

THE IMPACT OF ATTACHMENT ON THE PROPENSITY TO ENLIST
IN THE U.S. MILITARY

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DEDICATION

For my father, Dabiruddin Khan, for his support, encouragement, and inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

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The current study investigated the factors associated with military propensity, particularly how attachment-related avoidance and anxiety may impact high school seniors' propensity to enlist in the U.S. military. A proposed path model was tested using data from a nationwide sampling totaling 188 participants, which was collected utilizing online survey methods. A reduced path model was created using significant relationships from the originally proposed path model. Educational plans directly impact reported propensity to enlist in the military with several factors, including parental education, income, and grades impacting educational plans directly. These relationships, as well as other direct and indirect influences on enlistment propensity, are explored. Neither attachment anxiety nor attachment avoidance impacted propensity. Finally, implications for research and practice are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

At the end of high school, most young people face the challenge of identifying whether they would like to go to college, find a full-time job, or join the military. Military propensity has been found to be the best predictor of actual military enlistment (Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 1998). When measured with other variables, all other influences tend to be rendered statistically insignificant with propensity capturing nearly all variability in enlistment behaviors. It is then important to understand the variables that impact propensity to enlist in the military, particularly given almost a million teenagers approach this decision every year (Eighmey, 2006).

Overview of Propensity Factors

Many contextual factors and individual characteristics influence the propensity to join the military. For example, gender has been found to impact propensity as men are significantly more likely than women to indicate high propensity for military service and to eventually enlist (Segal, Segal, & Bachman, 1998; Woodruff, Kelty, & Segal, 2006). While women report moderate propensity, there is a disparity in reported interest in the military and actual enlistment behaviors, which may be related to a number of gendered concerns (Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010). Additionally, Black individuals enlist at a higher rate than Whites (Armor, 1996; Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 2000; Teachman, Call, & Segal, 1993), perhaps because the military appears to be a fairer

and less discriminatory work environment than the civilian realm or higher education (Binkin & Eitelberg, 1986; Kelty et al., 2010; Kilburn, Asch, & National Defense Research Institute, 2003). Alternatively, there may be a confound with socioeconomic status as monetary and vocational benefits may impact youth's propensity to join the military, particularly those from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds. (Bouffard, 2005). Benefits that are generally costly in the civilian realm, including health care, child care, housing assistance, and housing allowances may further serve to attract those from less privileged economic backgrounds (Korb & Segal, 2011).

Regional differences exist in intention to join the military (Bachman et al., 2000). Individuals from states and locations in which there is a high exposure to the military through large populations of active duty military or veterans are more likely to express a high propensity to join (Ford, Gibson, Griepentrog, & Marsh, 2014).

A significant factor related to propensity to enlist in the military is educational aspirations. For some with high educational ambitions and educational success, there is increased likelihood that college will be pursued as opposed to military service (Bachman et al., 2000). Parental education level seems to impact propensity as well. Interestingly, those with the least educated parents are less likely to enlist, potentially due to a norm of joining the civilian labor market post-high school or a belief the military will not provide adequate monetary compensation (Elder, Wang, Spence, Adkins, & Brown, 2010). However, attending college and joining the military are not mutually exclusive. Military

enlistees earn relatively average grades and express college aspirations but express higher propensity to join the military than attend college (Spence, Henderson, & Elder, 2013).

Along with the practical benefits offered by the military, several less tangible motives have been cited as important for propensity. The endorsement of values like fidelity, a sense of adventure, and a challenging work environment are reported by individuals high in propensity (Woodruff et al., 2006). Those from conservative religious backgrounds are more likely to report higher propensity, particularly for those from evangelical Christian backgrounds (Burdette, Wang, Elder, Hill, & Benson, 2009). Patriotism and a desire to do something positive for the country and community seems to be the most powerful determinant of propensity when compared to other values and beliefs, including external incentives (Bachman et al., 2000). For the most privileged and economically well-off groups, these values and beliefs may be the main motivator as the economic assistance offered by the military is less needed (Wang, Elder, & Spence, 2012).

Psychological and family factors, such as early traumatic life experiences, may also impact the propensity to enlist in the military. Individuals who have experienced sexual or physical abuse as children and adolescence may view the military as an escape from difficult home environments (Ginexi, Miller, & Tarver, 1995; Merrill, Hervig, Milner, Newell, & Koss, 1998; Woodruff et al., 2006). Previous substance use also appears to impact propensity as well as enlistment outcomes, though research is mixed here (Bachman et al, 2000; Barry et al., 2013). Delinquent behavior appears to increase

propensity to enlist (Eighmey, 2006; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Shihadeh & Flynn, 1996). Regarding family composition, those from alternative family structures tend to enlist at a higher rate than those from traditional, two-parent families (Bachman et al., 2000; Elder et al., 2010; Spence et al., 2013). This may be due to an interaction with socioeconomic status as single-parent families as well as divorced/re-married families tend to be poorer (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2012). Additionally, those from a non-traditional family structure may have an increased desire to develop a stable life, lessen feelings of isolation and loneliness, and feel a general sense of social support (Amato, 1987; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Considering these familial factors raises the possibility that attachment may figure in to the propensity equation.

Overview of Relevant Attachment Concepts

Relationships between parents and children are enduring, involving mutual experiences that continue throughout life. Attachment theory presents a theoretical frame for understanding how these relationships work to impact individuals as well as continued relationships with others. Attachment to primary caregivers involves a mental representation of relationships that develop through continued contact and interaction (Bowlby, 1973; Dykas & Cassidy, 2011; Feeney & Noller, 1996). Individuals form expectations about how others will respond to their needs and desires as well as how responsive others will be in distressing situations (Feeney & Noller, 1996). The attachment figure serves as a secure base from which to explore the world (Feeney & Noller, 1996). Infants' early attachment experiences when seeking comfort, proximity, or

safety, become internalized parts of our understanding of themselves, others, and the world (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985).

While many have provided the groundwork for understanding styles of attachment (e.g. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), two fundamental dimensions of attachment appear to be attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance (Fraley, 2010; Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Anxiety reflects vigilance over rejection and potential abandonment while avoidance reflects discomfort in close relationships (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Those with a securely attached style would be expected to have relatively low attachment-related avoidance and anxiety.

Security of attachment can have significant impacts on relational functioning and well-being outcomes. Those with a secure attachment pattern have generally more positive psychological adjustment across a number of affective and behavioral domains (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Madigan, Atkinson, Laurin, & Benoit, 2013; Marganska, Gallagher, & Miranda, 2013). Attachment theorists suggest attachment patterns are relatively stable into adulthood due to the persistence of mental models of the self and others (Bowlby, 1980). Attachment models may continually reinforce themselves within an individual as they interact with others and the environment in a way that will maintain the system of attachment.

The transition from adolescence into young adulthood is a critical period in development as internal working models of attachment become reworked when formal working operational capacities and significant relationships outside the family develop

(Allen, 2008; Scharf & Mayseless, 2007). As individuals mature, attachment style impacts the leaving home transition, with securely attached late adolescents negotiating this developmental milestone more successfully than those with insecure attachment (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Larose & Boivin, 1998; Mayseless, Danieli, & Sharabany, 1996).

Purpose and Rationale

The majority of individuals considering military service are at that point in development in which they must decide how to transition into adulthood. Given the likelihood for development of negative outcomes for insecurely attached individuals (Marganska et al., 2013; McWilliams & Bailey, 2010), sense of attachment is important to understand in terms of how young adults successfully or unsuccessfully navigate this critical transition period.

Military service can be seen as a significant turning point in the lives of those that enlist. When considering options following high school, it is normative for separation from primary caregivers to occur, whether for college or military service, thus activating attachment models of behavior (Mayseless, 2004).

The current study aimed to identify the relationship between parent-child attachment and the propensity to enlist in the military. It was expected that the data collected in this study would support a proposed path model based upon previous literature. A reduced path model was created utilizing the results of the current data collection.

Results of this work may be of interest to a number of constituencies, including military advertising agencies and recruiters who may be able to better pinpoint methods that would attract more young adults to the military. Adolescents at the point of transition as well as their families may also be able to utilize this information to understand the transition process better and may assist in post-graduation planning. Finally, mental health professionals including high school counselors, vocational counselors, and psychologists working with military families may be able to use this information to inform conceptualization, treatment considerations, and intervention.

Definition of Terms

Attachment is defined as an enduring internal working model that reflects how secure, caring, and trusting relationships with early caregivers were and continues to help individuals gather and interpret social events (Bowlby, 1973; Dykas & Cassidy, 2011; Feeney & Noller, 1996).

Attachment Anxiety is defined as marked vigilance over rejection and potential abandonment in relationships as well as frequent worry others will forget or abandon them (Fraley, 2010).

Attachment Avoidance is defined as marked distrust of others, efforts to maintain emotional and psychological distance from relationships, and fear of dependency in relationships (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000).

Insecure Attachment is defined as any attachment style marked by high levels of anxiety and/or avoidance (Fraley, 2010).

Propensity to Enlist is defined as a behavioral intention reflective of an individual's interest, desire, and plan with respect to the behavior of enlisting in military service (Woodruff et al., 2006).

Secure Attachment is defined as an internal working model marked by low levels of both attachment-related anxiety and avoidance, in which the individual feels comfortable relying on others and allowing others to rely on them (Fraley, 2010).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review below provides depth and detail regarding the multiple factors related to propensity to enlist. As the other major focus of this study is attachment, key aspects of attachment theory, the impacts of secure and insecure attachment, and issues related to attachment stability through developmental transitions are reviewed as well. The scant literature that addresses the potential relationships between these two areas is presented last, along with the rationale for the investigation and the research questions that were examined.

Propensity to Enlist

In this section, propensity and enlistment are operationalized and discussed. The importance of studying the relationship between propensity and enlistment is also covered.

Definitions

Military propensity is defined as an individual's interests, desires, and plans with respect to military service (Woodruff et al., 2006). Propensity to join the military is a behavioral intention while enlistment is the behavior itself. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that behavioral intentions are strong predictors of ultimate behaviors, an assertion that has been supported by research investigating a wide variety of behaviors (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988). Research on the

relationship between intentions and behaviors indicated a mean correlation of .53, suggesting the theory of planned behavior is helpful in understanding the belief/intention of propensity and the actual behavior of enlistment (Sheppard et al., 1988).

By the end of high school, most young people have had opportunities to seriously consider college, the labor market, and military service. Often, before graduation, many high school seniors have been accepted into colleges or made other preliminary life plans (Bachman et al., 1998). The plans or expectations that individuals report just before high school graduation often correlate well with future behaviors (Bachman et al., 1998). Actual enlistment behavior after graduation is strongly predicted by propensity to enlist expressed while in high school (Bachman et al., 1998). Those who express high propensity to enlist have an actual enlistment rate 24 percent higher than those who express a negative enlistment intention even when controlling for demographic variables (Orvis, Gahart, Ludwig, & Shutz, 1992). Among high school seniors, 70% of those who express a high propensity of actually serving in the military enlist within six years of high school graduation (Bachman et al., 1998). When propensity is included in models of enlistment, other variables tend to be rendered statistically insignificant, with propensity accounting for the majority of explained variance (Segal, Bachman, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 1999). Military propensity, when measured at the end of high school, is the pathway that captures nearly all the relation between other factors and actual enlistment, suggesting that before young adults graduate from high school, their expectations concerning military enlistment are clearly formed and generally accurate in predicting

actual enlistment behavior within two years (Bachman et al., 2000). This strong relationship between propensity (intention) and enlistment (behavior) has been empirically validated by extensive research dating back to the 1970's with very small dips in the strength of the relationship (Stone, Turner, & Loper, 1997).

However, although propensity appears to be the strongest predictor of enlistment behavior, there is not a perfect relationship between youth's reported propensity and their eventual enlistment behavior. Contextual factors (e.g., economic conditions) as well as individual characteristics (e.g., race, gender) may impact reported propensity.

Importance of Propensity

The U.S. military requires approximately 200,000 new enlistments each year in order to maintain an active duty force of about 1.2 million (Eighmey, 2006). The U.S. military aims to draw a representative sample of young people from society. A substantial portion of these new enlistments come from a pool of those graduating high school. As reported propensity to enlist is the single best predictor of actual enlistment behavior, attention to what impacts propensity in youth is of particular importance. Significant amounts of recruitment resources have been aimed at identifying how to increase youth interest and desire to join the military while still in high school (Eighmey, 2006). There is a need to examine the interests of the youth population as it relates to the desire to join the military.

Factors Influencing Propensity

A wide range of factors have been associated with propensity to enlist. An overview of each of these variables is presented below.

Gender. Military service has historically been a male-dominated role, a factor that can be clearly seen in military related advertising which appears to be inundated with images of men (Ford et al., 2014; Kelty et al., 2010). Men are considerably more likely than women to indicate high propensity for military service and to eventually enlist (Segal et al., 1998; Woodruff et al., 2006). Among high school seniors, 70% of young men who reported high propensity of enlistment (i.e. “definitely will join the military”) had done so within six years of high school while women were distinctly less likely (40%) at a 6 year follow up (Bachman et al., 1998).

Interestingly, the proportions of young women who indicate they would like to serve in the military are significantly higher than the proportions who report they actually expect to serve and have high propensity to enlist. This finding suggests that young women may be interested in military service but do not view it as a feasible option (Bachman et al., 1998). The norm of masculinity in the military may contribute to the disparity between interests and expectations, given the perceived limitations in opportunities for women in the military to advance in their careers (Kelty et al., 2010; Bachman et al., 1998). The military is one of the only social institutions remaining in the nation that may legally discriminate based on gender, prohibiting women from holding certain positions or specialties (Kelty et al., 2010). These restrictions vary by branch of

the military and these regulations are currently changing to allow greater opportunities for women.

Currently, Army regulations state that a woman may serve in any specialty or position except those related to direct ground combat, a group of jobs that make up approximately 33% of all jobs available in the Army (Kelty et al., 2010). The Marines is a highly combat-focused branch, excluding women from approximately 38% of all jobs while the Air Force appears to be the most inclusive of women, allowing them to serve in 99% of all jobs available (Manning & Lamb, 2003; Segal & Segal, 2004). The Navy restricts women from serving aboard submarines (Kelty et al., 2010). The exclusion of women from occupational specialties within the branches limits women from certain units that may be considered more prestigious or have increased upward mobility in career advancement (Kelty et al., 2010; Snyder, 2003). However, the number of military jobs available to women has significantly increased over the past 25 years (Segal et al., 1998). Despite this legal discrimination, the military as an institution does compensate women more evenly than careers available in the civilian sector (Kelty et al., 2010).

Additionally, the perceived hyper-masculine nature of military culture may lead to both physical and symbolic violence against women, a factor that has recently been made public and widely investigated (Kelty et al., 2010). These factors may contribute to decreased propensity as well as lower actual enlistment among young women.

Despite relatively low propensity and eventual enlistment numbers, young women generally report fairly consistent desire to serve (Segal et al., 1998). There appears to be

an interaction between gender and race as Black women report highest propensity while White women report lowest (Segal et al., 1998). While this is comparable to numbers seen with young minority men, the magnitude of difference is significantly more substantial for women. In fact, half of all women serving in the military are minority women, with Black women accounting for 30% of all women in the military (Manning & Lamb, 2003).

Race/ethnicity. Race and ethnicity play an important role in propensity of American youth to enlist in the military. When controlling for other variables, researchers have consistently found that Black individuals are more likely to express intention to enlist and ultimately complete enlistment than Whites (Armor, 1996; Bachman et al., 2000; Mare & Winship, 1984; Teachman et al., 1993). Since World War II, the military has been described as the most integrated institution in the U.S. (Kleykamp, 2009). Black men in particular enlist at higher rates and choose to remain in the military for a career at higher rates than their White peers, which strongly supports the claim that military service is more appealing than the civilian labor market for some demographics (Kleykamp, 2006). Specifically, older research indicates Black men have fewer job and educational opportunities than White men in the civilian realm (Binkin & Eitelberg, 1986). The military may provide a source of social mobility for disadvantaged minorities during service because of the generally less discriminatory environment, steady employment, benefits and compensation over civilian-equivalent jobs (Kilburn et al.,

2003). The pay gap between Blacks and Whites is significantly smaller in the military than in the civilian labor market (Kelty et al., 2010).

In addition to the relatively less discriminatory job market and educational benefits provided by military service, the military may be perceived as more tolerant and meritocratic with less racial discrimination compared to the civilian labor market or educational system (Butler & Moskos, 1996). Military culture is generally thought of as relatively race-neutral with less racial discrimination/segregation in housing, educational, and social opportunities (Kelty et al., 2010). Pay, benefits, and upward mobility are almost entirely based on rank, years in service, and job performance, providing a seemingly fairer environment for minority service members than the civilian labor market. These factors may impact youth's propensity to enlist, particularly to the degree they believe they will encounter discrimination in the educational system or civilian labor market.

It is notable, however, that Black representation in the armed forces as well as minority youth interest in the armed forces has declined since the terror attacks in 2001 after steady increases throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Kleykamp, 2004). Propensity to enlist has been declining for more than two decades and studies show decreased propensity for service among Black youth is a leading factor (Woodruff et al., 2006). Propensity to serve among Black and other minority youth is declining faster than among White youth (Armor, 1996; Segal et al., 1999). Recent research indicates that the propensity-enlistment relationship is weaker for Black, Hispanic, and non-White youth,

noting an increase in minority youth who indicated that they were not inclined to join the military (Ford et al., 2014).

Little research on other racial minority members was found, which may be reflective of the generally low enlistment rate of racial minorities overall. Hispanic propensity and enlistment has been minimally studied. Hispanic enlistment has been increasing steadily since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) but they remain significantly underrepresented in the armed forces, making up approximately 10-13% of active duty service members (Armor & Gilroy, 2010; Kelty et al., 2010). Interestingly, Hispanic youth have shown the highest level of interest in the military, indicating higher propensity to serve than White youth, so the underrepresentation of Hispanic individuals in active duty roles may be indicative of screening procedures during recruitment (Kleykamp, 2006; Segal et al., 1999). Additionally, the civilian labor market may play a significant role in the lower number of Hispanic service members as Hispanic men are twice as likely as their White peers to join the labor market post-graduation rather than enlist (Kleykamp, 2006).

Immigrants serve in the armed forces and more than 65,000 (both non-citizens and naturalized citizens do serve). The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced to Congress in August, 2001 suggesting provisions that would allow immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to age sixteen a path to citizenship after serving in the military for two years (S. 1291, 2001). However, the bill has been reintroduced several times and has failed to pass.

Non-naturalized citizens can and do serve in the military. During times of peace, noncitizen members of the armed forces are eligible to obtain citizenship after one year of military service (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2013). Per the Immigration and Nationality Act, the president can issue an executive order authorizing expedited citizenship for foreign born members of the U.S. military (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2013). The last time this was invoked was September 11, 2001. Additionally, a program launched in 2009 called Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) allows certain noncitizens with in demand skills, like health care and critical languages, to join the Army in order to obtain expedited citizenship (Department of Defense, 2009). However, these legal acts and related immigration issues are part of a currently changing political climate, making it difficult to predict or draw conclusions about how immigration status may impact military propensity.

Geographic military presence. Regional differences exist in intentions toward joining the military with Northeast youth tending to have lower propensity than those in the South or Midwest (Bachman et al., 2000). Areas where it is common for youth to join the military (i.e. the South) tend to have a higher military institutional presence, which provides a higher level of exposure to the institution of the military and those who serve on active duty (Ford et al., 2014; Kleykamp, 2006). Locations with less of a military presence (i.e. active duty service members, high number of veterans, societal support of military operations) may have fewer adolescents with a high propensity to enlist in the military (Ford et al., 2014). Areas where it is more common to see others join the military

likely have strong support for joining as well as high visibility of military culture (Ford et al., 2014). The percentage of people in the armed forces in one's zip code and the local rate at which youth in that zip code join the armed forces is positively related to enlistment (Ford et al., 2014). Inclined youth in zip codes with veteran presence levels in the highest quartiles were twice as likely to join the military as those in zip codes within the lowest quartile (Ford et al., 2014). High propensity youth were more likely to join if they lived in an area with a large number of veterans (Ford et al., 2014).

Education. Educational aspirations exert a significant influence on the decision to join the military versus joining the labor force or attending college post-graduation from high school (Kleykamp, 2006). One of the major motivations for young people to enlist is to earn educational benefits for use during or after service, a factor that is often highlighted in military recruiting efforts (Segal & Segal, 2004). Expectations late in the senior year of high school have been highly predictive of college entrance by both men and women while also being highly predictive of military enlistment (Bachman et al., 2000). Those individuals with the highest level of educational success are most likely to plan on college entrance and least likely to plan on military service (Bachman et al., 2000). Individuals expecting to definitely complete college show the lowest rates of propensity and enlistment, while those expecting to not get a college degree show the highest rates (Bachman et al., 2000). Parents' education level may also impact young adults differentially. Parents' education is inversely associated with military enlistment behaviors, suggesting those with the most educated parents are less likely to enlist

(Bachman et al., 2000; Elder et al., 2010). Lower levels of parental education are associated with higher propensity to enlist, which may be caused by a perceived lack of economic opportunity or a norm of joining the workforce after high school in such families.

College expectations may be significantly impacted by high school performance. The lower a person's grade point average (GPA), the more likely he or she is to be inclined toward military service, while students who consistently obtained good grades in high school were more likely to plan on entering college (Bachman et al., 2000). Students with a C average were twice as likely to report greater propensity for military service as those with A averages for both men and women (Bachman et al., 2000). It that appears aspiring to a four-year college degree decreases the odds of pursuing activity besides college (Kleykamp, 2006). Although military enlistees do express college aspirations and earn relatively average grades and test scores, they appear less likely to express high propensity to join the military when measured pre-graduation (Spence et al., 2013).

Military service may appear as a more realistic opportunity for those with a pattern of underachievement (relatively high cognitive ability and relatively average to low high school performance). Even among those who expected to both enlist and enter college, the numbers who actually entered college are small (Bachman, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 2001). Military service improves the odds of attaining an associate's degree or some college but actually reduces the odds of obtaining a bachelor's degree, suggesting the military serves as a strong pathway for obtaining at least some higher

education, but may not promote the same level of education as entering college post-graduation (Wang et al., 2012). Interestingly, military requirements and entrance testing favors those with higher cognitive capacities and therefore, recruiters may be seeking those with higher grades and higher aspirations for college.

Socioeconomic status. The perceived vocational/employment and monetary benefits offered by the military appear to be a major incentive for enlistment, particularly under difficult economic conditions in the U.S. (Bachman et al., 1998; Eighmey, 2006; Hanssens & Levien, 1983). Several individuals may choose military service as a means to maximize their economic well-being through either immediate monetary gain or via job training and increased access to college to which they may not have otherwise had access (Asch, Kilburn, Klerman, National Defense Research Institute, & Rand Corp, 1999; Bennett & McDonald, 2013; Kilburn et al., 2003; Kleykamp, 2006). The pragmatic motivations of pay, benefits, enlistment bonuses, and money for college serve to modestly increase propensity of enlistment (Woodruff et al., 2006). Those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may be provided opportunities not available in civilian life, which places military service as a good option for advancement through education and job training (Bouffard, 2005).

Individuals from economically disadvantaged families appear more likely to serve in the military than those whose families are more privileged economically (MacLean & Elder, 2007). It appears that higher levels of parental socioeconomic status (SES) diminish the appeal of military service compared to going to college, with youth from

lower SES being nearly half as likely to enroll in college as opposed to enlist in the military as peers from more privileged backgrounds (Elder et al., 2010; Kleykamp, 2006). One possible explanation for this relationship is that individuals from economically impoverished backgrounds may be attracted to the military for the employment and training opportunities it provides (Wolfe et al., 2005). Some may view it as a means to leave an impoverished neighborhood and ultimately escape a disadvantaged background (MacLean & Elder, 2007; Sampson & Laub, 1996).

Potential enlistees' perceptions of the job opportunities offered by the military (such as attractive and interesting working conditions, adequate compensation, job security, opportunities for advancement, and a relatively discrimination free work zone) must exceed those opportunities perceived to be available via alternatives post-high-school (Bachman et al., 2000). Benefits including housing assistance, health care, child care, and household allowances may serve as an important draw for those with limited or perceived limited employment opportunities (Korb & Segal, 2011). Individuals may be more likely to perceive these benefits as personally necessary and vital if they come from an economically disadvantaged background and have little desire to attend college.

Attitudes, values, and beliefs. In addition to monetary, vocational, and educational benefits, some individuals note several intangible motives for joining the military. Meta-analytic data indicates that attitudes and judgments are some of the best predictors of job choice and career path (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). Eighmey (2006) identified seven distinct motivational themes for joining

the military: fidelity (faithfulness to goals and people), risk (willingness to make personal sacrifices), family (desire to be near family and have their approval), benefits (having a satisfying career), challenges (having physical and mental challenge), and adventure (travel and experiences). Institutional motivation, an enlistment motivation that captures these seven intangible motives, has been found to be particularly high in those who also report high enlistment propensity compared to individuals who report low propensity to enlist (Woodruff et al., 2006). Service members who were institutionally motivated report greater levels of commitment (in terms of reenlistment intentions) and combat readiness and endorsed attributes commonly associated with effective fighting units, like teamwork and leadership (Griffith, 2008). Military recruitment efforts focus specifically on these factors, attempting to appeal to young people through promotion of a sense of pride, strength, and adventure (Spence et al., 2013).

Specifically, the patriotic adventure theme seems to tap individuals' interests in opportunities for adventure, physical challenges, doing something positive for their country, and doing something of which to be proud (Woodruff et al., 2006). This dimension seems to be a more powerful determinant of propensity than other factors, including external incentives (Woodruff et al., 2006). Patriotism may have specifically surged following the events of September 11, potentially inspiring individuals who were not interested in the military to change their minds (Ford et al., 2014). Fidelity, a value-oriented concept that reflects loyalty to others and ideas, being part of an elite team, and leadership, provided important explanatory significance when measuring propensity to

enlist (Eighmey, 2006). It appears that for the most privileged and economically well-off groups, institutional values might be a main motivation since they come from backgrounds without a need for the immediate economic assistance provided by military service (Wang et al., 2012).

Another attitudinal and value-based variable that may impact propensity is religiosity. Limited evidence indicates that military service members are disproportionately members of conservative religious affiliations (Segal & Segal, 2004). Young men classified as “highly or moderately religious evangelical” are more likely to join the military compared to their “highly religious non-evangelical” counterparts while those with a “nonreligious” view exhibit lower odds of enlistment (Burdette et al., 2009). While this appears to be preliminary, limited data, religious adherence may impact propensity to enlist for those with very strong viewpoints, potentially creating influence through a direct connection to attitudes regarding duty, honor, and other less tangible benefits of military service.

Familial and psychological factors. Individuals considering military service are only asked for a small amount of psychological and social history during initial conversations with recruiters. However, several psychological, psychosocial, and familial factors have been associated with propensity to enlist. These are enumerated below.

Trauma. Early experiences of trauma may also impact propensity to enlist. Enlistment seems to offer a “safe haven” for survivors of childhood trauma, including abuse, gangs, and sexual trauma (Merrill et al., 1998). Among enlisted military persons,

rates of pre-military trauma are substantial and exceed civilian rates (Merrill et al., 1999; Straus & Gelles, 1988). Several researchers posit the prevalence of adverse childhood events like abuse and neglect among military populations may be because some individuals enlist to escape violent, dysfunctional environments (Ginexi et al., 1995; Woodruff et al., 2006). In fact, to escape from family problems, suffocating home environments, and abusive or broken family relationships was one of eight main reasons enlistees provided for joining the military (Ginexi et al., 1995). Sadler and colleagues (2004) found that 86% of those who acknowledged some form of physical or sexual abuse prior to enlistment indicated they joined the military in order to escape the abusive situation (Sadler, Booth, Mengeling, & Doebbeling, 2004).

The military may serve as a route for a certain subset of people to escape dysfunctional home environments (Blosnich, Dichter, Cerulli, Batten, & Bossarte, 2014). Ultimately, it appears pre-military trauma experiences work more to impact outcomes after enlistment than to impact propensity prior to enlistment. Several studies have shown experiences of childhood sexual or physical abuse increases the likelihood of early termination from basic training or within the first year of military service (Merrill, Stander, Thomsen, Crouch, & Milner, 2006; Rosen & Martin, 1996; Wolfe et al., 2005). In one group of recruits who failed or dropped out of basic training, 40% reported a history of child abuse/neglect or childhood sexual abuse (Crawford & Fiedler, 1992).

Substance use and delinquency. Previous substance use and delinquent behavior may also significantly impact propensity to enlist in the military, particularly given

military enlistment standards related to alcohol use and the disqualifying nature of severe alcohol abuse and legal issues (Sackett & Mavor, 2006). Recruits at 18 years old are at increased risk for frequent, heavy drinking compared to recruits over the age of 21 (Ames, Cunradi, & Moore, 2002). Further, 18-year-old recruits who do drink are at higher risk for heavy and problem drinking while in the military than their older peers (Ames et al., 2002). Adolescents engaged in binge drinking also may experience more alcohol-related consequences (legal and personal) than same aged peers (Taylor, Haddock, Poston, & Talcott, 2007).

Research regarding the impact of substance abuse on propensity is mixed. Some research indicates those who engage in binge drinking were significantly more likely than their peers to indicate a propensity to join the military post-graduation, even when controlling for demographic variables (Barry et al., 2013). There appeared to be a positive linear relationship between binge drinking and propensity to join the military (Barry et al., 2013). However, other researchers suggest substance use (cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana) measures show little to no relationship with propensity to enlist, particularly for measures of alcohol use (Bachman et al., 2000). The relationship between substance use and propensity to enlist requires further elucidation.

Additionally, aggressive and violent behaviors pre-enlistment may impact propensity. The odds of enlistment for male delinquents are more than 40% greater than for same-aged peers who have not engaged in delinquent behaviors with this number increasing to 80% for women (Sampson et al., 1997; Shihadeh & Flynn, 1996).

Involvement in problem behaviors, like physical fighting with others, also increases the likelihood of military service over going to college (Sampson et al., 1997). There are several assertions for why this relationship between delinquency and propensity exists. Some posit that the military provides enlistees the opportunity to “knife off” their past, offering a blank slate for more positive development in the future (Sampson & Laub, 1996; p. 351). The regimented structure of the military lifestyle may provide a positive place for personal growth for those with very little structure in adolescence or those engaged in chaotic, delinquent behaviors (Eighmey, 2006). Individuals who have previously engaged in delinquent behaviors may view entrance into the military as an age-appropriate transition into adulthood, marking an appropriate time to desist from further delinquent behavior (Sampson et al., 1997). Some individuals may be motivated by self, peers, or family to join the military in order to transform their lives in a way that still allows for some level of aggression and violence (Eighmey, 2006).

In a related vein, others suggest the military may provide a safer, more acceptable channel for aggressive and violent tendencies associated with delinquency, encouraging legitimized and excusable forms of aggression (Sampson et al., 1997). This view suggests those who are already engaged in violent behaviors are then positively reinforced for similar behaviors upon enlisting in the military. The potential impact of delinquent behavior on military entry is not as significant as the potential barriers to steady employment or engagement with higher education (Sampson et al., 1997). The relationship between delinquency and enlistment becomes increasingly negative at higher

levels of delinquency, suggesting that some individuals are too entrenched with a delinquent lifestyle to see the military as a viable, beneficial option (Sampson et al., 1997).

Family factors. Parents have a critical influence on their child's career aspiration, providing encouragement and validation of their child's life ambition and career decisions while also modeling behaviors and expressing attitudes related to education and career placements (Sackett & Mavor, 2003). The mere structure of the family may influence a potential enlistee's propensity. Family structure has been linked to a wide range of adolescent outcomes including behavioral and academic problems (Manning & Lamb, 2003), educational aspirations (Sun, 2003), and early home leaving (Mitchell, Wister, & Burch, 1989). Alternative family structures have been found to be associated with military enlistment (Bachman et al., 2000; Elder et al., 2010). Single-parent families tend to be poorer than two-parent families, while divorced and remarried families may contribute less monetarily toward their children's college costs (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2012; López Turley & Desmond, 2011). Each of these factors may influence young adults propensity to join the military as it impacts their monetary need as previously discussed. The highest rates of enlistment occur among those in single-parent families while the lowest rate occurs among those with two parents, even when controlling for demographic variables (Bachman et al., 2000). Family structure may relate to military enlistment by influencing SES of the family and the individual, shaping parent-child

relationships, and creating feelings of social isolation (Elder et al., 2010; Spence et al., 2013).

Parental involvement in their children's lives, including monitoring of the children's behaviors, and participation in parent-child activities result in more positive outcomes and is a primary means with which to avoid problem behaviors (i.e. dropping out, delinquency, failing grades; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Coleman, 1988). Single parents may have less time to supervise or be involved directly with their children and non-biological parents may also have less influence with adolescent children (Spence et al., 2013). The potential effects of living in a single-parent family, including diminished economic resources, social isolation, and potentially diminished parental presence, have been linked to greater odds of military enlistment relative to college enrollment (Spence et al., 2013). The financial benefits as well as the potential to join a cohesive, supportive peer group offered by the military may effectively attract those from single parent homes (Spence et al., 2013).

Family structure may further be linked to the decision to join the military through a heightened need for belonging or a desire to live a stable lifestyle that may arise from feelings of loneliness, lack of support, or a chaotic home environment (Spence et al., 2013). Children in single-parent families tend to report lower levels of social support generally and those in single-parent families report generally less family cohesion (Amato, 1987; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Additionally, individuals in step-families experience an increase in the probability of leaving home early (for college, the labor

market, or the military) of more than 20% in comparison to those living with both biological parents (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998). Living with a step-parent during adolescence has been associated with a greater likelihood of entering the military compared to attending college (Elder et al., 2010). Growing up in an alternative family structure may significantly impact various factors that then indirectly work to decrease propensity to enlist (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). Spence and colleagues (2013) propose that adolescents from non-traditional family backgrounds may be more inclined to take on completely independent roles rather than semi-autonomous roles like college students. Youth with perceived pressure or desire to achieve independence from their family of origin are more likely to enlist generally, potentially seeing the military as an opportunity to find a stable, supportive environment outside the family.

For all adolescents, parents' opinions and attitudes impact the children's opinions and attitudes. Parental attitudes predict youth's attitudes regarding military enlistment, suggesting a complete understanding of enlistment propensity must include parental attitudinal variables as well as the enlistees' own attitudes (Gibson, Griepentrog, & Marsh, 2007). Youth perceptions of parental attitudes toward enlistment have been linked at a significant level (Legree et al., 2000). Parental recommendations of military service and communication about the enlistment process have been positively correlated with youth's propensity to enlist (Gibson et al., 2007). However, the same research indicates youth perceptions of parental attitudes regarding propensity to enlist are often inaccurate, so further research is necessary in this area (Legree et al., 2000).

Finally, parental attitudes may be significantly impacted by parental or family involvement in the military (Elder et al., 2010). Sons of fathers with military careers are twice as likely to enlist and twice as likely to serve a career in the military as opposed to the minimum time obligation (Faris, 1981). Children of current and former military members are more likely to report high propensity to enlist, suggesting that the values that sustain a positive attitude toward the military can be transmitted by military parents as well as other family members (Asch et al., 1999; Kleykamp, 2006; Segal & Segal, 2004). Findings regarding the influence of family structure and parental attitudes are consistent with the notion that parents exert their influence during the adolescent decision-making process to a significant extent (Legree et al., 2000).

In summary, understanding the connection between parents and children appears crucial in understanding the propensity-enlistment relationship. One of the most fundamental ways of conceptualizing this connection is through the lens of attachment.

Attachment

The relationship between parents and children is one linked through mutual experiences and a developmental trajectory that lasts throughout their lives. Attachment theory presents a widely supported theoretical framework from which to understand individuals as they progress through developmental stages. Attachment involves an individual's internal ideas and perceptions of early relationships with primary caregivers and reflects how secure, caring, and trusting these relationships are (Maccoby, 1992). From infancy, attachments to parents or other major caregivers are biologically

predisposed to form as the infant often sees the adult as a safe base and secure haven that in some way invests in the child's survival (Dykas & Cassidy, 2011). The theory of attachment proposes a universal need to form attachment with another stronger, wiser individual who can be protective and increase individuals' chances of survival (Mayseless, 2004).

A Brief History of Attachment Theories

Bowlby proposed that humans develop mental representations of relationships that help them gather and interpret social events and form the basis for future attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Dykas & Cassidy, 2011; Feeney & Noller, 1996). These representations take the form of expectations about how others will respond and how effective individuals will be in soliciting needed and desired responses from others that guide behavior, affect, and perceptions throughout life (Bowlby, 1980). It is believed that the attachment style, which is developed in childhood, may determine how open and trusting we are in future attachment relationships (Maccoby, 1992). Further, attachment style may help guide and be reflected in individual's responses to emotionally distressing situations (Feeney & Noller, 1996). Attachment behavior forms an organized behavioral system in which a set of behaviors (i.e. crying, smiling, reaching out) serve the same function (maintenance of proximity to caregivers). When children feel distressed or alarmed after perceiving a threat, attempts to increase proximity and to maintain contact with attachment figures is activated (Mayseless, 2004). Children behave in accordance with these expectations, serving to reinforce expectations of self, others, and the world.

Actions based on attachment models tend to produce consequences that reinforce the model itself. When forming new relationships, children seek to recreate the roles and interaction patterns that they learned in the context of early relationships, even if the relationships were destructive or non-supportive (Sroufe, 1988).

Bowlby (1973) suggests the goal of attachment behavior is proximity maintenance. In general, attachment figures also serve as a secure base from which children feel safe to explore and attempt to master the environment (Feeney & Noller, 1996). When children perceive a threat in the environment, proximity is likely to be sought in order to establish comfort (Feeney & Noller, 1996). Bowlby (1973) suggests the three defining features of the attachment relationship are proximity seeking, secure base, and safe haven. Therefore, when infants are confident that an attachment figure is available, they are much less prone to intense or chronic fear. Additionally, these patterns of caretaker availability and child confidence are built up slowly during the early years of life and then persist relatively unchanged throughout adulthood (Bowlby, 1973). Expectations concerning the availability of caregivers are based on two variables: whether the attachment figure is judged to be someone who generally responds when called on for support, and whether the self is judged to be someone toward whom others are likely to respond.

A fundamental proposition within Bowlby's theory of attachment states that infants' earliest attachment experiences become internalized in an enduring manner and serve to continually generate and maintain the capacity to cope with stress and a state of

emotional security or lack thereof (Bowlby, 1970). As individuals develop throughout life, attachment models become part of higher order models of the self and others, though models of specific relationships remain intact throughout the lifespan (Main et al., 1985). Attachment to caregivers not only maintains an evolutionary role in the survival of children, it also promotes adaptive development across the lifespan (Bowlby, 1970).

Ammaniti, Van Ijzendoorn, Speranza, and Tambelli (2000) cite four distinct processes within attachment theory. First, the development and stabilization of attachment patterns during the first five years of life are based primarily on a child's genetic makeup and their relational experiences with attachment figures. Secondly, these interactions with attachment figures are internalized and become representational working models. Third, developmental transitions throughout life often require specific attachment strategies that may in some cases lead to developmental difficulties. Finally, intergenerational transmission of attachment strategies from parents to children occurs frequently as parental attachment patterns translate into parental behaviors.

Mary Ainsworth's work provided a significant enhancement to attachment theory, revealing four distinct attachment styles of children that were later found to be lasting and similar to patterns of adult attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Ainsworth and her colleagues (1978) suggested that organized patterns of infant behavior can be used to identify styles of attachment. Ainsworth (1978) delineated three such styles: insecurely attached-avoidant, securely attached, and insecurely attached-resistant or anxious-ambivalent. These patterns are related to the amount of interaction between mother and

infant and to the mother's responsiveness to the infant's cries for support. Avoidant children respond with defensiveness and avoidance when in close contact with caregivers that may often respond with a rejecting, rigid, or hostile quality of caregiving (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Anxious-ambivalent children respond with anxious protest behaviors (i.e. crying, clinging) at separation or angry ambivalence typically in response to an inconsistent, intrusive, or insensitive quality of caregiving (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Secure children are sociable and engage in high levels of active exploration, appearing upset at separation from caregivers that generally display a responsive and warm quality of caregiving (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Working with the foundational ideas developed by Bowlby and Ainsworth, other researchers have constructed additional typologies of adult attachment. For example, Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) used three dimensions to describe adult relational constructs including avoidance, anxiety, and security. Avoidant individuals tend to distrust others and strive to maintain emotional and psychological distance from relationships (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000). They avoid emotional dependency for fear they may be disappointed as they were in early attachment relationships. This distancing often limits avoidant individuals from interacting in intimate relationships and such individuals are often seen as aloof and excessively independent in relationships (Simpson & Rholes, 1998). In conflict, avoidant individuals are less likely to engage or respond to signs of distress from others. Instead, they are more prone to utilize self-soothing behaviors which may manifest in maladaptive coping like the use of drugs or alcohol

(Simpson & Rholes, 1998). Conflict is often seen as an opportunity for continued distancing instead of an opportunity to seek support (Fraley & Shaver, 1998).

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) also hypothesized the presence of an additional attachment style within the avoidant construct, fearful-avoidant. Individuals with fearful-avoidant attachment may desire very close, intimate relationships but fear the discomfort of such closeness. This may be due to negative views of both themselves and those that are close to them as they view themselves as unworthy of companionship and do not trust others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Anxious-Ambivalent individuals are often worried others will fail to be available for support in times of need, ultimately fearing abandonment (Fraley & Shaver, 1998). They are more likely to become overly sensitive to attachment cues and attempt to overcompensate by being excessively clingy. Attempts by the attachment figure to distance may be interpreted as a need to increase such behaviors in order to salvage the relationship (Fraley & Shaver, 1998). Anxious-Ambivalent individuals maintain a more negative view of themselves and their relationships than those with secure attachment styles (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998).

Others have proposed that there are two fundamental dimensions of adult attachment behaviors: attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance (Fraley, 2010; Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Attachment-related anxiety reflects a predisposition toward anxiety and vigilance over rejection and potential abandonment while attachment-related avoidance reflects discomfort with

closeness and reluctance to be dependent or intimate with others (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Adults with high levels of attachment-related anxiety may tend to worry about availability, responsiveness, and attention of important people in their lives while those with low levels indicate greater security in responsiveness of others (Fraley, 2010). Additionally, those with high levels of attachment-related avoidance may prefer to avoid reliance on others or resist opening up to others while those with low levels may appear more comfortable being intimate with others (Fraley, 2010).

Adults with a generally secure attachment style would have low scores on measures of both attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety, indicating that they are more likely to seek out support when distressed or provide support when others are distressed (Fraley, 2010). Individuals with a preoccupied/anxious-ambivalent attachment style would be expected to have high score on measures of attachment-related anxiety and low scores on attachment-related avoidance while those with a fearful avoidant style would have high scores on both attachment-related anxiety and avoidance. Finally, those with dismissive attachment styles would be expected to have low attachment-related anxiety and high attachment-related avoidance (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Impact of Secure and Insecure Attachment

Individuals who are securely attached have a history of positive attachment interactions and a global sense of security in relationships (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). Individuals with a secure attachment style maintain generally high self-esteem compared

with others and do not fear emotional intimacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They are comfortable depending on others and being depended on while being more constructive in conflict (Fraley & Shaver, 1998). As opposed to conflict creating distancing or clingy behaviors, secure individuals use conflict as an opportunity to share feelings and strengthen the relationship (Fraley & Shaver, 1998). Secure attachment has been associated with more positive psychological adjustment, decreased delinquency, and lower rates of depression and anxiety (Marganska et al., 2013). Along with increased risk for development of mental health disorders, insecure attachment is a risk factor for the development of disease and chronic illness, particularly conditions involving the cardiovascular system (McWilliams & Bailey, 2010). Specifically, anxious attachment is more strongly associated with poor health and increased health concerns, including stroke, heart attack, and high blood pressure (McWilliams & Bailey, 2010).

Kohut suggested psychological health is improved by the presence of responsive, empathic caregivers (as cited in Tyson & Tyson, 1990, p. 86). Further, Kohut suggested the personality of parents and environment they create account significantly for pathology in the child (as cited in Tyson & Tyson, 1990, p. 86). Insecurely attached children and adolescents are at an increased risk for externalizing problems like aggression and hostility (Madigan et al., 2013). Some research indicates that individuals who have attachment deficiencies struggle to engage in age appropriate interactions, lack adaptive boundaries, and maintain primitive defenses (Fonagy et al., 2002). This may lead to individuals acting out aggressively or becoming demanding and clingy with

others. If the parent-child relationship is disrupted during infancy, leading to an insecure attachment style, long-term negative consequences may occur, including difficulty showing affection or concern for others and a lack of behavior aimed at exploring the larger world outside the immediate family of origin (Hoeve et al., 2012; Madigan et al., 2013). A history of neglect, abuse or other forms of impaired attachment systems have been correlated with a variety of maladaptive behaviors, including aggression, impulsivity, and drug use (Anda et al., 1999). Insecure attachment has been found to be linked to delinquency in children and adolescence regardless of gender, suggesting conventional, non-delinquent behavior is a by-product of strong parent-child attachment relationships (Hoeve et al., 2012).

Attachment has also been found to be predictive of personal strengths such as self-reliance, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-regulation (Fonagy et al., 2002). The disruption in the attachment process may lead to a variety of psychiatric symptoms later in life with the severity of attachment system impairment corresponding with severity of psychiatric symptoms (De Rick, Vanheule, & Verhaeghe, 2009; Scott, Levy, & Pincus, 2009; Stubenbort, Greeno, Mannarino, & Cohen, 2002). Insecure attachment early in life, particularly avoidant attachment, seems to be associated with increased internalizing problems, including behaviors like social isolation and withdrawal and symptoms of depression and anxiety, specifically Generalized Anxiety Disorder (Madigan et al., 2013; Tasca et al., 2009). Children who are insecurely attached are likely to take maladaptive internal working models of interpersonal relationships into the broader social context,

displaying decreased ability to cope with stress while behaving in ways that bring about continued adverse experiences (Madigan et al., 2013).

Attachment theory proposes internalizing symptoms of depression and anxiety originate in children's uncertainty and beliefs about their caregivers' response to attachment related needs (Madigan et al., 2013). For example, as a result of experiencing unresponsive or rejecting caregiving, avoidant children may come to expect continued rejection, perceiving others as hostile and unsupportive. This may lead to internalization of negative affect, fear of rejection, and feelings of alienation and hopelessness throughout life (Manassis, 2001). The non-optimal functioning of the attachment system may constitute a sequence of distress-exacerbating mental events that manifest as internalizing symptoms (i.e. catastrophizing, rumination, depression, anxiety) when children and adolescents encounter stressful life events (Carlson & Sroufe, 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Internalizing symptoms seen in insecurely attached children and adolescents tend to perpetuate themselves through manifestation of externalizing symptoms that act to maintain negative behavioral patterns and leading to overestimations and disproportionate attention to threat, distress, and negative views of the self and others (Doron et al., 2012).

Further, there appears to be a difference between the impact from high attachment anxiety and high attachment avoidance on internalizing symptoms. Those with high attachment-related anxiety may show increased exaggeration of emotions and care seeking in times of need while those with high attachment-related avoidance may be

more likely to suppress negative affect and decrease support seeking when it is needed most (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998; Riggs & Kaminski, 2010). In contrast, securely attached adults are less likely to develop depression and anxiety, have greater confidence in being able to manage emotions, are better able to stay focused on goals, and accept their emotions more readily during times of adversity (Marganska et al., 2013). They often perceive and seek more support from others, both in times of need and in times of calm (Riggs, Jacobovitz, & Hazan, 2002). Research indicates securely attached adults report higher job satisfaction than those with other attachment styles and were confident they were valued by their coworkers (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Such results demonstrate how early attachment environments have a long-lasting impact on functioning later in life.

Factors Influencing Attachment

The attachment styles suggested by several researchers including Ainsworth (1979) raise questions regarding the origin of individual differences in attachment patterns. It has been suggested that the specific manifestations of the attachment system are influenced by a wide range of factors, including individual experience, genetics, and cultural variables (Ainsworth, 1989).

Research into the determinants of attachment quality has traditionally focused on the gender of the attachment figure (the infant-mother relationship). A great deal of research supports the relationship between attachment quality and maternal variables. Attachment style has been related to various indices of quality of care including

responsiveness to crying, timing of feeding, cooperation, sensitivity, and acceptance (Ainsworth, 1979; Bates, Maslin, & Frankel, 1985; Isabella, 1993). Later research expanded to study infant interactions with fathers as well. Infant-father security is related to earlier ratings of positive father-infant interaction as well as father's attitudes toward the infant and the paternal role (Cox, Owen, Henderson, & Margand, 1992).

While the impact of countless factors has been studied with regard to the attachment relationship, the current study focuses on those aspects of the attachment research most relevant to the current study. These include cultural variation in attachment, the stability of attachment over time, and attachment during the "leaving home" transition between adolescence and young adulthood. It should be noted that data about the stability of attachment over time is by necessity longitudinal in nature, while most of the studies of the leaving home transition are cross-sectional and measure attachment at one point in time. This leads to understandable differences in conclusions about the degree of impact of attachment, which should be kept in mind.

Cultural variation. Some research attention has been given to the cross-cultural study of attachment patterns. Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988) found the distribution of attachment classifications in eight countries shows considerable variability both within and across countries with greater relative frequencies of avoidant attachment styles in Western Europe and greater frequencies of anxious-ambivalent attachment styles in Israel and Japan. These results suggest different attachment patterns reflect culturally based practices in child-rearing. Infants from cultures that encourage early independence

may exhibit less stress in response to separation (Sagi, Van Ijzendoorn, & Koren-Karie, 1991). Alternatively, individuals who identified as being a part of more collectivist cultures (India/East Asia living in the U.S., identified as either being born in another country, being first-generation, or strongly self-identifying with the culture of a non-U.S. country) generally show higher attachment anxiety (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013).

More individualistic cultures, including Eastern European groups, report the greatest attachment security (Merz & Consedine, 2012). There may be several reasons for this cultural variation in attachment security. Some hypothesize that attachment to parents may translate into attachment to culture of origin for Asian and Hispanic individuals in America (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013). This can then impact levels of acculturation seen in first generation children growing up in the U.S. Those with higher levels of identification with the dominant culture show lower levels of attachment-related anxiety, potentially because individuals with lower relational and cultural concerns then have more resources to allow themselves to acculturate into the dominant culture (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013).

Stability of attachment over time. Attachment theorists propose that attachment patterns are relatively stable into adulthood. According to Bowlby (1980), continuity of attachment style is due primarily to the persistence of mental models of the self and others which tend to be stable because they develop and operate in the context of a fairly stable family setting. The ways of thinking incorporated in the model become habitual and automatic over time, operating largely outside of conscious awareness, rendering

them more resistant to change. Whereas in infancy and early childhood, behaviors such as proximity seeking provide markers for attachment security, in adolescence, the emotional bond more aptly reflects the nature of the attachment to parents (Benson, McWey, & Ross, 2006).

This is not to say attachment models are completely unchanging. Bowlby (1980) did note that attachment patterns vary in stability throughout life depending on the degree of satisfaction each person derives from the attachment relationship. When the fit between actual social exchanges and the working attachment model becomes so lacking that the model is not effective, individuals may accommodate the model to fit better with reality (Bowlby, 1980). The natural dynamics of the attachment system work to create a situation in which, if there is a substantial change in attachment patterns, the change will only be temporary (Fraley, Vicary, Brumbaugh, & Roisman, 2011). After a period of time, the person will gravitate back toward the levels of security already established, falling into patterns of behavior that continue to reinforce attachment styles and beliefs (Fraley et al., 2011). Securely attached individuals show less variation in attachment pattern and attachment behaviors when compared to insecurely attached individuals (Pinquart, Feussner, & Ahnert, 2013).

Morris (1981) suggested that, because of the primacy and depth of early attachment relationships between infants and caregivers, the bond is likely to serve as a prototype for later relationships. Ainsworth (1989) proposed that attachment relationships are a particular type of affectional bond characterized by long-lasting ties and desire to

maintain closeness. Attachment relationships are thus distinguished from other affectional bonds by the seeking of closeness and resulting feelings of comfort and security (Bowlby, 1973). Attachment theorists conclude that some adult relationships, including the relationship between adults and their parents, are likely to continue to display properties of attachment bonds, including proximity seeking, security and comfort seeking, and continued persistence of the attachment relationship (Ainsworth, 1979). Attachment style appears stable even when controlling for personality traits and period of life in which attachment is measured (Fraley et al., 2011; Groh et al., 2014).

Leaving home transition. The transitional period from adolescence and high school into young adulthood and leaving home is a critical period in the developmental process. This developmental period has been recognized as distinct in itself and critical to the formation of unique identities (Arnett, 2000). As adolescents mature, the sense of security is attributed less to the physical presence of parents and more the affective and cognitive aspects such as trust, perceived mutual respect, expectations of sensitivity, and belief the adolescent themselves deserves empathy from parents (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

Adolescence has been described as a significant time for reworking of internal working models of attachment, owing to the emergence of formal working operational capacities as well as the simultaneous formation of significant relationships outside the family (Allen, 2008; Scharf & Mayseless, 2007). This time period has been addressed by several theorists, including Erikson (1968) who described this period of life as one where

individuals primary goal is to resolve the question “Who am I?” Arnett (2000) identified this period as a new phase in itself for individuals between 18 and 25 years of age, theorizing three distinct changes in life: demographically (change in residence), subjectivity (self-report of being a child vs. an adult), and identity exploration (who an individual is with respect to love, work, and worldview).

As individuals mature into adulthood, it appears adults with various attachment patterns show different profiles of coping with this separation. Attachment security during leaving home transitions has been shown to be very stable with perceived security in attachment predicting positive expectations of support during the high school-post high school transition (Larose & Boivin, 1998). Securely attached adults seem to have undergone the traditional and normative gradual process of separation and individuation (Mayseless et al., 1996). Often, they display decreased stress when living away from parents’ households and are more involved in close, romantic relationships than those with other attachment styles while maintaining close communication with their mothers (Mayseless et al., 1996). Significant separations do not appear to constitute a threat and securely attached adults tend to react with self-reliance when separated from parents. Secure young adults report generally superior functioning across multiple domains, suggesting generally good adjustment to transition (Cooper et al., 1998).

Ambivalent young adults seem to desire a separation from their parents’ households and have less success establishing a committed, close romantic relationship (Mayseless et al., 1996). Although they appear eager to leave the house of their primary

attachment figures, they may react to this separation with anxiety responses, feelings of rejection, and self-blame, impairing their ability to function in adult relationships with others (Maysless et al., 1996). Ambivalent young adults report the poorest self-concepts and highest levels of risky behaviors, both of which may impact the leaving home transition (Cooper et al., 1998).

Avoidant adults physically separated from their parents' households at a lower rate than both securely and ambivalently attached young adults (Maysless et al., 1996). Additionally, they are less likely to form intimate, close relationships with anyone outside the household, indicating a diminished involvement with relationships generally and little desire to either leave the house or build new relationships (Maysless et al., 1996). Avoidant young adults appeared less hostile and depressed but were also less socially competent generally which may then impact their comfort when making decisions that would cause them to leave home (Cooper et al., 1998).

In summary, it appears perceived attachment security in the parent-adolescent relationship, regardless of race or gender, promotes positive outcomes during the post-high school transition period and guards against negative expectations of life outcomes (Cooper et al., 1998; Larose & Boivin, 1998). Understanding the role of attachment in the transition to adulthood was important in the present investigation, as the majority of individuals considering military service are between ages 17 and 21 years of age, and they may be confused or undecided about their future and life goals, regardless of military propensity. As adolescents transition into adulthood, their sense of attachment to

parents is critical to successful navigation of this transition phase, as it impacts their level of individuation and self-efficacy beliefs which may then impact their propensity to enlist in the military (Hay & Ashman, 2003).

Attachment and Military Propensity

Military service can be seen as a significant turning point in the life course, being impacted by and directly impacting several life domains as already discussed. Bowlby's attachment theory provides a relevant theoretical basis to highlight individual differences in adjustment and changes in relationships with parents when considering the end of secondary education and leaving home transition (Mayseless, 2004). A major aspect of passage from adolescence to adulthood includes the physical separation from parents to live away from home (Moore, 1987). Approximately two-thirds of new military recruits are leaving their parent's home for the first time (Bachman et al., 2001). In the U.S., home-leaving for military service constitutes the second most common form of semi-autonomy from parents (with college attendance being first; Goldscheider & Davanzo, 1986). Parents remain primary attachment figures through adolescence and early adulthood, as young individuals explore options following leaving secondary school.

A key function of attachment figures is to provide a secure base from which to explore the physical and social environment. When considering options following high school, the separation from parents for either college or military service can be considered a stressful separation that would activate attachment models (Mayseless, 2004). Just as avoidant infants appear to use exploratory behavior as a means of avoiding

contact with their mothers, avoidant adults may work compulsively or use college or the military to avoid or distance themselves from intimate relationships with parents (Feeney & Noller, 1996). Contrastingly, anxious-ambivalent adults may tend to see work, college, or military service as an opportunity to meet unmet attachment needs.

In conclusion, when considering post-secondary school options, the potential for significant and perhaps stressful physical and emotional separation from parents may serve to trigger attachment models. The security of the attachment to parents may impact adolescents' propensity to join the military as the separation serves to heighten anxiety and/or avoidance patterns within an attachment framework.

Summary and Rationale for the Current Study

To date, no study has focused on the relationship between parent-child attachment security and the propensity to enlist in the military. The current investigation filled this gap in the literature. Prior research has indicated a number of factors impact both attachment and propensity. Propensity has been shown to be related to gender (Segal et al., 1998; Woodruff et al., 2006; Keltz et al., 2010), race (Armor, 1996; Bachman et al., 2000), military institutional presence (Ford et al., 2014), educational plans and achievement (Bachman et al., 2000), socioeconomic status (Bouffard, 2005), and attitudes/values (Woodruff et al., 2006). Additionally, trauma experiences (Merrill et al., 1998), substance use (Ames et al., 2002), and delinquency (Sampson et al., 1997; Shihadeh & Flynn, 1996) also impact propensity, although these factors are less understood. Attachment insecurity has been shown to be related to increased internalizing

(Fonagy et al., 2002; Madigan et al., 2013) and externalizing symptoms (Fraley & Shaver, 2000) due to increased attachment-related avoidance and/or anxiety. These variables were taken into consideration when examining the relationship between attachment and propensity.

Research Questions

There were two broad research questions that framed the current investigation. The first was, “What is the relationship, if any, between parent-child attachment and the propensity to enlist in the military?” The second was “What factors may influence the relationship between parent-child attachment and the propensity to enlist in the military?” Specific hypotheses and analyses are detailed in the Methods chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Method

This chapter includes a description of the study participants and instrumentation, and details the procedures followed. The analysis plan used following data collection is also included.

Participants

Participants were 18-year-old high school seniors in the U.S. Inclusion criteria included the ability to read English at a sixth-grade level, access to a computer with internet capabilities, and completion of the survey prior to high school graduation. These criteria ensured participants were in the relevant age range and relevant developmental period, but have not yet initiated concrete decisions following high school graduation. A total of 188 participants were recruited, ensuring a 92% level of power in detecting differences significant at the $p = .05$ level. Additional information about the sample demographics are presented in the Results chapter.

Measures

Each participant received four instruments including (a) personal data form, (b) attitudes and values questionnaire, (c) the Experiences in Close Relationships –

Relationship Structures (ECR-RS; Fraley, Niedenthal, Marks, Brumbaugh, & Vicary, 2006), and (d) the Brief Trauma Questionnaire (BTQ; Schnurr, Vielhauer, Weathers, & Findler, 2004). Each is reviewed below with respect to test components and technical adequacy.

Personal data form. A brief survey regarding personal data, including demographics, was created for this study. Specific demographic data collected included gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, region of the U.S. in which the participant resides, type of residence (urban, suburban, rural), parent's level of education, and household income. Additional questions asked included items regarding substance use, delinquency, and grades. Direct questions regarding propensity to join the military as well as to attend college were asked. For questions regarding propensity, a 4-point Likert scale is used with higher scores indicating higher propensity while lower scores indicate lower propensity. See Appendix A.

Attitudes and values questionnaire. Based on the literature, a 6-item questionnaire was designed to assess attitudes and values related to the military. The attitudinal questions, focused on how much participants agree with a set of statements regarding the military, were scored on a 4-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating greater pro-military attitudes and low scores indicating lesser pro-military attitudes. The range of possible scores was 6-24. Questions regarding pro-military attitudes originated from research investigating military attitudes and propensity to join the military (Bachman et al., 2000). The second section of this questionnaire sought to target the

values underlying the propensity to enlist in the military. Based on previous literature (Eighmey, 2006), a list of values considered important to military service was compiled. Participants were prompted to choose and rank the top 3 values they identified as being most important to them if asked to consider joining the military after high school. The listed benefits corresponded to specific value themes including benefits, dignity, challenge, adventure, fidelity, risk, and family. See Appendix B.

Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures. The ECR-RS (Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, Brumbaugh, & Roisman, 2011) is a self-report measure designed to assess attachment patterns in a variety of close relationships. Originally designed to be used to measure attachment with respect to four different targets, the current study encouraged participants to think of a significant attachment relationship representative of “the parent figure in your life to whom you feel closest.” This could be a parent, a step-parent, grandparent or other family member. The nine-item measure yielded a mean score of attachment-related avoidance and a mean score of attachment-related anxiety. Items 1-6 are included on the avoidance subscale (with items 1-4 being reverse keyed) and items 7-9 comprise the anxiety scale. Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale and the total score for each scale was divided by the number of items to obtain a mean score that can range between 1 and 7. Higher scale mean scores indicated higher levels of avoidance or anxiety.

The ECR-RS has displayed appropriate psychometric properties. Attachment-related anxiety and avoidance as measured by the ECR-RS are strongly correlated with

relationship satisfaction, investment, and commitment, and has been deemed to have preliminary construct validity (Fraley et al., 2011). The test-retest reliability (over 30 days) of the anxiety and avoidance scales is good (.80) when investigating attachment to parents. The subscales have demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity, noting increased correlations between similar avoidant/anxious attachment patterns and decreased correlations between less similar attachment patterns (i.e. secure vs. fearful; Feddern Donbaek & Elklit, 2014). Specifically, fearful and dismissing attachment styles, when measured by the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), showed significant increases in avoidance scores, while secure and preoccupied styles showed significant decreases in avoidance (Feddern Donbaek & Elklit, 2014). Similarly, fearful and preoccupied style showed significant positive correlations with anxiety scores while secure and dismissing styles showed significant decreases in anxiety (Feddem Donbaek & Elklit, 2014). The ECR-RS has also shown good discriminant validity, indicating it is useful when discriminating between subgroups of attachment styles while maintaining the ability to identify the independent contributions of the attachment avoidance and anxiety dimensions. See Appendix C.

In the current study, reliability for the ECR-RS was $\alpha = .91$. This reflects excellent reliability (Devellis, 2012).

Brief Trauma Questionnaire. The BTQ (Schnurr et al., 2004) is a self-report questionnaire derived from the Brief Trauma Interview (BTI; Schnurr et al., 2005). The BTQ was originally designed to assess traumatic event exposure according to the

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition's definition of trauma from the diagnosis for posttraumatic stress disorder (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). It was designed to specifically ask only about Criterion A.1 (life threat/serious injury) due to the difficulty of assessing Criterion A.2 (subjective response) in a brief self-report format. In the DSM-5, Criterion A.2 has been eliminated from the diagnostic criteria for PTSD, so the BTQ provides a complete assessment of Criterion A (APA, 2013).

The ten-item measure yields yes or no responses for a variety of traumatic life experiences. A second part of the BTQ asks respondents to state whether they believed they would be seriously injured and if they were seriously injured. In the present study, this second half of the measure was eliminated as it is not considered pertinent. The BTQ has demonstrated adequate construct validity when compared to an interview of trauma experiences (Schnurr, Spiro, Vielhauer, Findler, & Hamblern, 2002). Additionally, the BTQ has demonstrated good reliability (Schnurr et al., 2002). See Appendix D.

In the current study, reliability for the ECR-RS was $\alpha = .78$. This is an acceptable level of indicator of the instrument's reliability (Devellis, 2012).

Procedure

The investigator for the present study obtained approval from Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board (IRB) in August, 2016. After obtaining IRB approval, the study was placed online. The link for the study was placed on various forums and boards via Facebook between October 2016 and June 2017. This was done to

ensure high school seniors are completing the measures during that pivotal, decision-making point prior to graduation. A brief recruitment announcement was used to describe the study and invite participation (See Appendix E).

The survey was hosted by PsychData. PsychData provides a high level of on-line security including housing all company servers in a data facility that is monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week. PsychData utilizes secure encryption technology to ensure protection of all data transactions.

Once participants clicked the link for the study, they were provided with an informed consent (See Appendix F). The informed consent page included information regarding eligibility requirements to participate in the study, the purpose of the study, potential benefits and risks, and the right of participant to terminate the study at any time. Following the informed consent, consenting participants completed all measures. Measures were randomized in three different forms to reduce order effects. Upon completion of the study, participants were given a list of mental health resources in the event any distress occurred as a result of the study (See Appendix G). Additionally, they were asked for an email address if they wanted to enter a drawing for one of two \$50 Visa gift cards. Participants were given researcher and IRB contact information in the event they had questions regarding the study. The data file was maintained separately from the file that included participant emails for the drawing. Each file was kept on an encrypted flash drive that was locked in the researcher's desk at home to maintain confidentiality.

Research Hypotheses and Related Analyses

Given the multiple factors that influence propensity, a path diagram (See Figure 1) is offered illustrating the hypothesized relationships between the study variables and propensity to enlist in the military. Multiple regression analysis were used to identify standard regression coefficients (beta weights) for each hypothesized path.

Given previous literature, several direct and indirect effects were hypothesized. Gender was hypothesized to directly impact propensity with women demonstrating less propensity to enlist than men. With regard to race, Black individuals were hypothesized to report increased propensity while Hispanic individuals were hypothesized to report decreased propensity. No relationship was expected between other racial categories and propensity to enlist. Other direct relationships predicted with propensity include the importance of religion which is expected to have a positive relationship with propensity. Trauma, drug and alcohol use, and delinquency were expected to have a relationship to propensity but the direction was unknown at this time given conflictual previous research findings.

It was further hypothesized that propensity to attend college or obtain a full-time job in the two years following high school would be negatively related to the propensity to enlist in the military. Job plans and educational plans were expected to negatively influence each other as well. Several variables were hypothesized to influence propensity via their influence on educational and vocational plans. Type of residence (rural vs.

urban) was expected to impact plans following high school, although there is not a clear basis for hypothesizing about the direction of this relationship. Grades in high school and parental level of education were expected to impact plans after high school, having positive relationships with college plans and negative relationships with full-time job plans. Family income was hypothesized to impact plans following high school in the same way, as well as interacting positively with parental level of education. Finally, family structure was further expected to impact family income with a traditional family structure (biological mother and father in the home) having a positive relationship with family income and alternative family structure having a negative relationship.

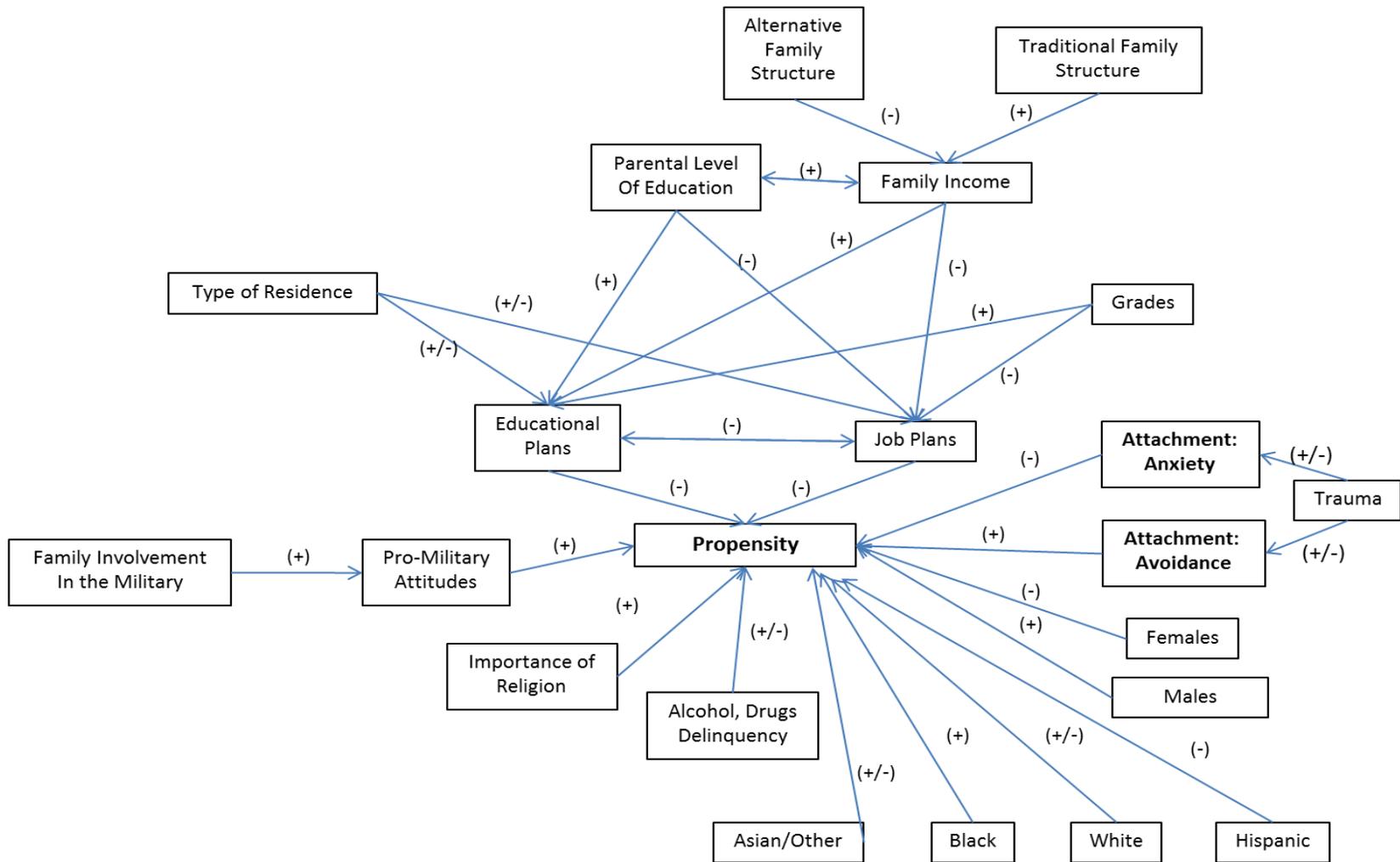


Figure 1. Proposed relationships between variables in path analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Initially, data were examined to determine if participants met required criteria and to ensure complete data sets. Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were performed in order to examine the data prior to analysis of the primary hypotheses via path analysis.

Data Cleaning

A total of 1581 individuals accessed the study (Form A: n = 526; Form B: n = 501; Form C: n = 554). Of those, 1362 did not qualify to complete the study based on their responses to the screening questions regarding age and graduation from high school. Of the remaining 219 participants, 31 did not complete the measures in their entirety and therefore, were not included in the final analyses. Therefore, the total number of participants included in the final path analyses was 188. One variable, grades, was recoded from the original data collection such that higher numbers are indicative of higher average grades.

Descriptive Statistics

Preliminary analyses were conducted to investigate the data and describe how variables were related in the study. Percentages and frequencies were determined for all categorical variables (gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity/race, region, type of residence,

family structure, family income as measured by qualification for free lunch, family involvement in the military, delinquency, application/acceptance into college, speaking to a recruiter, and valued benefits of military service). These variables are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Categorical Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Man	92	48.9
Woman	91	48.4
Transgender	5	2.7
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	153	81.4
Bisexual	21	11.2
Gay	6	3.2
Lesbian	2	1.1
Other	6	3.2
Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan	4	2.1
Black/African American	13	6.9
East Asian/Asian American	14	7.4
Latino/Hispanic	10	5.3
Middle Eastern/West Asian	2	1.1
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	.5
South Asian/Asian Indian	2	1.1
White/Caucasian	124	66.0
Biracial/Multiracial	16	8.5
Other	2	1.1
Region of the U.S.		
West	30	16.0
Middle West	31	16.5
Southwest	35	18.6
Southeast	49	26.1
Northeast	43	22.9

(Continued)

Type of Residence		
Urban	57	30.3
Suburban	101	53.7
Rural	30	16.0
Have You Ever Qualified for Free or Reduced Fee Lunch?		
Yes	80	42.6
No	108	57.4
Family Military History		
Yes	128	68.1
Biological Parents	36	19.1
Other Family Member	92	49.0
No	60	31.9

It is notable that men and women were approximately evenly distributed. With regard to ethnicity/race, the number of participants who identified as White, Native American, and Native Hawaiian approximated the latest 2016 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). However, the number of participants who identified as Black was slightly less representative of the general population and those who identified as Latino/Hispanic was much less representative of the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Individuals who identified as Asian or Biracial were represented at a higher rate within the study than in the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Additionally, more participants indicated they lived in suburban and urban areas than those in rural areas. Given that urban and suburban areas are far more densely populated than rural areas, this finding is to be expected. Lastly, more participants endorsed living within the Northeast and Southeast areas of the United States. This may again be explained by the population density in these areas.

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and ranges were calculated for continuous variables (mother’s level of education, father’s level of education, religious importance, frequency of alcohol and drug use, grades, propensity of attending college, propensity to enlist in the military, pro-military attitudes, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, total trauma score). These results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Mother’s Level of Education	3.65	1.72	7	1	7
Father’s Level of Education	3.55	1.78	7	1	7
Importance of Religion	2.24	1.08	4	1	4
Grades	4.20	.80	5	1	5
Alcohol Use Frequency	.85	.99	4	0	3
Drug Use Frequency	.40	.88	4	0	3
College Propensity	3.05	.92	4	1	4
Propensity to Enlist	2.02	.88	4	1	4
Pro-Military Attitudes	15.85	2.87	18	8	24
ECR-RS Mean Avoidance	2.99	1.36	7	1	7
ECR-RS Mean Anxiety	2.67	1.67	7	1	7
BTQ Total Score	1.82	2.18	10	0	10

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; ECR-RS = Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures; BTQ = Brief Trauma Questionnaire. In all cases, higher numbers represent higher levels of the construct. All ranges reflect the range of the instrument used.

Notably, participants generally indicated higher propensity to enroll in college upon graduation than to enlist in the military. Additionally, participants indicated generally low alcohol and drug use. The participants in this sample generally had good grades, which fits logically with their low substance use and college-bound goals.

Simple Correlations

A correlation matrix for all continuous variables was calculated to identify any significant simple relationships between pairs of these variables. These data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix for Continuous Variables

	Religious Import.	Mother Educ.	Father Educ.	Alcohol Freq.	Drug Freq.	College Prop.	Military Prop.	Pro Military Attitudes	ECR Avoidance	ECR Anxiety
Mother Education	r = -.12									
Father Education	r = -.04	r = .36**								
Alcohol Frequency	r = .00	r = .14	r = .06							
Drug Frequency	r = -.06	r = -.01	r = .00	r = .50**						
College Propensity	r = .00	r = .24**	r = .20**	r = -.10	r = -.11					
Military Propensity	r = .10	r = -.17*	r = -.06	r = -.02	r = .04	r = -.33**				
Pro Military Attitudes	r = .12	r = .03	r = -.03	r = -.14	r = -.09	r = -.06	r = .21**			
ECR-Avoid	r = -.11	r = .01	r = -.05	r = .12	r = .14	r = -.17*	r = .01	r = -.29**		
ECR-Anx	r = -.07	r = -.04	r = -.19*	r = .06	r = .20**	r = -.22**	r = .07	r = -.09	r = .59**	
BTQ	r = .07	r = -.04	r = -.01	r = .09	r = .28**	r = -.21**	r = .11	r = -.11	r = .18*	r = .20**

Note. ** indicates $p < .01$ (2-tailed); * indicates $p < .05$ (2-tailed); $N = 188$ for all variables; ECR = Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures; BTQ = Brief Trauma Questionnaire

There were several significant findings in the correlational data, although most significant relationships were weak. There was a moderate positive correlation between mother and father's levels of education ($r = .36$, $p < .01$). A weak significant positive correlation was found between maternal level of education and propensity to enroll in college ($r = .24$, $p < .01$) while maternal level of education was negatively correlated with propensity to enlist in the military, although this relationship was weaker ($r = -.17$, $p < .05$). Paternal level of education was positively correlated with propensity to enroll in college ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) but was not significantly correlated with propensity to enlist in the military.

As expected, propensity to enroll in college and propensity to enlist in the military were inversely related ($r = -.33$). Propensity to enroll in college was also negatively correlated with trauma exposure as measured by the BTQ ($r = -.21$, $p < .05$). Further, as would be expected, pro-military attitudes were positively correlated with propensity to enlist in the military ($r = .21$, $p < .01$).

The ECR-RS anxiety and avoidance mean scores were correlated with several variables at a significant level. Attachment related anxiety as measured by the ECR-RS was positively correlated with frequency of drug use ($r = .20$, $p < .05$) and trauma exposure as measured by the BTQ ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) while it was negatively correlated with paternal level of education ($r = -.19$, $p < .05$). Attachment related avoidance as measured by the ECR-RS was also positively correlated with trauma exposure ($r = .18$, $p < .05$) while it was negatively correlated with pro-military attitudes ($r = -.29$, $p < .05$) and

propensity to enroll in college ($r = -.22, p < .01$). Finally, as anticipated, attachment related anxiety and avoidance were strongly positively correlated ($r = .59, p < .01$).

Finally, drug and alcohol use frequencies were positively correlated with each other ($r = .50, p < .01$). Drug use frequency was positively correlated with trauma exposure ($r = .28, p < .05$).

Primary Hypotheses

The proposed model (readers may wish to refer back to Figure 1 at the end of the Methods chapter) was tested with path analysis. In the analysis, a structural model was used to represent the casual hypotheses and a reduced model was used to depict the outcome of the analysis. See Figure 2 for the reduced model with standardized regression (β) coefficients for each path. The model chi-square (χ^2 ; non-significant values indicate good fit) was used to evaluate goodness-of-fit between the model and the data. The chi-square test for the reduced model indicated good overall model fit, with $\chi^2(25) = 10.54, ns$.

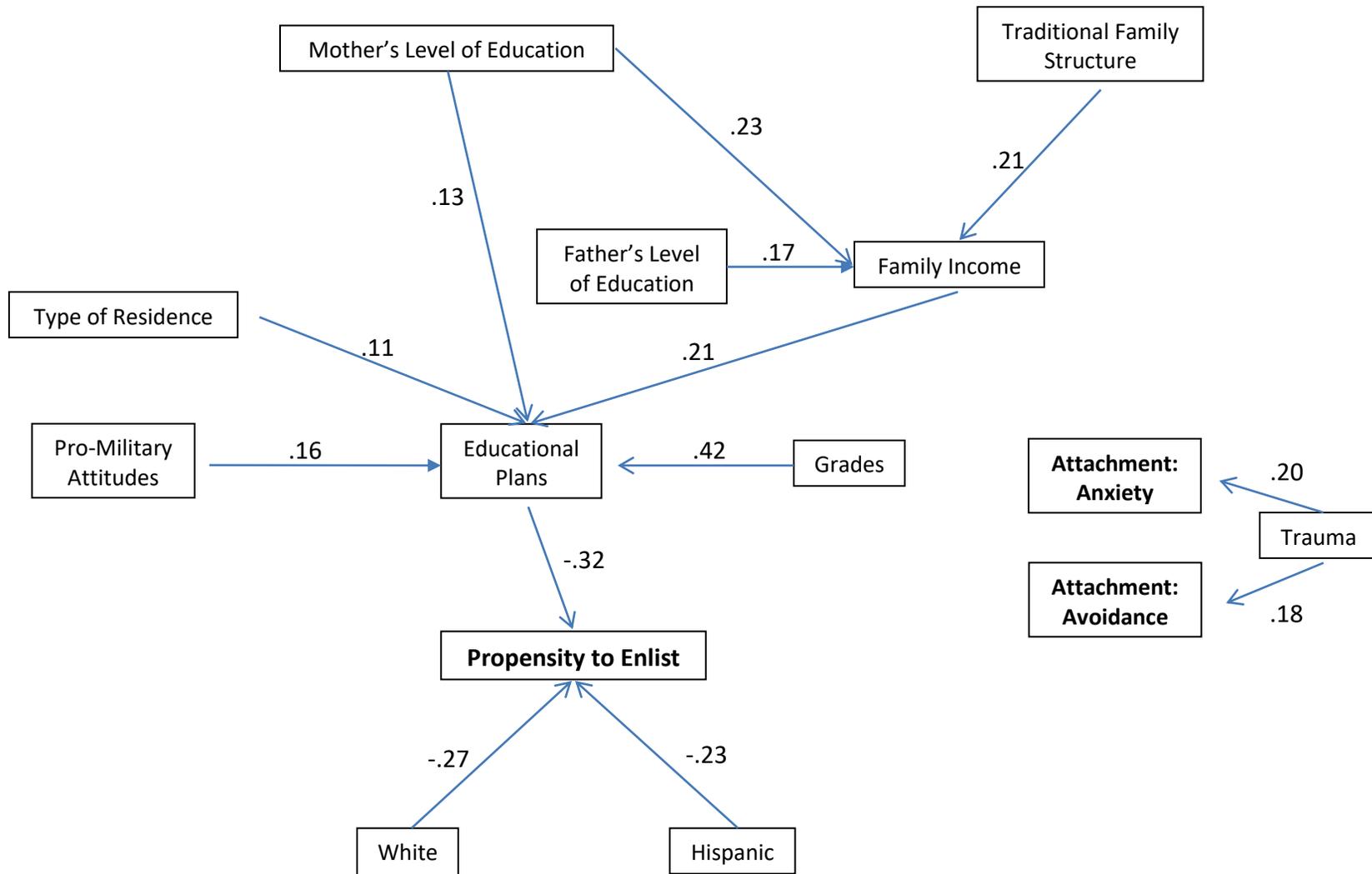


Figure 2. Reduced path model.

While the reduced model is weak, several significant relationships were found. With regard to propensity to enlist in the military, increased likelihood of enrolling in college was directly associated with decreased propensity to enlist ($\beta = -.32$). Stronger pro-military attitudes were positively related to propensity to enlist ($\beta = .16$). White and Hispanic ethnicities had a direct negative relationship with enlistment ($\beta = -.27$ and $\beta = -.23$, respectively). No other significant direct relationships were identified with regard to propensity to enlist. It is notable that attachment did not have a direct or indirect relationship with propensity to enlist in this model.

Several significant relationships were found with regard to educational plans. Grades ($\beta = .42$), Family Income ($\beta = .21$), and Mother's Education ($\beta = .13$) each had significant positive relationships with propensity to enroll in college. Type of residence ($\beta = .11$) also had a significant positive relationship with those living in urban locales reporting less propensity to go to college and those living in rural locations indicating higher propensity to enroll.

Further, higher parental education ($\beta = .23$ for mother; $\beta = .17$ for father) was directly associated with higher family income as measured by qualification for free/reduced-fee lunch. Having a traditional family structure was also directly associated with higher family income ($\beta = .21$).

In this model, increased trauma exposure was significantly associated with both attachment anxiety ($\beta = .20$) and attachment avoidance ($\beta = .18$). No other relationships were significant from the proposed path model.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between attachment to primary caregivers and reported propensity to enlist in the military following high school graduation. This chapter includes a discussion of the research questions and the results of the data analysis. There is also a discussion regarding the implications of the data and the contribution of this study to the literature. Following the implications, strengths and limitations of the study are reviewed. Finally, this chapter provides suggestions related to future research.

Integration of Results with Current Literature

In the present study, there was a low rate of reported propensity to enlist in the military, with a majority of participants endorsing high likelihood of enrolling in college in the two years following high school graduation. This is similar to findings in older literature utilizing samples from both before and after September 11, 2001 (Bachman et al., 2000; Kleykamp, 2006) It is important to note that high likelihood of college enrollment does not preclude the possibility of enlisting in the military at a later time just as enlistment in the military does not preclude the possibility of enrolling in college later (Bachman et al., 2000). In fact, when asked about which value was most important when considering a career in the military, the most chosen response was “money for college,”

suggesting that participants had considered the possibility of joining the military for the future educational benefits. However, it is notable that there is a reported low propensity overall in the sample as previous literature suggests expectations of future behavior late in high school, as the current study's participants were, is highly predictive of actual behavior (Bachman et al., 2000).

As proposed, several factors impacted educational plans, thereby indirectly impacting propensity to enlist in the military. These factors are discussed below.

As predicted, higher grades had a positive impact on educational plans. This is in line with previous research that indicates high school seniors with the highest level of educational success in high school are most likely to plan on enrollment instead of enlistment in the military (Bachman et al., 2000; Elder et al., 2010). Those who expect to definitely complete college show the lowest rates of propensity, suggesting that college aspirations decrease the odds of pursuing any other avenues post-graduation (Kleykamp, 2006). Further, findings in the current study regarding the indirect relationship between grades and propensity to enlist seem to support previous research that indicate high school “underachievers,” or those who have high cognitive abilities but average to low grades, are most likely to join the military compared to those with high grades (Bachman et al., 2001; Spence et al., 2015).

Several familial factors directly and indirectly impacted educational plans as well. Familial income, as measured by a dichotomous question regarding whether participants had ever qualified for reduced-fee lunch, had a significant relationship with educational

plans. Those with higher familial incomes were more likely than those with lower familial incomes to indicate intention to enroll in college. These findings support previous literature that suggest individuals from economically advantaged families show lower rates of propensity while those from the most economically disadvantaged groups show the highest rates of propensity (Elder et al., 2010; Kleykamp, 2006; MacLean & Elder, 2007). It could be reasonably surmised that high school seniors from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to see the military as a viable option to increase access to higher education and immediate economic benefits, as has been discussed in previous literature (Elder et al., 2010; Kleykamp, 2006). The relatively low propensity to enlist in the military overall in the current sample may also be representative of a norm of attending college within economically privileged families. Indeed, previous literature supports that increases in parental income increases the educational aspirations and attainment of children (Mayer, 2010).

Family income may also relate to parental education, another variable that was found to both directly and indirectly impact educational plans. Unlike other studies (i.e. Bachman et al., 2000; Elder et al., 2010), parental education was separated between maternal and paternal educational attainment in the current study. Paternal education was found to indirectly influence educational ambitions via the connection to familial income. Interestingly, mother's level of education both directly impacted participant's propensity to enroll in college and directly influenced family income. Previous studies have been inconclusive on this particular issue, with some finding that paternal education is far

more important to child educational outcomes than maternal education (Behrman & Rosenzweig, 2002). However, Antonovics and Goldberg (2005) found no difference between paternal and maternal education on childhood educational outcomes. In a related study, Benjamin (1993) found that the mothers' education had a significant impact on their children's learning process and outcomes. One possible reason for this finding is that mothers (as compared to fathers) have been found to contribute significantly to children's cognitive, language, and literacy skills, all of which strongly contribute to success in school (Benjamin, 1993).

Those with the highest educated parents were more likely to be from economically advantaged families and therefore, reported intention to enroll in college following high school graduation. This finding is consistent with previous findings that parental education is inversely associated with military enlistment behaviors, suggesting those with the most educated parents are least likely to enlist in the military (Bachman et al., 2000; Elder et al., 2010). Further, Bachman and colleagues (2000) found that parental education works to impact propensity to enlist in the military via parental education's impact on post high-school educational plans. The current study expands upon this finding, suggesting that while both parents' education level influences educational aspirations late in high school, maternal level of education is more impactful on the post-high school decision-making process.

Potentially, there could be a norm of attending college post high school graduation instead of military enlistment, particularly if prominent attachment figures

were college educated and familial income level allows for college entrance. While there may be a norm of college entrance for participants with college educated parents, there did not appear to be a similar relationship for participants with parents who are service members. This is counter to previous literature suggesting children of former military service members are more likely to report higher propensity (Asch et al., 1999; Kleykamp, 2006; Segal & Segal, 2004). One possible explanation for the difference in this finding is the proportion of participants who identified a parent as a service member. In the current study, 60 participants (31.9%) identified some sort of family involvement in the military. Of those, 39 participants (20.7%) specifically identified their mother or father (or paternal/maternal caregiver) as the family member in the military. This proportion is much higher than the numbers reported by Kleykamp (2006) in which approximately 1% of the study participants had a parent in the military. Given these proportions, the results of the current study may be more representative of the current relationship between parental participation in the military and propensity to enlist in the military.

Taken together with findings regarding parental education, it may be that while there is a norm of enrolling in college post-high school graduation for those whose parents graduated college, there is not a similar norm of military enlistment for those whose parents enlisted. It could be that college entry is viewed as a norm for all high school seniors, regardless of military family involvement, while military enlistment is

viewed as an alternative method as has been suggested in previous literature (Kleykamp, 2006; Elder et al., 2010).

The proposed path in the current study suggested family involvement in the military impacted propensity to enlist based on literature regarding the impact parents may have on adolescent decision-making (Eighmey, 2006; Woodruff et al., 2006). It was proposed that military family involvement would impact pro-military attitudes and thusly, increase reported propensity to enlist. However, when looking at the range of scores, participants reported generally neutral attitudes about the military. When examining correlations, a significant, positive relationship between pro-military attitudes with reported propensity to enlist was still found. This supports previous findings that suggest values like patriotism, pride, strength, and duty to country influence decision-making regarding the enlistment process (Woodruff et al., 2006; Eighmey, 2006). Previous research indicates those with the highest propensity to serve prior to actual enlistment behaviors were most likely to express values like patriotism, duty to country, and adventure/challenge (Woodruff et al., 2006).

Similar to findings elucidated by Eighmey (2006), participants in the current study recognized both tangible (monetary benefits) and intangible benefits (pride, patriotism, duty). In the current study, when asked which values were most important when considering a career in the military, duty to country and engaging in a job that participants could be proud of were commonly chosen as most important. Further, the current study expands upon these previous findings by being more inclusive of gender

(compared to Woodruff et al., 2006) and specifically focusing on the decision-making process during senior year of high school (unlike Eighmey, 2006). Taken together with other evidence, the current findings seem to support the idea that regardless of financial privilege or parental involvement in the military, duty to country and patriotism remain an important consideration, particularly for individuals who are already expressing intent to join the military. For those individuals who may not be motivated by economic or educational benefits of military service, pro-military attitudes and a duty to country may serve as a significant motivating factor (Asch et al., 1999; Bachman et al., 1998; Segal & Segal, 2004).

Another familial factor indirectly related to educational plans in the current study is family structure. In the current study, participants with both biological parents living in the home were more likely to have a higher family income and thereby, higher educational aspirations and lower propensity to enlist in the military. Further, there was a strong significant difference ($\chi^2 = 12.85$; $p < .001$) between those who qualified for free lunch and were raised in a non-traditional (without both biological parents in the home) household and those who qualified for free lunch and were raised in a traditional family. Those in non-traditional households were about three times more likely to say they have qualified for free lunch than those from traditional family households. While traditional family structure directly impacted family income (for the better), non-traditional family structure had no relationship to family income.

There could be several reasons for these findings. Family structure seems to impact propensity to enlist via the relationship with income. Single-parent families tend to have fewer financial resources to devote to college costs, and divorced and remarried families may contribute less monetarily toward college costs (DeNavas-Walt, 2012; López Turley & Desmond, 2011). Perhaps the financial impact of having both biological parents in the home, particularly given the findings in the current study regarding the difference in income between traditional and alternative family structures, is a significantly greater influence on graduating high school student's college plans than the impact of having an alternative family structure.

Alternatively, other factors that were not measured in the current study could be related to family structure (e.g. closeness of familial relationships as proposed by Spence et al., 2013) and therefore, have an impact on the overall path model. Children in single-parent families report less family cohesion (Amato, 1987; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994) while individuals in step-families are at an increased probability to leave home early compared to those living with both biological parents (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998). Adolescents raised within alternative family structures may be more inclined to take completely independent roles post high school graduation rather than semi-autonomous roles like college students (Spence et al., 2013). Overall, the relationships between family structure, familial income, and educational plans is complex and may include several unmeasured relational dynamics that require continued research.

Type of residence (urban vs. suburban vs. rural) had a significant relationship to educational plans, although it was small. Those from rural locations reported higher educational aspirations than those from urban settings. This would suggest that those from rural locales are more likely to seek a college education and thereby, less likely to enlist in the military while those in urban setting may be more likely to forgo college and potentially, be more open to enlisting in the military. This is surprising given previous literature suggesting urban residents, particularly in the Northeast, generally report lower propensity than those in rural locations (Bachman et al., 2000; Ford et al., 2014). One significant difference between previous findings and the current study is the age of the data itself. Bachman and colleagues (2000) collected data between 1984 and 1991, suggesting the current study's findings may be more representative of today's high school population. Additionally, in the current study, the number of participants who reported living in each type of residence seem to be representative of what could be expected in the larger population with the majority of participants living in urban and suburban locations while only 16% of participants lived in rural locations. In support of this conclusion, the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) reports that in 1990, approximately 24.8% of the population lived in rural areas and in 2010, that percentage had dropped to 19.3%. Although the relationships between type of residence and family income was not investigated in the current study, it could be logically argued that there is some type of relationship given the impact each variable has on educational plans. This relationship requires further elucidation in future research.

Regarding demographic variables, Black and Asian individuals were no more or less likely than other racial groups to report propensity to enlist while White and Hispanic individuals were significantly less likely to report propensity to enlist in the military. Armor (1996) discussed a trend in which, despite Black youth reporting an overall higher propensity to enlist, reported propensity for Black youth was decreasing faster than White youth and the relationship between propensity and actual enlistment is weaker. The findings of the current study may be reflective of a continued general decrease in reported propensity to enlist for Black individuals. Additionally, Kleykamp (2006) as well as Segal and colleagues (1998) found generally higher propensity among Hispanic individuals. Huerta (2015) expanded this finding, noting that Hispanic high school seniors identified higher education as a priority while recognizing military service as a path to acquire a college degree with minimal financial burden on the family.

However, the findings of the current study seem to expand previous findings that minority youth report decreased inclination to join the military by specifying that this decrease in reported propensity is larger for Hispanic youth (Ford et al., 2014). There could be several reasons for the difference in results regarding race in the current study and multiple previous studies. The difference in the current study may be reflective of the generally low reported propensity to enlist overall. Findings in the current study regarding non-White individuals may also be reflective of the generally low enlistment rate of racial minorities overall (Armor & Gilroy, 2010; Kelty et al., 2010). Notably, earlier studies (Kleykamp, 2006; Segal et al., 1998) identified higher Hispanic propensity

to enlist after utilizing data that is now a decade old while more recent studies (Kelty et al., 2010; Huerta, 2015) seem to reflect more current data trends. While the results of the current study are congruent with more recent findings, the results are limited in generalizability due to the small sample size of Hispanic participants.

Gender did not appear to have a significant direct impact on propensity to enlist in the military as was proposed. This is inconsistent with previous literature that suggested men are significantly more likely than women to report intention to enlist, despite women's consistent reported interest in military careers (Segal et al., 1998; Woodruff et al., 2006). This is an interesting finding given that enlistment numbers for women have increased significantly over the past 30 years with women reporting intention to join the military for the financial stability as well as vocational prospects (Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, 2014; Mankowski, Tower, Brandt, & Mattocks, 2015). Further, the number of military jobs available to women has increased over the past 25 years and military compensates women more equitably than the civilian sector (Segal et al., 1998; Kelty et al., 2010). Newer research suggests women identify identical reasons for joining the military as men (i.e. job training, educational benefits, financial gains, pride; Mankowski et al., 2015). Given the age of previously cited literature and the low reported propensity of the sample overall, women may view the military as just as viable a career as do men (or similarly lack interest in it). Current results could be interpreted to support the premise that the gender gap in military participation has been

closing, perhaps due to greater job availability for women in the military or decreases in the perceived masculinity of military culture (as discussed by Kelty et al., 2010).

Several proposed factors did not impact propensity to enlist as hypothesized by the model. Contrary to previous literature (Barry et al., 2013), alcohol and drug use did not impact reported propensity to enlist in the military. Instead, findings in the current study seem to support older findings that there is little to no relationship between propensity to enlist and substance (cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana) use (Bachman et al., 2000). One explanation for this finding could be the relative low endorsement of drug and alcohol use generally within the sample. Similar studies have also had small amounts of reported drug use (Barry et al., 2013; Bachman et al., 2000). This relationship continues to need elucidation. Overall, it could be surmised that there may be a low rate of substance use among high school seniors, at least in this sample. Alternatively, high school seniors may be unwilling to self-report substance use, even anonymously.

Similarly, delinquency did not have any meaningful relationship with propensity to enlist in the military. This is counter to previous findings that suggest male delinquents are at least 40% more likely and female delinquents are 80% more likely than non-delinquent peers to enlist (Sampson et al., 1997; Shihadeh & Flynn, 1996). The age of previous research findings as well as overall low reported delinquency within the current sample may explain this difference.

Additionally, religious importance was found to have no significant impact on propensity to enlist. Although Segal and Segal (2004) found that service members are

disproportionately from conservative religious backgrounds, the results of the current study would suggest that religious importance does not impact high school seniors' intention to join the military. In the current study, the average reported religious importance can best be described as "neutral," with the majority of respondents selecting that religion is either somewhat important or somewhat unimportant. In previous literature, some studies' participants had a higher level of reported religiosity, even self-identifying as Evangelical Christian (Burdette, 2009). Burdette's (2009) study was also limited to men. Given the more inclusive nature of the current study compared to previous, albeit sparse, literature, this result may reflect that religious values do not impact propensity directly. Potentially, religious values may interact with other values-based attitudes that were not measured as part of the values questionnaire. Alternately, religious ideals may not impact post-high school decision-making. This relationship needs further focus in future research.

Regarding the main hypothesis of the study's proposed path analysis, neither attachment-related anxiety nor attachment-related avoidance had an impact on propensity. The current findings suggest insecurely attached individuals are no more or less likely to report increased propensity to enlist than those with secure attachment. The original proposed model was based upon previous research suggesting that a major aspect of passage from adolescence to adulthood includes the physical separation from parents to live away from home (Moore, 1987). This separation from parents for college or military service can be considered a stressful separation that could activate attachment

models (Mayseless, 2004). While attachment mechanisms are vital during the period of adolescence and emerging adulthood, the attachment may manifest in other domains of behavior as opposed to directly impacting propensity decisions (Larose & Boivin, 1998; Mayseless et al., 1996).

The current study seems to suggest that attachment does not significantly impact propensity to enlist in the military. There could be several reasons for this finding. It seems plausible, particularly given previous literature regarding attachment and outcomes (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Marganaska et al., 2013; Mikulincer & Florian, 1998) as well as the impact of parents and environment on a child (Tyson & Tyson, 1990), that attachment impacts propensity to enlist via indirect influence as opposed to being directly related as originally proposed. Given the findings of the current study that suggest several factors indirectly impact propensity to enlist in the military, attachment to caregivers could impact any of these other factors, though they were not investigated by this researcher. For instance, previous research indicates family structure, specifically divorce and a single-mother household, significantly impacts the attachment process (Wallerstein, Lewis, & Packer Rosenthal, 2013). Other research indicates attachment to parental caregivers served as a mediating relationship for academic achievement (Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005). O'Brien, Friedman, and Tipton (2000) found that attachment to parents is significantly linked to career goals senior year of high school. Clearly, the relationship between attachment to caregivers and decision-making regarding post-high school behaviors is complex and would benefit from continued research.

In the current study, attachment was directly impacted by trauma history with participants reporting high trauma exposure also reporting the high levels of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance. Previous literature indicates trauma experiences can create barriers to healthy interpersonal functioning later in life (Davis & Petretic-Jackson, 2000; Trickett, Negriff, Juye, & Peckins, 2011). Researchers have found that highly traumatized individuals are often insecurely attached to caregivers (Owen, Quirk, & Manthos, 2012). The current study supports these previous findings, suggesting trauma experiences significantly impact attachment quality.

Implications for Research and Practice

The results of the study itself speak to the complex nature of the decision-making process at the end of high school (Kracke, 1997; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). School counselors and psychologists could benefit from knowledge regarding all aspects of the decision-making process, particularly how various family factors may impact propensity to enlist in the military versus enroll in college following high school graduation. These factors can be used to open discussions with teenagers and family members who are facing leaving home transitions that may then trigger attachment related mechanisms of anxiety and avoidance. Findings from this study can serve to inform a deeper understanding of how complicated the decision-making process can be as well as the various factors that need to be considered with regard to making a successful transition out of high school.

Data from the current study could be used by counselors and psychologists in discussions with high school seniors and family members as they attempt to find the best options post-graduation that would allow for the greatest success for the student. Equipped with data such as this, a counselor or psychologist could better facilitate the decision-making process for students as well as begin conversations regarding a student's motivations to seek various post-graduation decisions. Finally, this data could also allow counselors and psychologists to engage students in a conversation regarding the external factors that impact the student's ultimate vocational goals, particularly how factors that the student cannot control (e.g. family structure, family income, parental education, type of residence) as well as those that are more student-dependent (e.g. grades, values and attitudes) may impact these decisions.

The results of the path analysis indicate there is still much to be understood about the relationship between attachment factors and propensity to enlist in the military. Recruitment in high schools continues despite a relative decrease in military operations in recent years (Huerta, 2015). The results of the present study as well as future studies with similar factors could help recruiters elucidate how to best utilize resources, whether by identifying which areas of the country would most likely indicate higher propensity or by focusing efforts on certain characteristics of a typical enlistee in recruitment advertisements. For example, it may be valuable for recruitment materials to emphasize college and monetary benefits to those communities with higher rates of poverty while

emphasizing duty to country and the concept of freedom to communities with higher rates of economic prosperity.

Taken together, one could formulate a profile of an individual who is more likely to report higher propensity to enlist in the military. Such an individual may be of middle to lower socioeconomic status, receive low to average grades, and may be from a family in which the parents did not complete an advanced degree. Above all, individuals who have not definitively decided to enroll in college by the end of high school seem to be the most likely to consider military service. This information could be useful for both counselors as they engage in conversations regarding the possibility of military service or college enrollment with high school seniors as well as the military broadly as they continue recruitment efforts.

Several ideas for research have already been noted. To summarize, the relationship between high school decision-making, specifically propensity to enlist in the military, and substance use, religious importance, and attachment to primary caregivers may be better elucidated with continued research. Further, the impact of family structure differences, familial income, and educational plans/propensity to enlist in the military warrants continued investigation. In addition, further investigation utilizing factors similar to those in the current study in a longitudinal design may serve to improve understanding of how the factors related to propensity change over time and which factors may impact actual enlistment in the military as opposed to reported propensity to enlist.

Strengths and Limitations

One notable strength of the current study is the participation of high school students during the crucial decision-making period prior to high school. While other studies have utilized a similar sampling, the current study expands on this research by asking specifically about attachment mechanisms as well as several other factors previously researched separately. Additionally, the current study benefits from a sample with a relatively equal distribution of men and women, giving weight to conclusions related to gender and propensity to enlist.

Several limitations to the current study exist. No additional ad-hoc analyses were completed as part of the current research. However, there appears to be several opportunities for further exploration. Notably, several iterations of a similar path model could further elucidate relationships between measured variables and propensity to enlist in the military. For instance, further delineating how attachment-related anxiety and avoidance may impact or be impacted by family structure, education plans, and substance use could provide additional information to clarify how each variable may be related to propensity to enlist.

Additional variables may impact decision-making regarding military enlistment as well, including the consideration of which branch of service an individual may wish to join. If a particular branch of the military has been particularly salient in an individual's life or offers a type of lifestyle that appeals more to the individual, it seems possible this could impact propensity to enlist. Additionally, it should be acknowledged that

individuals may also endorse high likelihood of enrolling in college with the intention of seeking Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) training while in college and ultimately, enlist in the military as an officer. This may have impacted the results as these individuals may have endorsed high likelihood of enrolling in college post-graduation and low propensity, but also plan to enlist in the future.

During data imputation, the question regarding propensity to obtain a full-time job following high school graduation was unfortunately omitted from the measures that participants completed. Although participants were presented with the questions in such a way that there was not a forced decision between military and college plans, the lack of an option for full-time employment may have impacted the results.

Additionally, all measures were completed online. This introduces several potential disadvantages, including inaccuracy of self-report either intentionally or accidentally (Gosling, Vazire, & Srivastava, 2004; King, O'Rourke, & DeLongis, 2014). Of particular importance to this study, participants could have been older than 18 or could have been high school graduates. This would significantly impact the results. Survey data collected online is subject to a lack of control over data quality as participants may have attempted to complete the survey twice, experienced technical issues, or simply invested less time and energy than would be expected if they completed measure in person (Best & Krueger, 2004; King et al., 2014). Additionally, all measures were based in self-report. Although each measure demonstrated validity, all self-reported data, online or offline, can contain potential sources of bias, including exaggerating or

minimizing experiences, misunderstanding of questions, and random answering (Gosling et al., 2004).

Finally, the sample was limited in size with regard to variability of race/ethnicity as well as type of residence. This could impact the generalizability of the results.

Conclusion

Overall, the current study speaks to the complex nature of decision-making process high school seniors go through as they approach graduation. With the availability of options including college enrollment and military enlistment, adolescents are impacted in their decision-making by several factors including demographics, familial income, and parental education. The factors that impact decision-making surrounding military enlistment have been changing during the last decade and are likely to continue to change. The present investigation provides a greater understanding of the various factors that influence adolescent decision-making and may help both college and military recruiters identify better approaches to recruitment efforts.

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APPENDIX A
Personal Data Form

	Are you at least 18 years old?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
	Have you graduated high school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
1.	What is your gender?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Man 2. Woman 3. Transgender 4. Other: _____
2.	How do you describe your sexual orientation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heterosexual 2. Lesbian 3. Gay 4. Bisexual 5. Other: _____
3.	What ethnicity do you consider yourself? (Please choose the <u>one</u> with which you most closely identify)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. American Indian/Alaskan Native/Inuit 2. Black/African American 3. East Asian/ Asian American 4. Latino/Hispanic 5. Middle Eastern/West Asian 6. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 7. South Asian/Asian Indian 8. White/Caucasian 9. Biracial/Multiracial/Multiethnic 10. Other: _____
7.	What region of the U.S. do you live in?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Northeast 2. Midwest 3. South 4. West
8.	What type of residence area do you live in?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urban (3000+ people per square mile) 2. Suburban (1000-3000 people per square mile) 3. Rural (Less than 1000 people per square mile)
9.	How important is religion to you?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not important at all 2. Slightly important 3. Important 4. Very important
10.	What is your mother's (or mother figure's) highest level of education?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less than high school 2. High school 3. 2 year college 4. 4 year college

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Master's Degree 6. Doctoral Degree 7. Unknown
11.	What is your father's (or father figure's) highest level of education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less than high school 2. High school 3. 2 year college 4. 4 year college 5. Master's degree 6. Doctoral degree 7. Unknown
12.	Have you ever qualified for free or reduced-fee lunch?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
13.	With whom do you currently reside? (Pick more than one if needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biological Mother 2. Biological Father 3. Step-parent 4. Adoptive parent 5. Foster parent 6. Extended family 7. Friends 8. Independent 9. Other
14.	Are any of your immediate family members (Parents, parental figures, siblings) currently active duty military or military veterans? If so, who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. Who? _____
15.	How often do you drink alcohol?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never 2. Rarely (1-2 times a month) 3. Occasionally (3-4 times a month) 4. Frequently (Weekly)
16.	How often do you engage in illegal drug use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never 2. Rarely (1-2 times a month) 3. Occasionally (3-4times a month) 4. Frequently (Weekly)
17.	Have you ever been arrested?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
	If yes, how many times?	# of times _____
18.	Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
19.	What are your average grades?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A's 2. B's

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. C's 4. D's 5. F's
20.	How likely is it that you will attend college during the first 2 years after high school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitely won't 2. Probably won't 3. Probably will 4. Definitely will
21.	How likely is it that you will enlist in the armed forces during the first 2 years after high school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitely won't 2. Probably won't 3. Probably will 4. Definitely will
22.	How likely is it that you will obtain a full-time job during the first 2 years after high school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitely won't 2. Probably won't 3. Probably will 4. Definitely will
23.	Have you applied and been accepted to a college program during your senior year of high school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
24.	Have you spoken to a recruiter about joining the military during your senior year of high school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No

APPENDIX B
Attitudes and Values

How much do you agree with each of the following statements?

1	2	3	4
Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree

1. The military does a good job for the country as a whole.
2. The military should have more influence in society than it does today.
3. The U.S. should spend more money on the armed services.
4. The U.S. should only go to war to defend against an attack on our own country.
5. The military is an acceptable work environment.
6. The military provides a great deal of opportunities to those who join.

If you were to consider joining the military after high school, which benefits are most important to you? Please rank your values with 1 being most important, 2 being second most important, and 3 being third most important. (Choose 3)

Personal Freedom	A work environment free of racial discrimination
Job Security	A work environment free of sexual discrimination
A Comfortable Lifestyle	Physical challenge
An Interesting Job	Mental challenge
Money for College	Development of self-discipline
Good paying job	Being a part of an elite team
A job that makes you happy	Training in cutting edge technology
Learning a valuable skill	Structured lifestyle
Preparation for a future career	Development of leadership skills
Benefits package (Health care, retirement)	Adventure
Doing something you can be proud of	Opportunities to travel
Gaining respect	

Doing something for your country

Make a difference in your community

Be in a war

Not go to college

Earn respect of family members

Receive approval from parents

APPENDIX C

ECR-RS

ECR-RS

Please answer the following questions about the **parent figure (either biological, step, adoptive, or foster parent)** in your life to whom you feel closest.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. It helps to turn to this person in times of need.
2. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with this person.
3. I talk things over with this person.
4. I find it easy to depend on this person.
5. I don't feel comfortable opening up to this person.
6. I prefer not to show this person how I feel deep down.
7. I often worry that this person doesn't really care for me.
8. I'm afraid this person may abandon me.
9. I worry that this person won't care about me as much as I care about her/him.

APPENDIX D

Brief Trauma Questionnaire

BTQ

The following questions ask about events that may be extraordinarily stressful or disturbing for almost everyone. Please select “yes” or “no” to report what has happened to you.

1. Have you ever served in a war zone, or have you ever served in a noncombat job that exposed you to war-related casualties?
2. Have you ever been in a serious car accident, or a serious accident at school or somewhere else?
3. Have you ever been in a major natural or technological disaster, such as a fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, earthquake, or chemical spill?
4. Have you ever had a life threatening illness such as cancer, a heart attack, leukemia, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, etc.?
5. Before the age of 18, were you ever physically punished or beaten by a parent, caretaker, or teacher so that you were very frightened, thought you could be injured, or received bruises, cuts, welts, lumps, or other injuries?
6. Not including punishments or beatings you already reported in question 5, have you ever been attacked, beaten, or mugged by anyone, including friends, family members, or strangers?
7. Has anyone ever made or pressured you into having some type of unwanted sexual contact?
8. Have you ever been in any situation in which you were seriously injured, or have been in any other situation in which you feared you might be seriously injured or killed?
9. Has a close family member or friend died violently, for example, in a serious car crash, mugging, or attack?
10. Have you ever witnessed a situation in which someone was seriously injured or killed (Do not answer yes for any event you already reported in Questions 1-9)?

APPENDIX E

Facebook Post

Facebook Post:

You are invited to participate in a study being conducted by Sarah Khan, a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University. This study is investigating future plans after high school graduation as well as your relationship to primary caregivers. We are looking for high school seniors who are at least 18 who have **not yet graduated**. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete on the PsychData system and your responses are confidential. No identifying information will be collected.

At the completion of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to provide your email to be entered into a drawing for 1 of 2 \$50 Visa gift cards!

Thank you for your time! (PsychData link here)

Your answers are completely anonymous. No identifying information will be collected. Your participation is voluntary.

As with any web-based survey, there is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all e-mails, downloading, and internet transactions.

APPENDIX F
Informed Consent

Informed Consent

TEXAS WOMAN’S UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Impact of Attachment on the Propensity to Enlist in the U.S. Military

Investigator: Sarah Khan, M.A..... 469-XXX-XXXX
Advisor: Sally D. Stabb, Ph.D.....940-898-2149

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Ms. Khan’s dissertation at Texas Woman’s University. The purpose of this research is to examine the factors impacting the likelihood of enlisting in the U.S. military. Specifically, this study seeks to investigate how relationships to parental figures/primary caregivers may impact the likelihood of enlisting.

Research Procedures

For this study, you will be asked to fill out a series of questionnaires related to your future plans after high school graduation as well as your relationship to primary caregivers/parental figures. Your maximum total time commitment in the study is estimated to be approximately 30 minutes. You will be able to fill out the questionnaire at your own pace. Responses may be saved mid-way and you may return to the survey later to finish it.

Potential Risks

Potential risks related to your participation in this study include the possibility of a release of confidential information. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. There is a potential risk of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and Internet transactions. Only the investigator and her advisor will have access to the data collected. All files will be stored on a blank flash drive that will be stored in a locked drawer in the investigator’s residence. All data will be deleted within two (2) years of the conclusion of the study. It is anticipated that the results will be published in the investigator’s dissertation document as well as in other research publications and local and national presentations. However, no names or other identifying information will be collected or included in any publication.

Another risk of participating in this study is possible emotional discomfort due to the potentially sensitive material in the surveys. If you do experience any emotional discomfort regarding any aspect of any of the questionnaires, you may stop answering the questions at any time. A list of mental health resources will be provided at the end of this informed consent and again after you submit your responses. You may choose to print this resource list for future reference.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and she will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

A third possible risk is your loss of time. The measures used in this study were chosen to be quick and easy to rate. However, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

A final risk relates to any coercion or pressure you may feel for participating in this study. Please know that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and should you feel that you would like to withdraw from the study, you may do so at any time.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this research study is completely voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time.

There are indirect benefits as this study may contribute to a growing understanding of how relationships to parental figures during young adulthood may impact the likelihood of enlisting in the military.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions concerning this research, you may ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way the study was conducted, you may contact Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu. You may print a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. You may also contact the investigators at XXX-XXX-XXXX or by e-mail at skhan12@twu.edu.

By clicking "Continue" below, you acknowledge that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understand this information, and are giving your consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX G

Mental Health Resources

Mental Health Resources

American Psychological Association Referral Service

1-800-964-2000

<http://locator.apahelpcenter.org/>

National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology

<http://www.nationalregister.org/>

American Board of Professional Psychology Directory of Specialists

http://www.abpp.org/abpp_public_directory.php

SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline

1-877-SAMHSA (1-877-726-4727)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK