following sections describe the sociodemographic characteristics of the men by their age distribution. Because of the close correlation between employment status and

school status, the employment status categories are presented by both age and school status.

1. Age

As shown in Figure 2.1, nearly half of the YATS population were 16 to 17 years old (24% and 23%, respectively, for a total of 47%). The percentage of men in the remaining age groups declined as age increased.

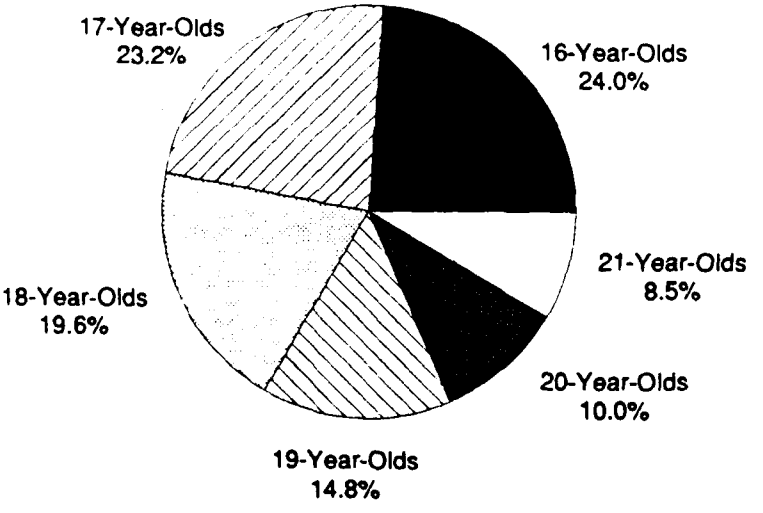
2. Race/Ethnicity by Age

Figure 2.2 demonstrates that the distribution of race/ethnicity is virtually the same for the younger and older age groups. In the younger age group, 74.5% were white, 10.6% were Hispanic, and 10.2% were Black. Among the older age group, 73.4% were white, 13.5% were Hispanic, and 10.4% were Black. Other races/ethnic groups totaled 4.7% of the 16- to 17-year-olds and 2.8% of the 18- to 21-year-olds. The "other" categories were dropped from further analyses in this report due to the small sample size.

3. School Status by Age

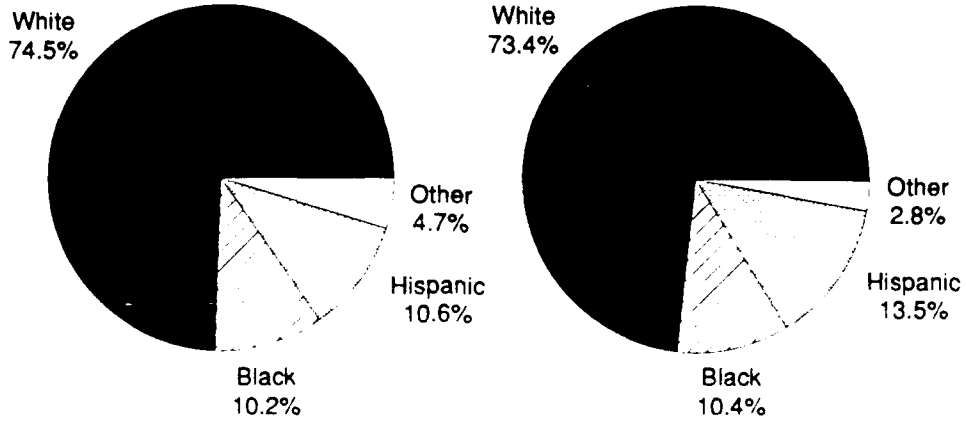
Figure 2.3 illustrates the school status of the total YATS population by age groups. Among the younger age group, 82.9% were in high school (51.2% were

Figure 2.1 YATS Age Distribution



Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Figure 2.2 Race/Ethnicity Distribution by Age



Note. Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

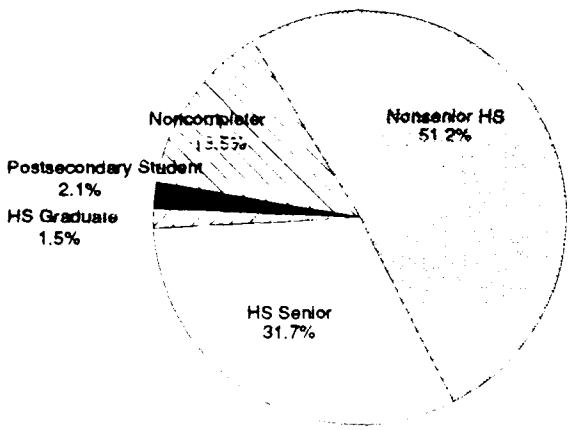
nonseniors and 31.7% were seniors). A total of 13.5% were noncompleters, while 2.1% were postsecondary students and 1.5% were high school graduates.

Among the older age group, 35.6% were high school graduates and 29.7% were postsecondary students. The next highest category was noncompleters (23.1%), followed by high school seniors (9.7%) and nonsenior high school students (1.9%).

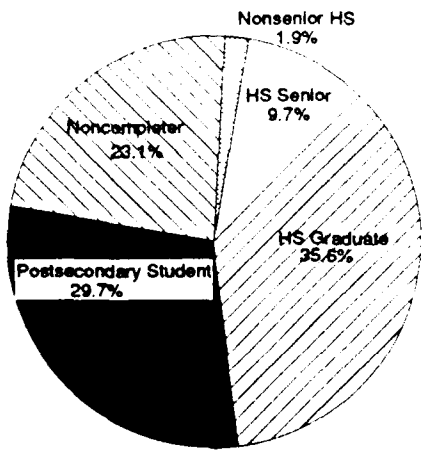
4. Employment Status by School Status and Age

Table 2.1 presents the data on employment status by school status and age. Among the 16- to 17-year-olds, those employed full time were most likely to have graduated from high school (53.1%) or were noncompleters (21.2%). These percentages were even higher for the older age group (76.5% and 54.3%, respectively).

Figure 2.3 School Status by Age



16- to 17-Year-Olds



18- to 21-Year-Olds

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding. Postsecondary students are high school graduates currently attending college or a business/vocational school. High school graduates are men who are not students and have graduated from high school. Noncompleters are men who are not high school students and have not graduated from high school.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Among the total YATS population, employment levels varied dramatically by age: Only 9% of the younger age group were employed full time compared to 48.6% of the older age group, while 25.7% of the younger age group were not employed and not seeking work compared to 10.4% of the older age group. Also, 37.8% of the younger age group were employed part time and 27.5% were not employed but were looking for work.

Table 2.1 Employment Status by School Status and Age

Age/school status[a]	Employment status: Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed, looking	Not employed, not looking
16-17				
Postsecondary student	14.1 (5.5)	38.4 (8.4)	29.8 (8.7)	17.7 (6.6)
High school graduate	53.1 (9.9)	29.4 (9.4)	11.7 (5.8)	5.8 (5.6)
High school senior	6.9 (1.1)	45.8 (2.1)	21.2 (1.8)	26.1 (1.8)
Nonsenior high school student	5.5 (0.7)	35.4 (1.5)	31.5 (1.5)	27.6 (1.4)
Noncompleter	21.2 (2.6)	29.4 (2.9)	28.5 (3.1)	21.0 (2.6)
Total	9.0 (0.7)	37.8 (1.1)	27.5 (1.1)	25.7 (1.0)
18-21				
Postsecondary student	26.1 (1.9)	40.0 (2.0)	13.6 (1.4)	20.3 (1.7)
High school graduate	76.5 (1.5)	10.4 (1.1)	10.5 (1.1)	2.6 (0.6)
High school senior	8.9 (2.0)	43.4 (3.6)	29.4 (3.3)	18.3 (2.7)
Nonsenior high school student	12.7 (5.5)	29.2(17.1)	42.9 (7.6)	15.1 (4.8)
Noncompleter	54.3 (2.4)	18.0 (2.0)	21.6 (2.0)	6.0 (1.1)
Total	48.6 (1.1)	24.5 (1.0)	16.5 (0.8)	10.4 (0.7)

Note. Tabled values are row percentages with standard errors in parentheses.

[a]Postsecondary students are high school graduates currently attending college or a business/vocational school. High school graduates are respondents who are not students and have graduated from high school. Noncompleters are respondents who are not high school students and have not graduated from high school.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

3. INFORMATION SEEKING AND SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter describes the information-seeking activities of 16- to 21-year-old men. The first section examines the prevalence of three information-seeking activities (phone calls, postcards, or visits) and includes a discussion of the distribution of men who engaged in one, two, or three of the activities. With this as a foundation, the remainder of the chapter examines the three information-seeking activities and composite active propensity by selected sociodemographic characteristics. These characteristics include age, race/ethnicity, school status, employment status, and aptitude.

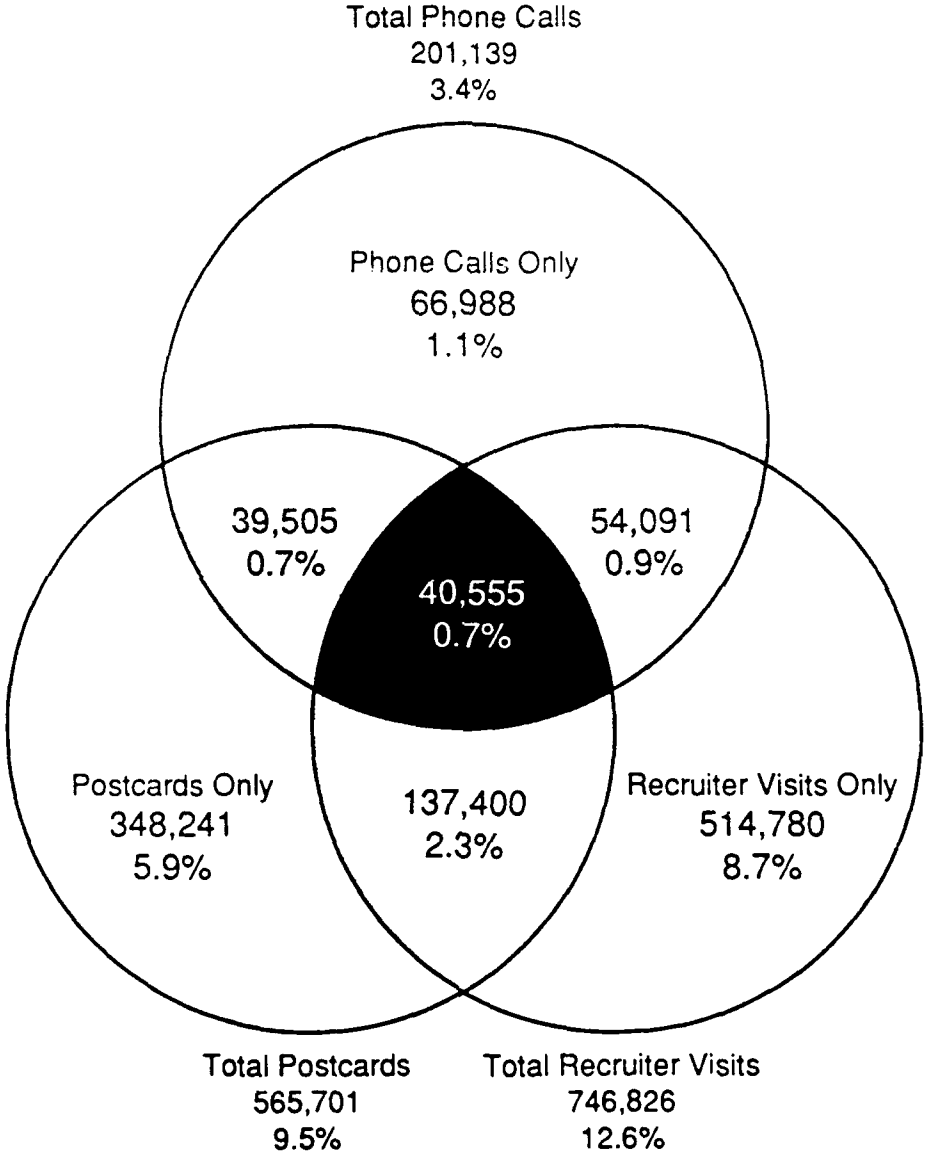
A. Prevalence and Distribution of Information Seeking

Figure 3.1 shows the prevalence, distribution, and overlap of the three information-seeking activities. Both population values and percentages of men in the YATS population are presented. Values outside of the circles indicate the total prevalence of information seeking for each activity. For example, 12.6% visited a recruiter. Values in the white portion inside the circles indicate the prevalence of seeking information through that specific activity alone. For example, 8.7% visited a recruiter only. Values in the gray shaded sections indicate the prevalence of those who sought information through two activities. For example, 2.3% of the men both visited a recruiter and mailed a postcard in the past year. Finally, values in the black central section of the figure indicate the prevalence of those who engaged in all three activities (0.7%).

Several findings about the three information-seeking activities emerge from this figure. Summing all of the percentages from within the three circles shows that 20.3% of men engaged in one or more of the activities during the past year. Overall, 12.6% of men (over half of the information-seekers) visited a recruiting station, 9.5% sent in postcards or coupons, and 3.4% made toll-free phone calls. Excluding men who sought information through multiple activities, 8.7% visited a recruiting station only, 5.9% sent in postcards or coupons only, and 1.1% made toll-free phone calls only.

Figure 3.1 also shows that few men engaged in more than one information-seeking activity. Overall, only 4.6% of all men sought information through two or through all three activities. This compares to 15.7% who sought information through recruiter visits only, mailing postcards only, or making phone calls only (i.e., omitting those who engaged in more than one activity). Of the small percentages who did engage in more than one activity, visiting a recruiter and mailing a postcard were most common (2.3%). Only 0.9% both visited a recruiting station and placed a phone call; and only 0.7% both made a phone call and sent in a postcard or coupon. An additional 0.7% of all men reported seeking information through all three activities.

Figure 3.1 Distribution and Overlap of Information-Seeking Activities



Note. Entries are estimates of the population counts and percentages of young men aged 16 to 21 who have engaged in one or more information-seeking activities. Each cell is independent. Overall, 20.3% of the young men in the YATS population sought information about military service.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Figure 3.1 illustrates rather clearly that relatively few men made toll-free phone calls, and of those who did, more than half sought information through one or both of the other activities. Also, more than one third of those who mailed postcards or coupons also sought information by engaging in one or both of the other activities.

Thus, of the activities considered, visiting a recruiter was the most common (whether considered alone or in combination with other activities) and making a toll-free phone call was the least common. What is not clear from the data is whether this pattern of activities indicates strong preferences among men for face-to-face contact provided by recruiters or perhaps just greater awareness of recruiters than of toll-free telephone numbers or postcards as sources of information.

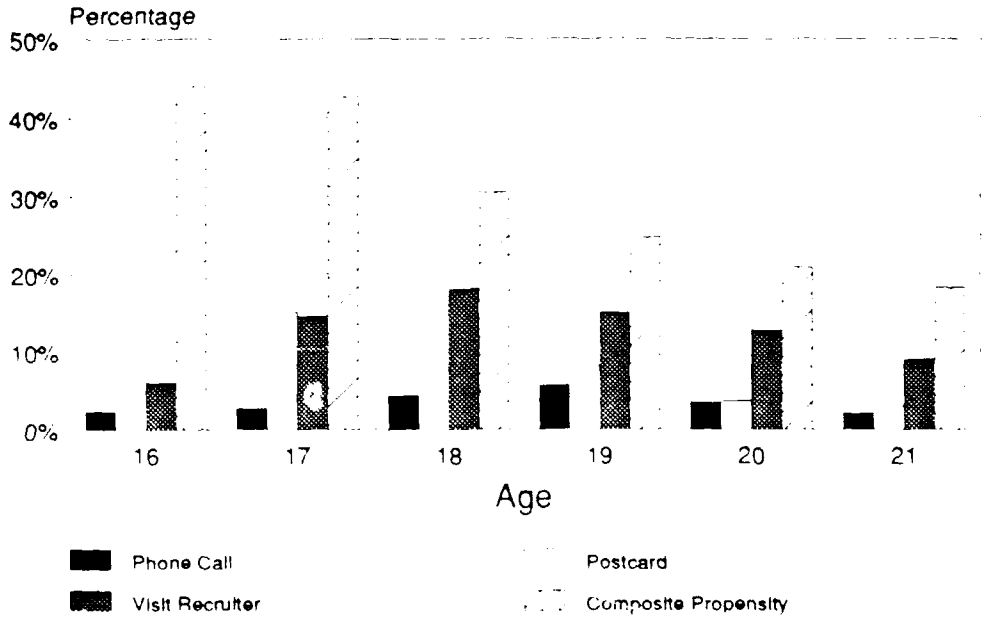
B. Information Seeking by Age

Among 16- to 21-year-old men, propensity for military service tends to decline with increasing age (e.g., Bray et al., 1990). These data suggest that information seeking about the military may also vary with age, but not necessarily following the same pattern as propensity. We hypothesized that information seeking would vary according to the importance or salience of the information to individuals. In general, the saliency of information about the Military should be higher for men who are at a decisionmaking point in their lives; consequently, participation in information-seeking activities should be higher for such individuals.

Figure 3.2 shows for each age the percentages of men who engaged in the three information-seeking activities along with their composite propensity. Differences in information seeking due to age are apparent in the data. All three activities showed a general pattern of increases with age followed by decreases, although they differed in the ages when the behaviors peaked. Recruiter visits peaked at age 18 (with highest occurrences at ages 17 to 19); postcard mailings peaked at age 17 (with highest occurrences at ages 17 and 18); and phone calls peaked at age 19 (with highest occurrences at ages 18 to 20). These data are generally consistent with a saliency hypothesis and suggest that men aged 17, 18, or 19 years were relatively more likely to seek information about military service than those aged 16, 20, or 21. For men aged 16, finding out about the Military was less likely to be salient than for 17- to 19-year-olds because they still had 1 or 2 years of high school remaining before they would face a decision about a job or further schooling. Men aged 20 or 21 may also have been less likely to seek information than those aged 17 to 19 because they were more likely to have already decided on a career path other than military service.

Even though information seeking was greatest for men aged 17 to 19, the saliency hypothesis suggests that individuals of all ages who seek information do it because it is an important activity for them. At the very least, information seeking requires individuals to take positive steps to explore the alternative of military service.

Figure 3.2 Information-Seeking Activities by Age Level



Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men. Estimates are based on variables for which there may be missing information.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Table 3.1 presents data similar to those in Figure 3.2 except they are classified by age groups. This classification of data both confirms the findings noted above and offers additional insights about information seeking. Overall, the older age group was significantly more likely than the younger age group to make phone calls (4.2% vs. 2.5%) and visit recruiters (14.7% vs 10.2%). Conversely, a higher percentage of the younger age group mailed a postcard for information than did the older age group (11.3% vs 8.0%). The younger age group was equally as likely to mail a postcard as to visit a recruiter; the older age group was less apt to mail a postcard than to visit a recruiter.

An additional finding in Figure 3.2 and Table 3.1 concerns the relative levels of propensity and information-seeking activities. As shown, there was a wide divergence between composite propensity and information seeking among those who were younger, which tended to narrow among those who were older. For example, there was a 33.2% difference between recruiter visits and propensity of 16- to 17-year-olds compared to a

Table 3.1 Information-Seeking Activities by Age

Age	Estimated population count	Activity: Phone call	Activity: Postcard	Activity: Visit	Composite propensity
16-17	2,793	2.5 (0.4)	11.3 (0.8)	10.2 (0.7)	43.4 (1.2)
18-21	3,137	4.2 (0.4)	8.0 (0.6)	14.7 (0.8)	25.1 (1.0)
Total	5,931	3.4 (0.3)	9.5 (0.5)	12.6 (0.5)	33.7 (0.8)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Tabled values are cell percentages of men who reported engaging in each activity. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

10.4% difference for 18- to 21-year-olds. This observation may be partly explained by differences in the level of effort required of individuals to engage in these behaviors. Verbal expression of positive propensity requires little effort and consequently occurs more often, whereas information seeking requires more effort and consequently occurs less often.

Stated another way, these data suggest that the younger age group was likely to express an intention to enlist, but not act on that intention by seeking additional supporting information about the Military. The older age group, on the other hand, was less likely to indicate propensity to enlist, but more likely to act on that intention by seeking information.

C. Information Seeking by Race/Ethnicity and Age

This section builds on the prior analysis of age differences and examines information seeking by race/ethnicity and age. Table 3.2 presents these data for the three information-seeking activities along with composite propensity. Overall, Hispanics and whites engaged in comparable levels of information seeking. Blacks, on the other hand, were more apt to make phone calls and visit recruiters. For example, 16.4% of Blacks visited a recruiter in the past 12 months compared to 11.9% of whites. A similar pattern of differences occurred for Blacks and Hispanics, although it was not statistically significant.

The overall difference between Blacks and the other racial/ethnic groups is accounted for by the information seeking of the older age group. For this age group, Blacks were significantly more likely to make phone calls and visit recruiters than were

Table 3.2 Information-Seeking Activities by Race/Ethnicity and Age

Age and race/ethnicity	Estimated population count	Activity			Composite propensity
		Phone call	Postcard	Visit	
16-17					
White	2,075	2.5 (0.4)	10.5 (0.8)	9.8 (0.8)	37.9 (1.3)
Black	284	2.4 (0.9)	13.9 (2.5)	10.5 (2.1)	61.7 (3.6)
Hispanic	294	2.6 (1.0)	12.7 (2.7)	12.7 (2.8)	63.7 (3.8)
18-21					
White	2,295	3.2 (0.4)	7.3 (0.7)	13.8 (0.9)	20.1 (1.0)
Black	325	9.2 (1.9)	9.6 (1.8)	21.6 (2.8)	47.6 (3.6)
Hispanic	422	4.3 (1.4)	9.7 (2.1)	14.5 (2.3)	33.8 (3.3)
Total					
White	4,370	2.8 (0.3)	8.8 (0.5)	11.9 (0.6)	28.6 (0.8)
Black	608	6.0 (1.1)	11.6 (1.6)	16.4 (1.8)	54.2 (2.6)
Hispanic	716	3.6 (0.9)	10.9 (1.7)	13.8 (1.8)	46.1 (2.7)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Tabled values are cell percentages of men who reported engaging in each activity. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

whites or Hispanics. For the younger age group, on the other hand, Blacks did not differ significantly from Hispanics or whites in making toll-free phone calls, mailing postcards, or visiting recruiters as information-seeking activities.

Overall, propensity for Blacks (54.2%) and Hispanics (46.1%) was more than one and a half times higher than that for whites (28.6%). This difference was more pronounced among the younger age group than the older. Of greater interest is the discrepancy among racial/ethnic groups between the levels of propensity and information-seeking activities. For both younger and older age groups, a consistent pattern appears: Whites showed a substantially smaller discrepancy than Blacks or Hispanics. For example, there is a 16.7% difference between recruiter visits and propensity of whites compared to a 37.8% difference for Blacks and a 32.3% difference for Hispanics.

In summary, the data indicate that Blacks (at least for the older age group) were more likely than whites or Hispanics to make phone calls or visit recruiters, activities that rely on personal interaction. This finding may indicate that Blacks considered enlistment more seriously as an attractive career choice than either Hispanics or

whites. Despite the greater percentage of phone calls and recruiter visits by Blacks, information-seeking activities of whites were much more consistent with their level of propensity than were the same activities for Blacks or Hispanics.

D. Information Seeking by School Status and Age

The discussion in section 3B used the concept of saliency to examine differences in information seeking with age. Because school status is closely related to age, the same logic used there applies to our discussion here. In brief, we would expect information-seeking activities to vary by school status because school status tends to define points for making decisions or choices about career actions. In general, nonseniors would not have been likely to pursue information seeking about the Military because they had not reached a decision juncture. More high school seniors and high school graduates could have been expected to seek information about the Military than postsecondary students. They were more likely to have been examining job or schooling options, thus making information about military service more relevant. Postsecondary students, in turn, would have been less apt to seek information than noncompleters who may have perceived fewer viable employment alternatives to military service.

Table 3.3 presents data on school status and age group. Composite propensity for these subpopulations is located in the far right column of the table. These data offer some, although by no means complete, support for the saliency hypothesis. Data in the total rows show that high school seniors were more likely to mail postcards for information (17.2%) relative to the other school groups (which range from 6.6% to 9.1%). For recruiter visits, nonseniors (6.4%) were significantly lower than all other school status groups, which were similar to one another (12.4% to 17.2%). There were no notable differences in the percentages of school groups who made phone calls.

Among the older age group, more high school seniors visited recruiters (22.1%), and more seniors and nonseniors in high school reported mailing postcards (both 15.3%) than other school status groups. With the exception of nonsenior high school students, men in each school status group were more apt to visit recruiters than mail postcards.

Among the younger age group, few significant differences were noted between those who mailed postcards and those who visited recruiters. Few differences were noted with respect to phone calls. No high school graduates in this age group, however, mentioned making a toll-free phone call for information. Unfortunately, the large standard errors (due to small sample size) for some of the data limit drawing further inferences about this group.

Nonsenior high school students recorded the highest levels of propensity; however, they were considerably less apt to visit a recruiter than the other groups and were only equally likely to engage in mailing postcards or making phone calls for information.

Table 3.3 Information-Seeking Activities by School Status and Age

Age/school status[a]	Estimated population count	Activity: Phone call	Activity: Postcard	Activity: Visit	Composite propensity
16-17					
Postsecondary students	59	1.2 (1.2)	12.0 (5.2)	13.8 (5.2)	20.8 (7.5)
High school graduates	42	++ ++	5.9 (3.5)	23.2 (9.1)	19.9 (7.0)
High school seniors	886	3.1 (0.7)	17.8 (1.7)	15.6 (1.4)	36.9 (2.1)
Nonsenior high school students	1,428	2.4 (0.5)	7.4 (0.9)	6.2 (0.8)	48.7 (1.6)
Noncompleters	378	2.3 (0.7)	11.4 (2.0)	11.1 (1.9)	45.1 (3.2)
18-21					
Postsecondary students	932	3.5 (0.8)	6.3 (0.9)	13.2 (1.3)	14.3 (1.4)
High school graduates	1,115	4.2 (0.7)	7.1 (1.0)	15.2 (1.3)	19.8 (1.5)
High school seniors	304	4.7 (1.4)	15.3 (2.5)	22.1 (3.0)	44.6 (3.6)
Nonsenior high school students	60	4.7 (3.2)	15.3 (5.9)	12.0 (5.5)	59.2 (7.4)
Noncompleters	726	4.7 (0.9)	7.9 (1.3)	13.1 (1.5)	36.0 (2.3)
Total					
Postsecondary students	991	3.3 (0.8)	6.6 (0.9)	13.2 (1.3)	14.6 (1.4)
High school graduates	1,157	4.1 (0.7)	7.1 (0.9)	15.5 (1.3)	19.8 (1.5)
High school seniors	1,190	3.5 (0.6)	17.2 (1.4)	17.2 (1.3)	38.8 (1.8)
Nonsenior high school students	1,489	2.4 (0.5)	7.7 (0.9)	6.4 (0.8)	49.1 (1.6)
Noncompleters	1,104	3.9 (0.6)	9.1 (1.1)	12.4 (1.2)	39.1 (1.9)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Tabled values are cell percentages of men who reported engaging in each activity. Standard errors are in parentheses.

++ Estimate rounds to zero; standard error, therefore, cannot be computed.

[a]Postsecondary students are high school graduates currently attending college or a business/vocational school. High school graduates are men who are not students and have graduated from high school. Noncompleters are men who are not high school students and have not graduated from high school.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

The propensity among high school seniors was among the highest, and information seeking was relatively high (for mailing postcards and visiting recruiters) as well. Postsecondary students and high school graduates exhibited propensities that were roughly comparable to the level of recruiter visits. This finding may have occurred, at least in part, by the older age group focusing more precisely on career choices. Perhaps those who were considering the military option sought information, and others who had decided against enlistment were no longer curious and did not seek information. The result is a closer relationship between information seeking and propensity. Overall, the data offered only partial support for the saliency hypothesis. As expected, nonseniors

were relatively unlikely to engage in information-seeking activities. Seniors were more likely than postsecondary students to visit recruiters and to mail postcards, but not more likely to make phone calls. In contrast to expectations, information-seeking activities of high school graduates were not higher than those of postsecondary students; similarly, information-seeking activities of noncompleters were not higher than those of postsecondary students.

E. Information Seeking by Employment Status and School Status

Table 3.4 shows the information-seeking activities of men by employment status and school status. Composite propensity for each subpopulation is presented in the far right column of the table. Results showed few significant differences among the various employment categories and no strong patterns. Some of the percentage differences between groups appear rather large, suggesting that they may be statistically different. Because of small sample sizes, however, standard errors are quite large, which indicates considerable variance in the data around the reported percentage.

The comparability of certain propensity levels with information seeking is found, for the most part, along the lines of school status. As was observed in section 3D, postsecondary students and high school graduates exhibited comparable levels of propensity to percentages of information seeking. The present data indicate that this pattern does not change across employment status categories. Postsecondary students and high school graduates exhibited a relatively close match between propensity and information seeking regardless of employment status.

F. Information Seeking by Predicted Aptitude and School Status

Table 3.5 shows information-seeking activity by aptitude and by school status. Composite propensity for each subpopulation is also provided in the far right column of the table. Overall, the data show that lower aptitude men were significantly though only slightly more likely than higher aptitude men to visit a recruiter (13.8% vs. 11.6%) and to make a toll-free phone call (4.0% vs. 2.9%). Although statistically significant, these differences were quite small and of little practical significance. A more general conclusion from these data is that higher and lower aptitude men were about equally likely to engage in any of the information-seeking activities about the Military.

Similar to the overall findings, differences between higher and lower aptitude men for each of the school status groups were not statistically significant, with a few exceptions. Even in those exceptions, however, the magnitude of the differences was relatively small.

Table 3.4 Information-Seeking Activities by Employment Status and School Status

School status[a]/ employment status	Estimated population count	Activity			Composite propensity
		Phone call	Postcard	Visit	
Postsecondary students					
Employed full time	251	4.3 (1.6)	5.5 (1.6)	14.0 (2.6)	14.4 (2.7)
Employed part time	395	3.5 (1.3)	7.2 (1.5)	14.0 (2.1)	13.9 (2.3)
Not employed, looking	144	1.4 (1.0)	4.2 (1.5)	15.8 (4.0)	21.8 (4.3)
Not employed, not looking	199	3.3 (1.6)	8.4 (2.5)	9.0 (2.2)	11.5 (2.8)
High school graduates					
Employed full time	871	2.9 (0.7)	5.9 (1.0)	13.8 (1.4)	17.8 (1.6)
Employed part time	128	2.1 (1.1)	5.4 (1.8)	20.6 (4.9)	18.0 (3.8)
Not employed, looking	121	15.6 (4.0)	18.2 (4.8)	24.4 (4.5)	35.4 (5.6)
Not employed, not looking	31	1.6 (1.6)	3.8 (2.8)	9.4 (5.1)	8.4 (4.4)
High school seniors					
Employed full time	88	7.6 (3.1)	27.6 (6.3)	19.7 (4.6)	42.0 (6.9)
Employed part time	536	3.6 (1.0)	16.6 (2.0)	18.8 (2.0)	36.0 (2.6)
Not employed, looking	277	5.2 (1.7)	15.1 (2.7)	14.7 (2.7)	52.0 (3.9)
Not employed, not looking	286	0.6 (0.3)	16.8 (3.1)	16.1 (2.8)	30.9 (3.5)
Nonsenior high school students					
Employed full time	87	4.7 (2.7)	13.0 (4.3)	8.7 (3.7)	61.2 (6.3)
Employed part time	521	2.4 (0.7)	8.2 (1.5)	5.5 (1.1)	45.0 (2.6)
Not employed, looking	475	2.1 (0.7)	7.1 (1.4)	6.5 (1.4)	56.4 (2.8)
Not employed, not looking	401	2.5 (1.2)	6.6 (1.6)	6.4 (1.4)	43.1 (2.9)
Noncompleters					
Employed full time	472	3.7 (1.0)	6.1 (1.3)	12.4 (1.8)	34.0 (2.7)
Employed part time	241	3.2 (1.2)	12.1 (2.6)	14.4 (2.8)	37.9 (4.1)
Not employed, looking	264	5.0 (1.4)	10.6 (2.6)	11.3 (2.2)	52.9 (4.1)
Not employed, not looking	123	3.7 (1.6)	11.8 (3.6)	9.3 (3.4)	30.4 (5.0)
Total					
Employed full time	1,770	3.6 (0.5)	7.3 (0.8)	13.5 (1.0)	25.0 (1.3)
Employed part time	1,821	3.1 (0.5)	10.8 (0.9)	13.5 (1.0)	32.8 (1.4)
Not employed, looking	1,281	4.6 (0.7)	10.3 (1.1)	12.0 (1.1)	48.8 (1.8)
Not employed, not looking	1,040	2.2 (0.6)	10.3 (1.3)	10.0 (1.2)	31.2 (1.8)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Tabled values are cell percentages of men who reported engaging in each activity. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a]Postsecondary students are high school graduates currently attending college or a business/ vocational school. High school graduates are men who are not students and have graduated from high school. Noncompleters are men who are not high school students and have not graduated from high school.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Table 3.5 Information-Seeking Activities by Aptitude and School Status

School status[a]/ aptitude[b]	Estimated population count	Activity			Composite propensity
		Phone call	Postcard	Visit	
Postsecondary students					
Higher aptitude	725	3.1 (0.7)	7.1 (1.0)	12.4 (1.3)	12.4 (1.3)
Lower aptitude	266	4.1 (1.3)	5.3 (1.0)	15.6 (2.2)	20.8 (2.4)
High school graduates					
Higher aptitude	611	3.3 (0.6)	6.4 (0.9)	13.5 (1.3)	15.6 (1.4)
Lower aptitude	546	4.9 (0.9)	7.7 (1.1)	17.7 (1.6)	24.6 (1.8)
High school seniors					
Higher aptitude	748	3.3 (0.7)	17.4 (1.6)	15.9 (1.3)	32.0 (1.9)
Lower aptitude	441	3.9 (0.9)	16.9 (1.8)	19.6 (1.8)	50.4 (2.3)
Nonsenior high school students					
Higher aptitude	773	1.9 (0.4)	6.6 (0.8)	5.5 (0.7)	41.0 (1.7)
Lower aptitude	716	3.0 (0.7)	8.9 (1.1)	7.5 (0.9)	57.8 (1.7)
Noncompleters					
Higher aptitude	369	3.2 (0.7)	10.0 (1.5)	11.4 (1.4)	27.6 (1.9)
Lower aptitude	735	4.2 (0.7)	8.6 (1.1)	12.9 (1.3)	44.9 (2.1)
Total					
Higher aptitude	3,226	2.9 (0.3)	9.6 (0.6)	11.6 (0.6)	26.1 (0.8)
Lower aptitude	2,704	4.0 (0.4)	9.5 (0.6)	13.8 (0.7)	42.8 (1.0)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Tabled values are cell percentages of men who reported engaging in each activity. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a]Postsecondary students are high school graduates currently attending college or a business/ vocational school. High school graduates are men who are not students and have graduated from high school. Noncompleters are men who are not high school students and have not graduated from high school.

[b]Higher aptitude is defined as the predicted probability of scoring in Categories I-IIIA (percentiles 50-99) of the Armed Forces Qualification Test. Lower aptitude is defined as the predicted probability of scoring in Categories IIIB-V (percentiles 1-49).

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Even though, for the most part, information seeking does not differ with predicted aptitude, propensity to enlist is considerably lower among higher aptitude men. These data suggest that lower aptitude men report higher levels of propensity, but they do not act (or have not acted) by seeking additional information to fulfill this interest. Conversely, higher aptitude men are more apt to act on their propensity by seeking information.

G. Summary

The prevalence and distribution of three information-seeking activities were described that provided 16- to 21-year-old men with information about the Military: making a toll-free telephone call, mailing a postcard, and visiting a recruiter during the past 12 months. The three activities and composite active propensity were examined for selected sociodemographic characteristics of age, race/ethnicity, school status, employment status, and aptitude. This section summarizes the key findings from these analyses.

- Overall, 20.3% of men engaged in one or more information-seeking activities during the past year to learn about the Military. Visiting a recruiter was the most common activity (12.6%), followed by mailing a postcard (9.5%) and making a toll-free telephone call (3.4%). Few men engaged in more than one information-seeking activity.

- Information seeking varied with age. All three activities showed a general pattern of increases with age followed by decreases, although ages varied when the behaviors peaked. Recruiter visits peaked at age 18, postcard mailings peaked at age 17, and phone calls peaked at age 19. Findings were generally consistent with a saliency hypothesis that information seeking would be higher for men who were at a decision point in their lives.

- There was a large discrepancy between the percentages of men seeking information and expressing positive propensity among 16- to 17-year-olds, but less discrepancy among 18- to 21-year olds. The younger age group was more likely to express propensity, but not act on it to seek additional information, whereas the older group was less likely to express propensity, but more likely to act on it and seek information.

- Whites and Hispanics reported comparable levels of information seeking. Blacks were more apt to place phone calls or visit recruiters than either whites or Hispanics, suggesting a preference for contacts that involved personal interaction. Whites showed less discrepancy between their levels of expressed propensity and their levels of information seeking than did Blacks or Hispanics.

- There were few differences in information-seeking activities across school status categories. Notable exceptions include more high school seniors mailing postcards and fewer nonsenior high school students visiting a recruiter than the other school status groups. Findings offered partial support for the saliency hypothesis.

- Information-seeking activities did not differ systematically by the differences in employment status.

- Higher and lower aptitude men were equally likely to engage in information-seeking activities about the Military.

Part of the discussion in this chapter has examined the discrepancy between information seeking and propensity and noted that they are qualitatively different. The former is an activity, whereas the latter is a stated intention. To understand the connections better between information seeking and propensity requires further analyses. These analyses are the subject of the next chapter.

4. RELATING INFORMATION SEEKING AND PROPENSITY FOR ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE

In Chapter 3, we described the extent to which men sought information about military service by sociodemographic groups for the activities of placing a toll-free phone call, mailing a postcard, or visiting a recruiting station. Additionally, we compared the total percentages of men who expressed positive propensity with the total percentages who engaged in information seeking for each sociodemographic group. Those analyses permitted us to examine the discrepancy between information seeking and propensity in the aggregate, but they did not permit us to assess the link among individuals between propensity to enlist and information-seeking activities.

Our purpose in this chapter is to analyze YATS data for 16- to 21-year-old men along two lines:

- Information-seeking levels of individuals with propensity, and
- Propensity of information-seekers.

To clarify the distinction between these analyses, it is important to understand the reference populations. In the first analysis, the reference population is men who expressed various levels of propensity; information seeking is computed for this population. In the second analysis, the reference population consists of those who sought information; propensity to enlist is computed on this population. We present data both for composite propensity and Service-specific propensity. Service-specific analyses also include a discussion of information-seeking activities among men with predicted higher aptitude.

These analyses are not intended to assess *causal* relationships between positive propensity and information-seeking. The data do not contain information about temporal ordering of events that would be needed to determine if positive propensity leads to information seeking or vice versa. Our analysis of the *association* between propensity and information seeking, however, may assist program planners in understanding how information seeking relates to the enlistment decisionmaking process.

A. Information Seeking of Men with Positive Propensity

This section first assesses information seeking for each response level of composite active propensity (from "definitely will enlist" to "definitely will not enlist"). It then examines information seeking for men with positive propensity for each of the DoD active Services.

1. Information Seeking by Propensity Level

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of males who engaged in information-seeking activities by level of composite active propensity. The rows labeled "definitely," "probably," and "total positive" comprise positive propensity levels; the rows labeled "probably not," "definitely not," and "total negative" indicate negative propensity.

The data show several findings of interest. First, men with positive propensity were substantially more likely to seek information than were those with negative propensity. For example, 20.6% of the total positive group visited a recruiter compared to 8.5% of the total negative propensity group; similar patterns also occurred for the other information-seeking activities.

Second, men who indicated they would "definitely enlist" were more likely to seek information than were men who said they would "probably enlist." The pattern is consistent for all three information-seeking activities, but it is statistically significant only for phone calls and recruiter visits.

Third, men who indicated they would "probably enlist" appear equally likely to have either visited a recruiter or mailed a postcard for information. Those who said

Table 4.1 Information-Seeking Activities by Composite Active Propensity

	Estimated population		Activity					
Propensity response	Count	Percent	Phone call		Postcard		Visit	
Definitely	417	7.0	10.2	(1.6)	21.0	(2.4)	27.8	(2.6)
Probably	1,584	26.8	5.5	(0.7)	17.2	(1.3)	18.7	(1.2)
Total positive	2,000	33.7	6.4	(0.7)	18.0	(1.1)	20.6	(1.1)
Probably not	1,586	26.8	1.7	(0.4)	7.1	(0.8)	10.1	(0.9)
Definitely not	2,332	39.4	1.9	(0.4)	4.0	(0.5)	7.5	(0.7)
Total negative	3,930	66.3	1.8	(0.3)	5.3	(0.4)	8.5	(0.5)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Tabled values are cell percentages of men who reported engaging in each activity. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

they would "definitely enlist," however, were more apt to have visited a recruiter. Because more men indicated that they would "probably enlist," the difference between mailing a postcard and visiting a recruiter was minor for those with overall positive propensity.

These data show a clear and striking association between propensity levels and all three information-seeking activities. Men with positive propensity were more likely to engage in information-seeking activities than those with negative propensity. Additionally, the percentages of information-seekers were consistently ordered by the degree of positive propensity; the more positive the level of propensity, the higher the percentages of information seeking. Despite these findings, care must be taken not to infer causality from these data. It is not clear whether positive propensity led to or resulted from information seeking.

2. Service-Specific Propensity and Information Seeking from Those Services

The purpose of this section is to answer the question:

Of those who expressed positive propensity for a particular Service, what percentage engaged in each of the information-seeking activities?

Data are presented for all men in the YATS population and those predicted to have higher aptitude.

a. All Information-Seekers

Table 4.2 shows the percentages of all men who sought information from specific Military Services for which they indicated a positive propensity to enlist. Positive propensity levels were highest for the Air Force (17.8%) and the Army (17.1%), followed by the Navy (13.1%) and the Marine Corps (12.6%). Overall, information-seeking levels were relatively low. For example, of the men with positive propensity for the Army, only 13.4% visited a recruiter within the past year. This suggests that men who indicated positive propensity to enlist in a particular Service had not taken steps to obtain information about that Service.

Table 4.2 also shows notable differences among the Services in the level of information-seeking activities. The Air Force had the highest percentage of men with positive propensity, but the lowest percentages of information-seeking activities. In general, Air Force information seeking was significantly lower for all three activities than comparable information seeking for the other three Services. For example, 6.6% of men with positive propensity for the Air Force visited a recruiting station compared to a range from 10.5% to 13.4% for men with positive propensity for the other three Services.

Table 4.2 Service-Specific Propensity and Information-Seeking Activities About Those Services

Service	Service-specific propensity	Activity		
		Phone call	Postcard	Visit
Army	17.1	3.5 (0.6)	8.4 (1.1)	13.4 (1.3)
Navy	13.1	3.4 (0.8)	11.2 (1.4)	12.4 (1.5)
Marine Corps	12.6	5.0 (1.0)	11.6 (1.6)	10.5 (1.3)
Air Force	17.8	1.9 (0.4)	7.5 (1.1)	6.6 (0.8)

Note. Entries for each activity are cell percentages of 16- to 21-year-old men who sought information from Services in which they indicated a propensity to enlist. For example, 13.4% of the 17.1% of men with propensity for the Army have visited an Army recruiter. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Finally, Table 4.2 shows different patterns of information-seeking activities for the different Services. Men with positive propensity toward the Army were more likely to have visited a recruiting center (13.4%) than to have mailed a postcard (8.4%) or made a phone call (3.5%). In contrast, men who expressed interest in enlisting in the Navy, the Marine Corps, or the Air Force reported roughly the same level of recruiting station visits as postcard mailings; very few of these men reported making any toll-free phone calls.

These data indicate little relationship between Service-specific propensity and Service-specific information seeking. Few men with positive propensity engaged in information-seeking activities for any of the Services. These data suggest that there is a need to reinforce propensity about the Military with additional information and that the Services may need to examine ways to encourage and motivate men to gather that information.

Of course, failing to engage in the three criterion activities examined here does not mean that men do not gather information in other ways such as discussions with parents and friends or talking to recruiters on occasions such as school job fairs. Furthermore, it is conceivable that the Service-specific analysis conducted here underrepresents the true magnitude of information seeking. Young men who visit a recruiter for one Service may have questions answered that apply to another Service as well.

The data also indicate clear differences in the levels and patterns of information seeking. This includes less information seeking about the Air Force than about the other Services and different rates of mailing postcards and visiting recruiters for the Army, but similar rates for the other Services. These data reinforce the importance of the Services providing multiple avenues for information gathering.

b. Higher Aptitude Information-Seekers

Table 4.3 presents data about information seeking among higher aptitude men from Services for which propensity is positive. The results for higher aptitude men were very similar to the data reported by all men discussed above (see Table 4.2). Overall, information seeking was relatively low among higher aptitude men. For example, information seeking ranged from a high of 14.3% (Army recruiter visits) to a low of 2.1% (toll-free phone calls to the Air Force).

Men who reported positive propensity for the Air Force also reported the lowest levels of information seeking for each of the three activities. Higher aptitude men with

Table 4.3 Service-Specific Propensity and Information-Seeking Activities About Those Services Among Men Predicted to Have Higher Aptitude[a]

Service	Service-specific propensity	Activity		
		Phone call	Postcard	Visit
Army	11.3	3.3 (0.8)	11.5 (1.9)	14.3 (1.6)
Navy	10.2	3.7 (1.0)	13.4 (1.9)	10.8 (1.6)
Marine Corps	8.4	5.0 (1.1)	12.5 (2.2)	11.7 (1.7)
Air Force	14.2	2.1 (0.6)	9.6 (1.6)	6.9 (1.0)

Note. Entries for each activity are cell percentages of 16- to 21-year-old men who sought information from Services in which they indicated a propensity to enlist. For example, 14.3% of the 11.3% of men with propensity for the Army have visited an Army recruiter. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a]Higher aptitude is defined as the predicted probability of scoring in Categories I-IIIA (percentiles 50-99) of the Armed Forces Qualification Test. Lower aptitude is defined as the predicted probability of scoring in Categories IIIB-V (percentiles 1-49).

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

positive propensity toward the Army were more likely to have visited a recruiting station (14.3%) than mailed a postcard (11.5%). On the other hand, mailing postcards and visiting recruiters were equally preferred among those interested in joining the Navy and the Marine Corps. As was the case among all men, use of toll-free phone calls was the least used information-seeking activity among higher aptitude men for all Military Services.

Overall, among higher aptitude men, Service-specific information-seeking levels show little relationship to Service-specific propensity. These data are consistent with the patterns described above in the last section for all men. Despite the lack of correspondence between propensity and information seeking, it is nevertheless interesting that the higher aptitude men were no less inclined than were all men to seek information from those Services for which they had positive propensity.

B. Propensity of Information-Seekers

This section examines the propensity of information-seekers of men aged 16 to 21. Composite propensity of information-seekers is first examined among all men. Service-specific propensity is then examined for all men and for higher aptitude men.

1. Composite Active Propensity of Those Who Did or Did Not Seek Information

The measures of information seeking considered in this report (making a toll-free phone call, mailing a postcard or coupon, visiting a recruiting station) are actions taken by individuals to learn more about military service. Because such information seeking requires effort, it *may* be motivated by an interest in the Military. Thus, expressed propensity could be expected to be higher among men who sought information than among those who did not seek information. (This assumes, of course, that information seeking does not diminish propensity substantially.) On the other hand, it is also conceivable that men had only average levels of interest before seeking information and that their interest increased as a result of the information received. Although the data do not allow for an assessment of the causal relationship, as we will see below, it is clear that a relationship does exist.

Table 4.4 presents data about composite propensity to enlist in one or more of the Military Services for those who either did or did not make a toll-free phone call, mail a postcard or coupon, or visit a recruiter. As shown, information-seekers were significantly more likely to have positive propensity (55.1% to 64.0%) than were men who did not seek information (30.6% to 32.7%); they were also more likely to have positive propensity than all men in the YATS population (33.7%).

For information-seekers, propensity was significantly higher among those who made a phone call (64.0%) or who mailed a postcard (63.4%) than among those who

Table 4.4 Positive Composite Active Propensity of Those Who Did or Did Not Engage in an Information-Seeking Activity

	Engaged in activity			
	Yes		No	
Activity	Count	Positive propensity (%)[a]	Count	Positive propensity (%)[a]
Phone Call	201	64.0 (4.1)	5,729	32.7 (0.8)
Postcard	566	63.4 (2.5)	5,361	30.6 (0.8)
Visit	748	55.1 (2.2)	5,183	30.6 (0.8)

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men. Population counts represent the number of men (in thousands) who either did or did not engage in a particular information-seeking activity. Percentages represent the propensity of information (noninformation) seekers, using the "count" column as a base. For example, of the 201,000 men who made a phone call to the Military, 64.0% had positive propensity. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a]33.7% of all men reported positive composite active propensity.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

visited a recruiter (55.1%). This difference is of particular interest in light of the finding in Chapter 3 that greater percentages of men visited recruiters than made phone calls or mailed postcards.

The high percentages of men with positive propensity among information-seekers are striking. In general, these percentages are as high or higher than those reported for any of the sociodemographic groups in Chapter 3. These findings suggest that men either *already have* an interest in the Military that leads to information seeking, or the information they obtain *leads to* positive propensity.

The finding that propensity was lower among men who visited recruiters than among those who mailed postcards or made phone calls is somewhat puzzling. It can be understood, however, in the context of a recruiter visit relative to the other activities. Visiting a recruiter is likely to provide the most complete range of information and impressions about the Military of the three information-seeking activities. Consequently, a personal discussion with a recruiter during a visit seems more likely than the

other activities to pinpoint some aspects of military life that may be viewed as unappealing or reveal a young man's lack of qualifications for some desired programs or placements. In such cases, men are not likely to express positive propensity for the Military.

2. Service-Specific Propensity of Information-Seekers

This section examines the Service-specific propensity of information-seekers. Analyses were conducted to answer the question:

> *Of those who sought information through a particular activity from a Military Service, what percentage expressed positive propensity for that Service?*

Data are first presented for all men in the YATS population and for those men predicted to have higher aptitude.

a. All Information-Seekers

Table 4.5 presents Service-specific propensity among men who sought information about the Services. Propensity levels averaged between 40% and 50%, ranging from a high of 72.7% for the Marine Corps among those who made a phone call, to a low of 35.5% for the Army among those who visited an Army recruiter. These levels are particularly striking when contrasted with overall Service-specific propensity, which ranged from 12.6% to 17.8% (see Table 4.2). Service-specific propensity among information-seekers was generally 2 to 3 times higher than comparable propensity among men overall.

These Service-specific data followed the same pattern observed above in Table 4.4, in which propensity was lowest among men who visited recruiters. For example, only 37.5% of men who visited a Marine Corps recruiter had positive propensity for the Marine Corps; this compares to 50.3% and 72.7%, respectively, among those who mailed a postcard and placed a phone call.

b. Higher Aptitude Information-Seekers

Table 4.6 presents Service-specific propensity of information-seekers for the subset of men predicted to have higher aptitude. The same basic pattern of propensity results was found in this analysis as was observed for the total population of information-seeking men (Table 4.5), but expressed propensities were about 5% to 10% lower. For example, 27.5% of higher aptitude men who visited an Army recruiter expressed positive propensity for the Army (Table 4.6) compared to 35.5% of all men (Table 4.5). Propensities among higher aptitude information-seekers ranged from 27.5% to 61.7%.

Table 4.5 Propensity for Services from Which Information Was Sought

	Army		Navy		Marine Corps		Air Force	
Activity	Count	Propensity	Count	Propensity	Count	Propensity	Count	Propensity
Phone call	69	51.8 (7.1)	55	48.5 (8.1)	51	72.7 (7.1)	42	47.8 (8.9)
Postcard	210	40.3 (4.4)	185	47.2 (4.7)	172	50.3 (4.7)	152	52.1 (5.3)
Visit	382	35.5 (2.8)	223	43.3 (4.1)	209	37.5 (4.0)	167	41.9 (4.5)

Note. Population counts represent the number of 16- to 21-year-old men (in thousands) who sought information from each Service; of these information-seekers, percentages indicate those who have propensity for each Service. For example, of the 69,000 men who made a phone call to the Army, 51.8% had positive propensity for the Army. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Table 4.6 Service-Specific Propensity for Services from Which Information Was Sought Among Men Predicted to Have Higher Aptitude[a]

	Army		Navy		Marine Corps		Air Force	
Activity	Count	Propensity	Count	Propensity	Count	Propensity	Count	Propensity
Phone call	32	38.6 (8.1)	28	43.8 (9.0)	22	61.7 (9.2)	21	46.2 (9.8)
Postcard	115	36.6 (5.1)	110	40.1 (5.0)	84	40.3 (5.6)	94	46.7 (5.9)
Visit	189	27.5 (2.9)	114	31.4 (4.3)	107	29.4 (4.0)	92	34.3 (4.6)

Note. Population counts represent the number of 16- to 21-year-old men (in thousands) who sought information from each Service; of these information-seekers, percentages indicate those who have propensity for each Service. For example, of the 32,000 men who made a phone call to the Army, 38.6% had propensity for the Army. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Standard errors are in parentheses.

[a]Higher aptitude is defined as the predicted probability of scoring in Categories I-IIIA (percentiles 50-99) of the Armed Forces Qualification Test. Lower aptitude is defined as the predicted probability of scoring in Categories IIIB-V (percentiles 1-49).

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Among higher aptitude men who sought information about the Marine Corps, the highest propensity level was among those who made toll-free phone calls (61.7%). This was followed by men who mailed postcards (40.3%) and those who visited a Marine Corps recruiting center (29.4%). Men who sought information for the Army, Navy, and Air Force had similar propensity levels among those who made phone calls and those who mailed postcards. For all Military Services, positive propensity among the higher aptitude men was lowest among those who visited recruiting stations.

C. Summary

This chapter has examined the association between information-seeking levels of men aged 16 to 21 who expressed positive propensity, and propensity levels of men who engaged in information-seeking activities. We conducted analyses for aggregate information seeking and composite propensity, as well as comparable Service-specific analyses for all men and higher aptitude men. The purpose of these analyses was not to assert causality between information seeking and propensity, but to assess the association between the two.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data presented in this chapter regarding information-seeking:

- Information seeking was more common among men with positive propensity than among men with negative propensity. The likelihood of engaging in information seeking increased as the level of propensity increased.

- Few men with positive propensity engaged in information-seeking activities for any of the Services. This suggests that there may be a need for the Services to either encourage and motivate men to gather information about the Military or determine if they have obtained it from other sources.

- A high percentage of information-seekers expressed positive propensity. In general, these percentages were as high or higher than those reported for any of the sociodemographic groups. These findings suggest that men either *already have* an interest in the Military that leads to information seeking, or the information they obtain *leads to* positive propensity.

- Men who visited recruiters were not as interested in joining the Military as were those who mailed postcards or made phone calls. Recruiter visits may be more likely than the other activities to pinpoint perceived unappealing aspects of military life or reveal a young man's lack of qualifications for desired placements. In such cases, men would be less likely to express positive propensity for the Military.

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APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

This appendix describes the methodology for the 1989 YATS II survey. The discussion of methods includes the sampling design and data collection.

A. Sampling Design

The 1989 YATS II survey was designed to obtain information from four market groups most likely to enlist in the military:

- Males aged 16 to 21,
- Males aged 22 to 24,
- Females aged 16 to 21, and
- Females aged 22 to 24.

To be eligible for inclusion in this study, individuals had to reside in the continental United States in households or noninstitutional group quarters with telephones. This includes traditional households of close relatives and households of up to 10 unrelated individuals living together who share the same phone (e.g., roommates in an apartment). Students in college dormitories were included if they had private phones in their rooms, but they were excluded if they were served only by a central hall phone. Eligible individuals could have completed no more than 2 years of college. Military personnel, including those in the Delayed Entry Program and those with prior military service (other than high school ROTC), were excluded.

The sample size and allocation for each of the four markets were determined from DoD specifications of precision requirements for estimates of propensity. Males aged 16 to 21 were the market of primary interest for YATS II; accordingly, the sample size was determined by the number of households needed to meet the precision requirements specified for this group. Because the number of households required to meet the sample size for these males produced more eligible individuals for the other three market groups than were needed to satisfy the precision requirements, subsamples of these groups were selected for interviewing.

The YATS II sampling design is based on the Waksberg random digit dialing procedure (Waksberg, 1978). Under this procedure, telephone numbers are called in two stages to identify households. First-stage calls are made to randomly selected telephone exchanges. Exchanges yielding a household on the first number called are designated as clusters. In the second stage, numbers within these clusters are generated to find additional households. This approach is efficient because many

exchanges have disproportionately high percentages of residential telephone numbers. When the first call to an exchange reaches a household, subsequent calls to the same exchange are more likely to reach households than when the first call to an exchange does not reach a household.

B. Data Collection

1. Survey Questionnaire

Data for the YATS II survey consisted of responses to a questionnaire administered in a 30-minute computer-assisted telephone interview. The 1989 survey questionnaire was similar to the 1988 questionnaire and consisted of four sections. Section A contained primarily education and employment items. Sections B and C contained items about propensity toward the active Services and the Reserve Components, and general awareness about military pay, bonuses, educational benefits, requirements of the Reserve Components, and other selected issues. Section D contained items on advertising, recruiter contact, and respondent demographics.

Selected items dealing with attitudes toward National Service in 1988 were replaced with items exploring new enlistment incentives that may be offered by the military such as varying levels of benefits to be used for educational expenses or a down payment on a house. New items also examined recruiter contact for the Coast Guard as well as including the Coast Guard as a response option in questions asking about active duty Services. A copy of the questionnaire is in the volume of supplementary tabulations (Bray, Cobb, & Theisen, 1990).

2. Procedures

The 1989 YATS II used a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system for all phases of data collection. With this system, questionnaires for screening (eligibility determination), interviewing, and verification are programmed, entered, and stored within the computer. Instructions and questionnaire items appear on the screen in the proper sequence. Inconsistent, invalid, and incomplete responses are resolved as an ongoing part of the interview.

Data were collected in a two-phased approach from July 23 to November 10, 1989. Phase 1 consisted of calls to identify households, and Phase 2 consisted of household screening to identify members eligible for the study and then interviewing these individuals. Overall, 268,736 telephone numbers were called to identify 107,952 households. From these households, 13,953 eligibles for the study were identified and selected for interviews. Analyses for the study were based on 11,575 interviews (5,801 for 16- to 21-year-old males, 1,178 for 22- to 24-year-old males, 3,479 for 16- to 21-year-old females, 1,117 for 22- to 24-year-old females).

3. Performance Rates

Interview completion rates and overall response rates were calculated for each of the four market groups to assess the quality of survey field operations and the potential for nonresponse in the data. Table A.1 describes the performance rates achieved during the survey by sex and age groups. As shown in Table A.1, interview completion rates, which were computed as the percentage of completed interviews out of the total number of eligibles selected, were highest among males and females aged 16 to 21 followed by females and males aged 22 to 24. Overall response rates, which were computed by multiplying the interview completion rates by the household screening rates, followed the same ranking noted for interview completion rates.

A thorough effort was made to obtain high response rates within the given schedule constraints. Numerous calls were made to complete household screening for all sample telephone numbers and to administer a questionnaire to all selected eligibles.

Table A.1 Survey Performance Rates

	Market group			
Performance rate	Males aged 16-21	Males aged 22-24	Females aged 16-21	Females aged 22-24
Interview completion rate	77.3	67.9	76.9	74.9
Overall response rate	74.2	65.3	73.0	71.4

Note. Tabled values are percentages.

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA TABLES

Table B.1 Age Distribution of the YATS Survey Population

Age	Unweighted N	Estimated population	
		Count	Percent
16	1,420	1,422	24.0
17	1,369	1,374	23.2
18	1,117	1,165	19.6
19	854	876	14.8
20	567	593	10.0
21	474	504	8.5
Total	5,801	5,933	100.0

Note. Data reported are for 16- to 21-year-old men; population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Table B.2 Race/Ethnicity by Age Range

	Age range			
	16-17		18-21	
	Estimated population		Estimated population	
Race/ethnicity	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White	2,076	74.5	2,295	73.4
Black	284	10.2	325	10.4
Hispanic	294	10.6	422	13.5
Other	132	4.7	13	2.8
Total	2,785	100.0	3,128	100.0

Note. Population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.

Table B.3 School Status by Age Range

	Age range			
	16-17		18-21	
	Estimated population		Estimated population	
School status[a]	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Postsecondary student	59	2.1	932	29.7
High school graduate	42	1.5	1,115	35.6
High school senior	886	31.7	304	9.7
Nonsenior high school student	1,431	51.2	60	1.9
Noncompleter	378	13.5	726	23.1
Total	2,795	100.0	3,137	100.0

Note. Population counts are in thousands. Estimates are based on some variables for which there may be missing information. Percentage distributions may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

[a]Postsecondary students are high school graduates currently attending college or a business/vocational school. High school graduates are men who are not students and have graduated from high school. Noncompleters are men who are not high school students and have not graduated from high school.

Source. 1989 Youth Attitude Tracking Study.