



Supporting
Military Families
Through Research
and Outreach

PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

College, Jobs, or the Military? Enlistment During a Time of War

Kleykamp, M. A. (2006). *Social Science Quarterly*, 87(2), 272-290.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2006.00380.x/full>



Civilian-
Focused
Article



Military
Focused Article



This study investigated the factors associated with young men's likelihood of joining the military after high school, rather than attending college, joining the civilian labor force, or doing some other activity.

Key Findings:

- Results indicate that a higher military presence in the community increases the likelihood of young men enlisting in the military, relative to enrolling in college, becoming employed, or doing some other activity after high school.
- College aspirations are associated with the decision to attend college versus enlisting the military. College aspirations increase the odds of joining the military versus joining the civilian labor market or remaining idle.
- Contrary to historical trends, African Americans were no more likely to enlist than their white peers.

Implications for Programs:

- Programs could increase knowledge of post-secondary choices by making youth aware of a variety of professional options, including the option to enlist in the military.
- Youth with high educational aspirations, but who are limited in their choices, may benefit from understanding and becoming familiar with other options for education including the benefits of military enlistment.

Implications for Policies:

- Educational benefits were a key factor for enlistment; hence, policies continuing to strengthen educational opportunities for Service Members and Veterans (e.g., GI Bill) may encourage recruitment and retention.
- The strong link between educational goals and enlistment suggests that offering increased educational benefits may be an effective way to recruit people for needed specialties, and for longer tenures than the usual three- or four-year enlistment.
- Educational benefits and community military presence may be a key component in reversing the decline in African American enlistment.

Avenues for Future Research:

- Further research is needed to better understand how military presence influences enlistment decisions, such as through the process by which exposure to an institution increases awareness and interest.
- Future research could investigate why, contrary to historical trends, African Americans were not more likely to enlist than their white (or Hispanic) peers.
- These findings should be replicated with participants living in other regions of the country, and with women.

Prepared by Military REACH Team.

For additional information, please visit <http://reachmilitaryfamilies.arizona.edu>



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Background Information

Methodology:

- In this study, the author examined the correlates of post-high-school activity choice using a multinomial logistic regression model for 2,074 young men, who resided in 37 different Texas counties and graduated from high school in 2002.
- This study focused on enlistment behaviors of young adult civilian men (1 year post high school graduation).

Participants:

- 2,074 young adult men (1 year post high school graduation) participated.
- Ethnic composition: 51% White, 29% Hispanic, 13% African American, 8% Other

Limitations:

- Young adults (one year post high school graduation) living in Texas were included in this study, which may limit the generalizability of the findings, particularly when considering gender. It is unclear whether these patterns would be evident for women making post-graduation decisions.
- Analyses did not consider interactions among predictors, such as whether different factors influenced post-high-school activity choices for different ethnic groups or different socioeconomic status levels.

Assessing Research that Works

Research Design and Sample					Quality Rating:
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	★★★☆☆
The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research Methods					Quality Rating:
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	★★★☆☆
The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Limitations					Quality Rating:
	Excellent Minor Limitations (★★★)	Appropriate Few Limitations (★★★)	Limited Several Limitations (★★★)	Questionable Many/Severe Limitations (★★★)	★★★☆☆
The limitations of this study are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implications					Quality Rating:
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	★★★★★
The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications					
Overall Quality Rating					★★★☆☆

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