

A PROFILE OF AIR FORCE MILITARY
PERSONNEL COUNSELED UNDER
THE AIR FORCE PERSONAL
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM

By

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PREFACE

This study is concerned with defining profiles of Air Force personnel referred to financial counseling at one Air Force base. It is essentially a preliminary effort towards describing financially distressed Air Force consumers. Sincere thanks are owed to the Air Force personnel who participated in the study.

The author extends special appreciation to his thesis committee members for generously sharing their insights and expertise throughout the learning process: Dr. William L. Johnston, Director of the Center for Consumer Services who served as Thesis Advisor; Dr. Carl Hall, Head of the Department of Housing, Interior Design and Consumer Studies; and, Dr. Margaret Weber, Assistant Professor, Housing, Interior Design and Consumer Studies.

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CHAPTER I


INTRODUCTION

The United States Air Force has focused considerable attention on the financial situation and responsibilities of its personnel for a number of years (Air Force Regulation 35-18, 1977). In 1982 the Air Force formally established the Personal Financial Management Program (PFMP) to help its personnel cope with individual and family money issues. The major goal of the program centered on educating Air Force personnel so that they could avoid financial difficulty. Inherent in the program was the provision of a counseling service to help Air Force personnel prevent financial problems and to enable them to solve or minimize the seriousness of those money problems which did occur.

The Air Force's program guidance placed special emphasis on informing junior enlisted members, that is, military personnel in the ranks of Airman Basic through Senior Airman, about the nature of the PFMP and some of the common money issues they were likely to confront. The program mandated instructional briefings on financial management and basic money skills for junior enlisted personnel; attendance by other Air Force personnel was

optional. Volunteer Air Force personnel were trained as a counseling resource to assist other Air Force members across a range of personal financial matters from checkbook management to income tax matters (Air Force Regulation 177-3, 1982). The new program began functioning in 1982 and was in full operation by the end of the year at the Air Force base used in the study.

There were approximately 5,000 enlisted personnel in the rank of Master Sergeant and below assigned to the base during the first half of 1983 (Personal Communication, 1983). Summary data on the pay grade, military rank and number of enlisted personnel assigned to the base were provided in Appendix A. Twenty-five military personnel at the base were referred to counseling during the period of January 1 to June 30, 1983. Nineteen of the referrals were in the special emphasis group of Airman Basic through Senior Airman while five were in the next two higher enlisted ranks of Sergeant and Staff Sergeant; one was in the rank of Master Sergeant. Three referrals were initiated by counselees; the other 22 were either directed by the individual's supervisor or were required as a condition for obtaining small loans from Air Force financial assistance agencies (Personal Communication, 1983). A summary of the clients by pay grade, military rank and type of referral is provided in Appendix B.



Statement of the Problem

It was noted that over 85 percent of the referrals to PFMP counseling at the base were directed by either supervisors or Air Force financial assistance agencies. Financial overextension, budgeting problems and returned checks were indicated frequently as reasons for referral (Personal Communication, 1983). The percentage of directed referrals and the basis of the referrals suggested that few of the counselees sought to take advantage of the program before they experienced financial distress.

Informal discussions with a number of financial counselors at the base indicated that personnel referred to counseling appeared not to recognize the nature of their situation until it became serious and, at times, intractable. There was a perception that many counseling clients had repeated the kind of activities which created financial problems and seemed unconcerned about altering their spending pattern until the matter came to the attention of Air Force supervisors. Moreover, the counselors had seemed somewhat surprised with those attitudes and circumstances. This suggested that information about Air Force personnel who had money management problems was needed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to provide information on military personnel referred to PFMP counseling at one Air

Force base. The study's primary research objectives were:

1. To describe selected socio-demographic characteristics of PFMP counselees.
2. To identify the family life cycle stages of PFMP counselees.
3. To describe PFMP counselees in terms of selected life style dimensions.

A subsidiary objective was to make recommendations for further research concerning military financial counseling clients.

Value of the Study

Previous research concerning financially distressed consumers found that they tended to share some demographic and other characteristics. The usefulness of identifying those consumers was that it would greatly aid in providing financial counseling because "...the delivery of various... services necessitates the identification of target populations for which insolvency is an important factor" (Heck, 1980, p. 15).

Identification of a military financial counselee profile or profiles might be similarly helpful in the Air Force program. The review of literature showed there was virtually no research dealing with financially distressed military consumers. Only one brief specific mention of military personnel was noted in Stanley and Girth (1971). A study appeared necessary in this area to provide

descriptive data. Such information could be of assistance in two respects: first, it could be used in the initial educational process carried out as part of base orientation programs to relate money management to the practical considerations of military personnel; and, second, it could serve to better prepare volunteer financial counselors to deal with personnel of varying situations and life styles.

Limitations and Assumptions

The study was limited by the following factors:

1. It was limited to military personnel who were referred to financial counseling at one selected Air Force base during the period January 1, 1983 to June 30, 1983.
2. It was limited to those military counselees available and willing to participate in the study.
3. The research was conducted on the basis of confidentiality (Babbie, 1983) to preclude any possible embarrassment to respondents and encourage maximum participation. The identity of the base was known only to the researcher and thesis committee members. The identity of individual participants was known only to the researcher and all documentation associating a participant by name and/or organization of assignment with the study was destroyed upon completion of data analysis.

It was recognized that some bias could be introduced since study participants had received counseling. It was assumed that such bias, if any, would not materially affect

psychographic or life style profiling.

Definitions

The following definitions were applied to selected terms and phrases in this study:

Bankrupt

A non-business, personal user of Chapter VII of federal bankruptcy law for liquidation of debts and protection of certain assets from creditors under the supervision of a federal district court (Matthews, 1969; and Stanley and Girth 1971). The term is used for persons acting under either the 1938 or 1978 Federal Bankruptcy Acts.

Financially Distressed Consumer

Any person who has financial problems, primarily but not exclusively in relation to credit use; it includes bankrupts, insolvents and wage earner plan petitioners (Dolphin, 1967).

Insolvent

A person, other than a bankrupt or wage earner plan petitioner, who is consistently unable to pay debts as they become due (Stanley and Girth, 1971; Moffat, 1976; and, Miller, 1981). The term includes, among others, consumers labeled excessively indebted (Ryan and Maynes, 1969),

overextended (Miller, 1981), and a problematic credit user (Raske, 1979).

Life cycle

The general pattern of development of a family based on the age of parents and children, often stated in relation to financial demand. As used here, it refers to the life cycles for a moderate income family synthesized in Ardern (1981). The life cycle stages are as shown below in Table I.

TABLE I
MODERATE INCOME FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGES

Stage	Type (Adult Age Range)	Financial Demand
I	Young Single (18-29)	Light
II	Early Marriage (18-29) With children	Light Heavy
III	Children in primary grades (24-35)	Moderate
IV	Children in high school (35-39)	Heavy
V	College age children (38-55) Children at work	Heavy Light
VI	Preretirement (50-64)	Light
VII	Retirement (65 and older)	Light

Source: Pamela M. Ardern, "The Effect of Values on Spending Habits of Air Force Families," (Unpub. M.S. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1981).

Socio-demographic

A term coined by Saunders (1979) to consolidate a variety of socioeconomic and demographic variables such as income, occupation, marital status, education and age.

Wage Earner Plan Petitioner

A person using Chapter XIII of either the 1938 or 1978 Federal Bankruptcy Acts to repay creditors under the supervision of a federal district court (Stanley and Girth, 1971).

SUMMARY

This chapter summarized the background of the Air Force Personal Financial Management Program and discussed some financial counselor perceptions about the clients in the program. The purpose of the study was identified as the development of descriptive information about military financial counseling clients. The usefulness of the study is that it might provide information on such clients since no data was evident in the literature on this segment of the population. Three limiting factors affecting the conduct of the study were outlined. The factors identified concerned population, timing and application of confidentiality principles. Confidentiality was felt necessary to prevent embarrassment to study participants. One assumption underlying the study was briefly discussed. Finally, several terms important to the study were defined

to clarify the discussion of various types of consumers who experience financial problems.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"...financial problems confront most American families regardless of age, income, life-style, and stage of family life cycle" (Troelstrup and Hall, 1978, p. 114). Available income has been a limiting factor for many consumers in their effort to acquire better quality in or more of things they need and want. Aside from income losses or reductions arising from unemployment or underemployment, many consumer financial problems related to income have been associated with rising costs for food, housing and transportation. While level of income and rising costs have been significant factors, poor money management practices have further reduced a consumer's ability to satisfy wants from available income. Failure to plan for emergency expenses, compulsive spending, overuse of credit, and other unwise practices have compounded the problems of limited income and increased living costs (The National Foundation for Consumer Credit, 1978).

Lack of well-defined personal and economic goals with a practical plan for achieving them has been said to underlie poor spending habits (Lang and Gillespie, 1981). Very little discretionary income exists to cushion the

effects of errors or wasteful spending behavior for consumers at the lower end of the income spectrum (Gagnon and Greenblat, 1978). Many poor spending practices have been associated with the use of credit purchasing. Loans, charge accounts, credit cards, and checking account automatic overdraft provisions were among the more common forms of credit used to span the gap between current income and the cost of desired goods. Future income has been over obligated or mortgaged to meet current consumer desires (Schiller, 1981).

The widespread use of credit, particularly installment credit, was evident in that over half of all consumers had some installment debt in 1979 (Miller, 1981). In 1980, the level of outstanding consumer credit stood at almost \$400 billion or about 20 percent of disposable income; nearly four-fifths of the total was consumer installment debt (Steinberg, 1981). Use of credit may be either of benefit or detriment to the financial health of consumers (Troelstrup and Hall, 1978). Credit purchasing can be as economically sound as saving the total cash required over the same period of time in buying such durable goods such as automobiles and major appliances (Lang and Gillespie, 1981). Where credit is used on a regular, frequent basis as an source of income or a substitute for planning to meet essential living expenses, consumers can easily find themselves overextended (Miller, 1981).

Overuse of credit can lead to extreme financial

distress (The National Foundation for Consumer Credit, 1978, and Heck, 1980). Personal bankruptcy, one of the most severe symptoms of consumer money problems, increased by 165 percent between 1978 and 1981. Arguments have persisted about whether or not the growth in bankruptcy is due simply to overreliance on credit or some other factors. A portion of the surge has been attributed to liberalized legislation by some (Reilly, 1982) while others noted that the trend may reflect increases in the cost of living (Recent Financial Behavior of Households, 1980). Whatever the causes in a particular case, personal bankruptcy has been suggested as an index of more widespread consumer financial difficulty.

In using consumer bankruptcy as an indicator of the extent of financial distress, in general, it should be recognized that we are viewing only that portion of the iceberg above the water line. Bankruptcy represents financial failure resulting from extreme financial difficulties. For every bankrupt, there are hundreds of cases of financial distress of varying degrees (Dolphin, 1967, p. 55).

Whether it involved personal bankruptcy or a less extreme type of financial overextension, consumer financial management has been an matter of importance for business and education alike. It has been studied by those interested in improving commercial lending practices (Grablowsky, 1973) and others concerned with assessing the effectiveness of financial education and counseling (Bowers, 1979).

Research Approaches to the Study of Financially Distressed Consumers

Research on financially distressed consumers has been undertaken for diverse purposes. A shared objective in much of the research has been the development of a profile of consumers who experience financial distress as a means for understanding how and why money problems occur.

Persons who have resorted to bankruptcy law protection have been the most intensively studied segment of financially distressed consumers. Personal bankrupts and wage earner plan petitioners have been easily identified through their legal status under the federal bankruptcy law. Federal district court records provided an extensive information resource on their personal characteristics and financial habits (Dolphin, 1965; Siporin, 1967).

Other groups of distressed consumers have been less readily identified and consistently labeled but can be broadly considered as those who were overextended but did not qualify for, choose, or were not aware of bankruptcy and wage earner plan procedures as options to solve financial problems. They may be near or beyond insolvency and possibly headed for bankruptcy according to Moffat (1976). Although not an easily defined status or condition, the term 'insolvent' provided a suitable collective typology for the range of financially distressed consumers - other than those who resort bankruptcy law -

examined by researchers.

Assessment of credit worthiness, fundamental to the lending business, has been determined by a consumer's financial capacity and willingness to repay. Whether credit worthiness has been determined subjectively "...based on the skill and experience of a loan officer" (Bowling, 1977, p. 1) or an objective credit scoring system, there have been many problems in identifying good and bad risks. As Lang and Gillespie (1981, p. 223) noted "Merely having the ability to repay does not necessarily mean that the credit will be repaid."

Socio-demographic Research

The approach most often employed in the study of consumer ability and willingness to meet their debts has followed socio-demographic descriptive methods used in social and marketing research (Boone and Kurtz, 1977). Throughout the 1960s, socio-demographics were used by Dolphin (1965), Preston (1969), Stanley and Girth (1971) and other often cited research sources on bankrupt debtors. Ryan and Maynes (1969) study of consumers labeled excessively indebted used socio-demographics as did Lane (1969) in her examination of Chapter XII petitioners. Siporin's Bankrupt Debtors and Their Families (1967) was a sociological effort to understand the nature and process of debt creation in a family system context. It, too, was fundamentally socio-demographic in approach.

The socio-demographic method in consumer credit and debt research continued during the 1970s, for example, Paul (1973) and Minami (1974). Its use into the 1980s was noted in updated research on bankrupts and wage earner plan petitioners (Heck, 1981; and Johnson, Peterson and Sullivan, 1982). The outcome of the research was a number of profiles of financially troubled consumers.

A General Model of Financial Distress

Heck (1980) summarized much of the research data to develop an overall profile of a typical financially distressed consumer; most of the data dealt with bankrupts and wage earner plan petitioners. Her model did contain reference to a few early psychological assessments of financially troubled consumers but the model was essentially based on socio-demographic factors. She cautioned that no such thing as an 'average' financially troubled consumer existed but the general profiling concept might prove useful for research and in devising helping strategies. Examining 13 financial and personal factors, she stated that the financially troubled consumer household may be described as

having low incomes, high debt levels...headed by individuals around 30 years of age and...usually in the early stages of family formation, characterized by heavy financial demand. Marital difficulties and divorce are likely to have occurred. Educational and occupational levels are probably lower than the general population. Also, the household is more likely to have moved recently. Low aspirations, fatalism, and

emotional immaturity may be common psychological traits (p. 17).

A more detailed review of selected aspects of the research showed variance in a number of respects from that typical model for personal bankrupts and wage earner plan petitioners. Data concerning insolvent consumers indicated greater variance from the general model and variance from profiles of bankrupts and wage earner plan petitioners.

The Bankrupt and Wage Earner Plan

Petitioner Profile

Greatest agreement with the general model was found concerning lower income level, marital problems and mobility for bankrupts. In terms of age, it appeared that while most bankrupts tended to be in their thirties and younger there was a sizeable proportion of bankrupts over 35 years of age or in their forties (Matthews, 1969; and, Stanley and Girth, 1971). While blue collar workers formed the predominant segment of bankruptcy cases, the studies showed that from 18 to 40 percent were in other occupational strata (Brunner, 1965; Matthews, 1969; and, Stanley and Girth, 1971).

Although based on less extensive research, wage earner plan petitioners had a profile which appeared broadly similar to bankrupt consumers: most were males; there was a sizeable incidence of divorce, about 22 percent; and, about three quarters lived in a rental residence. Generally,

wage earner plan petitioners consisted of a lower middle income family with two or more children, headed by a male in a blue collar occupation (Lane, 1967). Siporin (1967) found the wage earner plan petitioners had the same education level as bankrupts but his sample was not claimed to be representative of the petitioner population. His data reflected a lower mean age for wage earner plan petitioners than for bankrupts. Wage earner plan consumers were in their early 30s while bankrupts were in their mid- to late-30s.

Insolvent Consumer Profiles

The insolvent consumer was stated earlier as a broad classification which could include many subcategories of financially troubled consumers. While there were many possibilities, the following four segments were used for comparison with the generalized model developed by Heck (1980).

Installment Debtors. Ryan and Maynes (1969) in a nationwide probability sample found 39 percent of consumers were in trouble with installment debt. Lower income earners, those in blue collar occupations and consumers with lower education levels predominated as in the general model. Dissimilar from the model, they noted that the unemployed and retired had above average incidence of debt problems. Also unlike the model, the greatest proportion of those in trouble were among the unmarried and those

under 25 or 65 and older. At least half of such households were headed by women and/or a Black.

Credit Counselees. Dolphin (1967) asserted that credit counselees appeared to come from the same socioeconomic strata as bankrupts. He stated that the difference between them was principally that the counselees had less debt and fewer creditors than the bankrupts. He reported the two types as having similar age, marital, family, occupational and ethnic characteristics with the data corresponding rather closely to the overall distressed consumer model.

Profile information used by the National Foundation for Consumer Credit (1978) showed a concentration among consumers aged 18 to 37 but especially those between 20 and 24, an age range lower than the general model. Otherwise, the Foundations view appeared to be consistent with the model.

Low Income Consumers. Three studies involving stratified samples of low income consumers using credit produced a somewhat ambiguous profile (Tabor and Bowers, 1977; Bowers, 1979; and, Bowers and Crosby, 1980). Few features appeared consistent with data developed on bankrupts, wage earner plan petitioners or the generalized model possibly due to the inherent design of the studies. The low income consumers were principally female, generally single and from ethnic minorities. In those respects, they

more closely matched the consumers described by Ryan and Maynes (1969). Low income consumers appeared to have a similar mobility status to that of bankrupts and wage earner plan petitioners with from 67-79 percent living in rental housing. Also, the age range seemed similar to that of bankrupts, ranging from the mid-twenties to mid-thirties.

Credit Addicted Consumers. Raske (1979) discussed general demographic features of consumers who tend to create financial difficulty for themselves via credit overuse. His listing of demographic indicators was similar to Heck's model. He stated that income, education and occupational status were lower than the local average for those most likely to become delinquent. Also, they tended to be younger, have more children and marry at earlier ages than the local average. He noted that the more a consumer exemplified an indicator and the greater the number of those indicators present in a consumer's profile, the greater the likelihood that debt problems would occur.

Problems with Socio-Demographic Profiles

In the marketing realm, Hustad and Pessimer (1974, p. 35) wrote that researchers found reliance on traditional socio-demographic research to be unproductive in explaining market behavior and led to widespread disenchantment in the business and academic communities. Investigation along sociological lines involving life cycle research had

improved understanding of consumer behavior but was still less than satisfactory: "...even life cycle data cannot explain why two households with identical demographic profiles can exhibit radically different behavior in the marketplace." Socio-demographics began to be combined with techniques from psychology. Based on psychography and the psychogram (English and English, 1958), measurement of consumer psychological factors was employed in marketing to understand consumer behavior "...in terms of where they live, who they are and how they think" (Rosenberg, 1977, p. 155). Marketing attention was focused on such factors as consumer attitudes, interests and opinions (Demby, 1974).

Paralleling the evolution in marketing research, studies dealing with consumer credit and financial issues indicated disagreement about the utility of socio-demographics in describing who did and did not meet debt obligations. Inadequacy of specific socio-demographic factors and more generalized problems were noted.

Certain socio-demographic variables were found to be either ineffective or ambiguous by some researchers in estimating consumer financial behavior. Paul (1973) studied a credit scoring model based on socio-demographic characteristics to determine credit risk for low income consumers. She found that the results were statistically significant in differentiating some poor risks from better risks; however, the actual levels of default remained unacceptably high using those factors. Her findings

indicated some other factors needed to be examined to determine their usefulness in the model. In an exploratory study of credit scoring methods, Bowling (1977) reported that the inclusion of consumer sex and marital status did not affect the predictive power of a credit scoring model. In a more limited context, Tabor and Bowers (1977) found the sex, marital status and total income variables used in conventional credit scoring did not explain variation in default among low income consumers.

As Matthews (1969) summarized concerning the personal characteristics of bankrupts

the conclusion one would draw is that bankrupts could come from many groups in the population. Their only distinctive characteristics seem to be in their type of occupation and lack of good money management. This finding, however, is not too helpful in understanding the causes of bankruptcy (p. 36).

The inability of socio-demographics to account for much consumer financial behavior was inferred by Dolphin (1967) in saying

approximately 30% to 50% of the individuals discharging their debts in bankruptcy were economically capable of paying all their debt within three years. Being in bankruptcy indicates that they are poor managers (or dishonest) and would find it difficult, if not impossible, to pay without guidance (p. 55).

Bowers (1979) stated that willingness to repay a loan was based on consumer attitudes and that data relating to those variables had not been included in the questions

asked of prospective borrowers. More recent data on personal bankruptcy indicated the continued inadequacy of socio-demographics as the sole basis for discriminating between those who were and were not willing to repay debt in a sizeable proportion of cases where income appeared adequate (Johnson, Peterson and Sullivan, 1982).

Socio-demographic methods appeared suited to deal with only one element of consumer financial assessment - ability to meet obligations.

Psychological Research

The psychological aspect, as mentioned previously, had not been wholly ignored in earlier research on financially distressed consumers. Heck (1980) used two studies which had looked at psychological variables and personality factors but noted that "Few other studies examined the attitudinal dimensions of bankruptcy and insolvency" (p. 16). Matthews (1969) used a survey instrument which dealt directly with bankrupts' attitudes toward debt. He found, at least for a small number of cases, that attitude offered the best explanation for their financial behavior. He stated that "...attitude orientation may help to explain why some individuals turn to bankruptcy and others seek different alternatives" (p. 78).

Later research on consumer money issues showed increased attention to the consumer psychology. One study determined that a relatively small number of attitude

variables had superior predictive power over a larger number of demographic and financial variables in classifying consumers as either good or poor credit risks (Grablowsky, 1973). Painter (1978) reported positive results in studying consumer psychological variables such as attitudes and perceptions in relation to debt status. Heck (1982) included a number of psychological variables in her study of repayment behavior concerning credit cards. Application of the psychological approach was evident in other areas of consumer finance, also. Saunders (1979) focused on perceptions of money management of low income rural families while Schuchhardt (1979) included selected attitude data as part of a study on consumer credit use and knowledge among women.

The inclusion or combination of psychological variables with socio-demographic data generally provided a more complete perspective on consumer behavior in money management issues. Those developments appeared to follow the evolutionary pattern evident in advertising and other market-related research towards the still more integrated socio-demographic/psychological approach called psychographic or life style research.

Psychographic Methods

Psychographic research, although derived from social science research techniques, was developed by marketing researchers and has become widely used in that field.

Marketing literature thus served as the primary source for defining and assessing psychographics. Britt (1973) described psychographics as research which attempts to look at psychological and personality differences in a group. Although stripped of his specific references to the marketing context, Demby's (1974) commentary provided the most comprehensive description:

1. Generally, psychographics may be viewed as the practical application of the behavioral and social sciences....
2. More specifically, psychographics is a quantitative research procedure that is indicated when demographics, socioeconomic and user/non-user analyses are not sufficient to explain and predict consumer behavior;
3. Most specifically, psychographics seeks to describe the human characteristics of consumers...from self-concept and life style to attitudes, interests and opinions, as well as perceptions....(p.13).

There has been some disagreement about terminology but 'psychographics' often has been used interchangeably with 'life style' (Kassarjian, 1971). Moreover, as Demby's (1971) definition indicated there are many possible components which may be included in life style research. Those components may be summarized by stating that psychographic research involves attitudes, interests and opinions (Boone and Kurtz, 1977; McDaniel, 1979; and Williams, 1982).

The process used in psychographics is based on analysis of interrelationships among the variables stated in a particular study (Kassarjian, 1971) and may therefore

be considered as a correlational method (Wood, 1977). Collection of data has involved many methods used in general survey research (Wells, 1974) using self-designed instruments, psychometric or sociometric instruments or adaptations of those instruments (Hustad and Pessemier, 1974).

Psychographics has not been observed as a technique that is in competition with socio-demographics. As McDaniel (1979) pointed out in terms of defining a consumer market, the attitudinal information provided by psychographics must be associated with specific sets of socio-demographic data to determine particular sets or groups of consumers. Psychographics provides an enhancement to socio-demographics. As Wells (1975, p. 209) commented concerning the utility of psychographics, they "...have offered new ways of looking at old problems, new dimensions for charting trends, and a new vocabulary in which consumer typologies may be described." That assessment suggested psychographics as an approach for dealing with the other element involved in consumer credit worthiness - willingness to meet financial obligations.

Evaluation of Psychographics

"The research findings obtained from a sample of subjects can be no better than the instruments employed to collect the data" (Van Dalen, 1979, p. 135).

Psychographics, as is the case with any research method,

has been subjected to analysis in terms of reliability and validity. Critiques drawn from marketing research were appropriate for a condensed discussion of some cautions and constraints involved in the psychographic approach.

Burns and Harrison (1979, p. 37) found psychographics did not precisely measure the life style of individual consumers but that there was a persistence in response for some items while others did not reflect persistence. This could be explained in that "...some dimensions are more reflective of lasting personal characteristics and behaviors and others are more likely to show the susceptibility and reactions of the individuals to external influences...." Since psychographics deals with consumer behavior in the aggregate rather than the behavior of specific individuals, Wells (1975, p. 205) reported that "...psychographic measurements and analytic procedures can have satisfactory reliability." He further noted that reliability may be affected for two major reasons: first, measurements may contain substantial amounts of random error; and, second, the behavior being studied by the measure may be intrinsically unstable.

Psychographic variables have been generally found to relate to one another and to socio-demographics in a pattern consistent with what is considered to be accurate about consumer behavior (Wells, 1975). While psychographics have not been able to account for much variance in consumer behavior according to Kassarian

(1971), Wells (1975) asserted that they have been shown to highlight differences between consumer groups and often do so to a much greater degree than demographic profiling. Kassarian (1971) offered some support, noting that proponents of psychographics had rightly asserted that even with correlational limitations the method has provided rich data for researchers and practitioners interested in consumer behavior. On the predictive validity of psychographics concerning aggregate rather than individual behavior, Wells (1975, p. 207) cited a number of research reports that showed it is likely to be much better than "...the predictive validity of the demographic attributes that have long been accepted as good, true and beautiful...."

Linked with those factors has been the concern that a measurement instrument be appropriate to the purpose of the research (Van Dalen, 1979). Wells (1975) pointed out that even though an instrument may be reliable and valid, it must relate to the consumer behavior being studied. It cannot be abstract to the point where the connection of results with behavior is obscure. On the other hand it cannot be so close to the behavior under study that the results are a redundancy. Neither extreme contributes to understanding consumer behavior in the real world.

Summary

The review of literature provided introductory information on the general nature and extent of consumer

financial problems with the main focus on credit-related difficulties. Two principal research methods involving such consumers were discussed. Models or profiles of several financially distressed consumers segments derived from socio-demographics and some problems or limitations involving the method were reviewed. Development of a psychologically-based methodology, psychographics or life style research, was reviewed. Psychographics was viewed as an enhanced approach with the potential to more adequately describe financially distressed consumers.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of the study was to provide information on military personnel referred to financial counseling. The research method used to conduct the study is outlined in the following sections: Type of Research, Population and Sample, Instrumentation, Collection of Data, Data Analysis, and Summary.

Type of Research

Van Dalen (1979) suggested that there were many kinds of descriptive research ranging from simple surveys designed to measure the current conditions to more complex studies designed to explain phenomena. He noted that in status descriptive surveys

investigators do not try to relate one variable to another. They merely search for accurate information about the characteristics of particular subjects (Ss), groups, institutions, or situations or about the frequency with which something occurs (p. 285)

The status descriptive survey was chosen as the research approach since the purpose of the study was to provide profile information on military financial counseling clients. As the review of literature

illustrated, the most useful and comprehensive descriptions of consumers can be derived using socio-demographic data in conjunction with psychographic or life style information. The status descriptive method was designed to include both types of data.

Population and Sample

The target population for the study consisted of the 25 military personnel who were referred to financial counseling over the specified six month period of January 1 to June 30, 1983 inclusive. Due to the relatively small size of the target population, the researcher decided to include the entire group. Such an approach treated the target population as a the sample for the study.

Initial identifying data available on the population was limited to their military rank, last name, unit of assignment and unit telephone number. This data was compiled into a master contact list.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was adapted from a survey questionnaire developed by the Department of Housing, Interior Design and Consumer Studies and the Center for Consumer Services, College of Home Economics, Oklahoma State University. The departmental instrument was derived from the Arousal Seeking Tendency scale used by Raju (1980) in a study of consumer exploratory tendencies.

He reported that the Arousal Seeking Tendency scale had been demonstrated to have high reliability using Kuder-Richardson and validity through correlation with other measures. The scale dealt with three personality traits: intolerance of ambiguity, rigidity and dogmatism.

The departmental instrument, titled "Social Security Questionnaire," contained six items directly concerned with attitudes on Social Security, a section containing 40 psychographic or life style statements keyed to a five point Likert-type scale, and a series of eight background questions dealing with the socio-demographics of respondents. A copy of that instrument is included as Appendix C.

As adapted for this study, the instrument retained the 40 attitudinal statements and the Likert-type scale in the psychographic section. Those statements were considered as descriptors of life style dimensions involving risk taking, adaptability and learning openness. The items which pertained to Social Security were deleted.

The socio-demographics background portion was modified to suit the military context of the target population. While no standard socio-demographic approach was identified in the review of literature, the items which were retained and those which were added were felt to represent the most appropriate items noted in over a dozen studies relating to financially distressed consumers. Further, it was desired to be brief but as reasonably inclusive as possible

concerning socio-demographics data for the purposes of this study and for future research in this area. Specific modifications to the socio-demographics portion were:

1. A question which asked for a description of the respondent's occupation was eliminated. It was replaced by an item which requested the respondent's military specialty and level of that specialty. For military personnel, the specialty data provides a precise description of the respondent's occupation and general experience level in that occupation according to the standard, Air Force-wide system.

2. A follow-up question concerning education was added which asked respondents to categorize the type of high school attended. It was felt by the committee that the level of education and the type of high schooling might provide a better indication of the individual's life skills preparation that was not evident solely from a query on education level.

3. A question which asked the respondent to state his/her military rank was included to verify the focus of the study among the more junior military personnel. The question would also serve as a partial check on the estimate of total household income since military pay scales are tied to rank and time in the Air Force. An unusually large total income response could be followed-up by the researcher to determine if a second income was earned by the respondent or his or her spouse.

4. A question concerning the number of children and their ages was added to determine some measure of the stage of family life cycle.

5. Three questions which related to the mobility of military households were included. These asked whether the individual lived in government quarters, owned a home or rented; how long the individual had lived at her or his current address; and the length of their assignment at the current military installation.

The final instrument used in the study, Counseling Client Questionnaire, appears as Appendix D.

Collection of Data

The collection process involved the researcher telephoning each person on the master contact list to determine availability and willingness to complete a short research questionnaire. Calls were made at least twice per week to contact or locate all individuals over a four week period. Both the voluntary nature of participation was explained as was the importance of gaining research data. The researcher emphasized that all data would be handled to assure complete confidentiality concerning the identity of participants, including any association with a particular Air Force base and organization, and that the list of participants would be destroyed after completing the data collection phase of the study.

A major difficulty was encountered concerning

collection of data from the target population. Of 25 potential participants in the survey, 11 could not be contacted due to changes in their assignment status at the base. The changes included departure due to permanent change of duty station, long term temporary duty assignments at other bases and discharge from the Air Force. Of the remaining population of 14 potential participants, seven declined to participate in the survey. Seven individuals completed the questionnaire resulting in an overall survey response rate of 28 percent. The final sample constituted a nonprobability, nonrepresentative accidental sample (Kerlinger, 1973). The distribution of respondents in the final sample relative to the target population is summarized in Table II on the succeeding page.

Each respondent was briefed on the purpose of the questionnaire as well as procedures used to protect respondent identity. Data were collected using an self-administered questionnaire which was completed in the presence of the researcher.

Each questionnaire was numbered seriatim as completed. This number was for use only in data analysis; it was not equated to the respondent's name on the master contact list.

Data Analysis

Responses to socio-demographic items were analysed by frequency to determine the characteristics of the sample.

Also, the length of assignment to the base and length of time at current residence were examined in terms of range. The data on age of respondents, marital status and age of children were analysed to determine the life cycle stages of the sample.

TABLE II
SAMPLE IN RELATION TO TARGET POPULATION

Pay Grade	Rank	Sample	Population
E-1	Airman Basic	0	2
E-2	Airman	0	9
E-3	Airman 1st Class	4	6
E-4*	Senior Airman	0	2
E-4*	Sergeant	1	3
E-5	Staff Sergeant	1	2
E-6	Technical Sergeant	0	0
E-7	Master Sergeant	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTAL		7	25

* Pay grade E-4 consists of two rank categories. Enlisted personnel promoted to E-4 with less than four years service carry Senior Airman rank; those with over four years service carry the rank of Sergeant.

Analysis of the psychographic data was intended to be conducted via factor analysis to determine underlying life style dimensions (Popham and Sirotnik, 1973, and Kerlinger, 1973). The accidental nature and small size of the actual sample indicated treatment of the data by factor analysis would be inappropriate and provide no useful analytical base. As Minium (1978, p. 171) noted concerning much less sophisticated statistical treatments such as the Pearsonian correlation coefficient, very small samples are highly unstable and "...a sample is really not very satisfactory unless n is large enough to produce reasonably stable results." Therefore, the psychographic items were subjectively classified into three potential life style tendencies. The three categories of statements were assigned bipolar labels to indicate the tendency alternatives: Risk-Safety, Adaptive-Rigid, and Learner-Dogmatic. Within each category, the psychographic statements were analyzed on the basis of frequency of response to the scale choices to indicate potential tendency.

Summary

The basic design of the study was described as a status descriptive survey. The population and sample for the survey was identified as 25 military personnel who had been referred to financial counseling at one Air Force base. The instrument consisted of psychographic statements

adapted from an existing questionnaire and a series of questions designed to obtain socio-demographic data. The data were collected by having each respondent complete the instrument in the presence of the researcher. The overall response rate was reported as 28 percent of the target population which resulted in a final sample of seven respondents. Data analysis was conducted using frequency counts for both psychographic and socio-demographic responses. Selected socio-demographic data were further analysed in terms of family life cycle stages.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This study was concerned with developing information about military personnel referred to financial counseling. This chapter presents an analysis of respondent socio-demographic characteristics, identifies respondents according to stage in the family life cycle, and analyzes respondent life style tendencies based on attitude, interest and opinion statements. Frequency counts were used to both describe socio-demographic characteristics and to summarize the life style tendencies. Identification of respondents according to the stage of the family life cycle was based on respondent age, marital status and age of dependent children, if any.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

A series of background questions were asked to obtain information about socio-demographic characteristics. The first three questions addressed age, marital status and sex.

All of the respondents were under 40 years of age but most, four of seven, were under age 25. One respondent was

in the 25-30 age group and two were in the 36-40 age group. Concerning marital status, the largest single group consisted of those who had never been married; three respondents formed that segment. The next segment consisted of two respondents who were married for the first time. Of the remaining two respondents, one was separated and the other was divorced. Regarding sex, six of seven respondents were male. See Table III for respondent age and marital status distribution.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY
AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Variable	N = 7
Age	
Under 25	4
25-30	1
31-35	0
36-40	2
Marital Status	
Never married	3
Married for the first time	2
Separated	1
Divorced	1

In the questions concerning educational background, all respondents had at least a high school education. Six

of the respondents had attended some college including one who reported graduate or professional level education. Five of the respondents attended secondary schools in large cities while two acquired their secondary education in small city school systems. See Table IV for educational background data.

TABLE IV
RESPONDENT EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Variable	N = 7
Education Level	
High school	1
Some college	5
Some graduate/professional school	1
Location of High School	
Large city: inner city	2
Large city: suburban	3
Small city	2

Data relating to income and the rank of respondents was analyzed. Six of the respondents had total household incomes below \$15,000. Of those six respondents, however, only one reported an income below \$10,000. The remaining respondent reported a household income between \$25,000 and \$29,999. The data on income corresponded closely to the military rank of the respondents. Six respondents were in

the rank of Staff Sergeant and below. The one respondent who was above that level held the rank of Master Sergeant. The data on income and rank are summarized below in Table V.

TABLE V
RESPONDENT INCOME - RANK DATA

Variable	N = 7
Income	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5
\$25,000 to \$29,999	1
Rank	
Airman 1st Class	4
Sergeant	1
Staff Sergeant	1
Master Sergeant	1

Concerning family composition, four respondents reported having dependent children. One respondent had three children, two of the respondents had two children, and one respondent had one child. The ages reported for the dependent children were mostly over 10 years. Only one respondent had a child younger than 10 years of age and none had children older than 19 years of age. Table VI summarizes the number and age level information concerning

dependent children of the respondents.

TABLE VI
RESPONDENT DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Variable	N = 4
Number of Children	
One	1
Two	2
Three	1
Age of Children	
Under 5 years	1
5 to 9 years	0
10 to 14 years	1
15 to 19 years	2

In response to the set of questions dealing with locale, type and length of residence and length of assignment to the base, it was found that most respondents were renting in the suburbs and small cities near the base. One was a homeowner and one lived in government provided quarters on the base. In all instances, the respondents had lived at their current residence for less than 12 months. It was noted that six respondents had been assigned to the base for less than two years while the remaining one had been assigned for longer than 36 months. Examining assignment and local residence according to range showed

the length of assignment ranged from 9 months to 38 months while length of residence ranged from 1 month to 9 months. See Table VII for details of respondent residence and assignment data.

TABLE VII
RESPONDENT RESIDENCE LOCATION, TYPE AND
DURATION AND LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT

Variable	N = 7
Location of Residence	
On base	1
Large city	1
Small city	1
Suburb	4
Current Residence	
Live in Government quarters	1
Own home	1
Rent	5
Length of Current Residency	
Less than 12 months	7
Length of Current Assignment	
Less than 12 months	2
12 to 23 months	4
24 to 35 months	0
36 to 47 months	1

Concerning occupational characteristics, all respondents were in white collar types of occupations.

Five were in clerical specialties and two were electronic technical specialties. Most of the respondents were at an intermediate skill level and several were at a fully skilled level while only one was at the entry or training level. Data relating to occupational characteristics are provided in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII
RESPONDENT OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND

Variable	N = 7
Occupation	
Technical	2
Clerical	5
Skill Level	
Entry	1
Intermediate	4
Fully Qualified	2

Finally concerning basic socio-demographic characteristics, the racial composition of the sample represented two ethnic groups. Four of seven respondents listed themselves as white. The three other respondents listed their ethnic background as Black.

Family Life Cycle Stages

The sample reflected three family life cycle stages defined in Table I. A portion of the sample did not lend itself to precise definition according to those life cycle stages.

Two respondents were in Young Single or Stage I of the life cycle based on their ages, 20 and 21, never married status and no dependent children. One respondent was in Stage II, Early Marriage. In this case, the respondent was 21, married for the first time and had no children.

Two respondents were in Stage IV, Children in high school. Based on the respondent ages, 39 and 40, and the age range of their children between 15 and 18 years, they could be labeled as being in transition to Stage V, College or Working Children. One of the respondents in Stage IV reported being separated.

Two respondents did not fit precisely into the life cycle pattern as defined earlier. One of those respondents was young, with a pre-school age child and could have been categorized as Stage II but was divorced. The other was a young single, never married who could have been assigned to Stage I except that the respondent had one dependent child of primary school age.

Life Style Tendencies

As noted previously, the 40 psychographic statements were classified into three potential life style tendency

categories and identified with bipolar labels. The assignment of statements to categories is depicted in Table IX below.

TABLE IX
PSYCHOGRAPHIC STATEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Risk - Safety	Adaptative - Rigid	Learner - Dogmatic
N = 14	N = 14	N = 12
S3	S1	S2
S8	S4	S5
S12	S6	S7
S13	S10	S9
S18	S11	S17
S19	S14	S24
S21	S15	S26
S23	S16	S27
S25	S20	S31
S28	S22	S34
S32	S29	S35
S33	S30	S40
S38	S36	
S39	S37	

Each statement within a life style tendency category was analyzed by frequency count to determine the direction of the sample's response. The five possible responses were weighted to determine the strength of response in a particular direction. Each response reflecting strong agreement or strong disagreement was assigned a value of

two; those showing agreement or disagreement were given a value of one; and, responses showing neither agreement nor disagreement were assigned zero value.

The frequency count for each response was multiplied by the assigned weight factor. Responses favoring strong agreement and agreement were summed as were those for strong disagreement and disagreement. The difference between those sums was obtained and the statement placed in the appropriate tendency pole. A mean was calculated for the statements identified according to a particular tendency.

The employment of this method had several effects. First, it provided an indication of the basic direction of the sample's tendencies. Second, it provided a measure of the magnitude of the response towards those tendencies. Finally, it balanced responses in cases where there were a relatively few but strong responses in one direction against more numerous but lesser strength responses towards the other direction.

Based on the analysis of the 14 statements identified as Risk-Safety indicators, it was found that the sample inclined to be risk-oriented. Seven of the statements suggested a tendency towards risk while five statements were in the direction of safety. Two statements, S12 and S23, had a zero net directional value. The mean value of the seven risk-oriented statements was found to be 6.14. That was approximately two points higher than the mean

value of 4.2 calculated for the five safety-oriented statements. The values obtained for the Risk-Safety indicators are stated in Table X below.

TABLE X
ANALYSIS OF RISK-SAFETY STATEMENTS

Risk Statement	Net Value	Safety Statement	Net Value
S8	7	S3	2
S18	5	S13	7
S21	9	S19	6
S28	6	S25	5
S33	8	S32	1
S38	4		
S39	4		
N = 7	X = 6.14	N = 5	X = 4.20

The second potential life style tendency dimension was Adaptive-Rigid. In the analysis of the 14 statements classified as potential Adaptive-Rigid indicators it was found that the sample showed a tendency to be adaptive. Eleven of the 14 statements suggested a tendency to be adaptive while three statements indicated a tendency towards rigidity. The mean value of the 11 adaptive-oriented statements was 5.90 in comparison with the mean value of 1.66 calculated for the three

rigid-oriented statements. The analysis of this potential life style tendency is presented in Table XI below.

TABLE XI
ANALYSIS OF ADAPTIVE-RIGID STATEMENTS

Adaptive Statement	Net Value	Rigid Statement	Net Value
S4	11	S1	1
S6	7	S10	1
S14	3	S11	3
S15	2		
S16	2		
S20	4		
S22	8		
S29	5		
S30	9		
S36	6		
S37	8		
N = 11	X = 5.90	N = 3	X = 1.66

In the third and last category, an analysis of the 12 statements identified as Learner-Dogmatic was conducted. The analysis suggested a tendency towards learning. Eight of the 11 statements suggested a learner orientation while three indicated a dogmatic view. Statement S24 had a net directional value of zero. The eight learner tendency statements had a mean value of 5.75 while the three dogmatic statements had a mean value of 1.66. The analysis

of this potential life style tendency is presented in Table XII below.

TABLE XII
ANALYSIS OF LEARNER-DOGOMATIC STATEMENTS

Learner Statement	Net Value	Dogmatic Statement	Net Value
S2	2	S7	1
S5	2	S26	3
S9	4	S31	1
S17	6		
S27	9		
S34	10		
S35	8		
S40	5		
N = 8	X = 5.75	N = 3	X = 1.66

Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the sample's socio-demographic characteristics. The analysis reflected a sample which shared general characteristics concerning sex, education level, income amount, type and length of residence and occupational type. Socio-demographic items relating to age, rank and marital status provided a basis for identifying two segments with the sample.

Socio-demographic data concerning respondent age, marital

status and children were used to identify the sample according to three stages in the family life cycle. Analysis of responses to 40 psychographic statements was conducted to determine potential life style tendencies using three bipolar categories. The analysis indicated that sample was inclined towards risk but was adaptive and learning oriented.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to provide information on military personnel referred to financial counseling at one Air Force base. Three principal objectives were specified to achieve that purpose: first, to describe the counseling clients in terms of selected socio-demographic characteristics; second, to identify each client according to their stage in the family life cycle; and, third, to describe the counseling clients in terms of life style(s). A corollary objective was to make recommendations for further research concerning military personnel who receive financial counseling.

The literature indicated that a number of models or profiles had been suggested for types of people who experience financial trouble. The models were based principally on socio-demographic characteristics. It was noted, however, that such models focused on one aspect of financially distressed consumers. Drawing on developments in marketing research, psychographics or life style research seemed to offer a more accurate aggregate picture of consumers when used in conjunction with socio-

demographics.

The study was undertaken as a status descriptive survey to provide data on military financial counseling clients. The study used a questionnaire instrument to collect both socio-demographic and psychographic data. The target population consisted of the 25 military personnel who had received financial counseling at a selected Air Force base during a recent six month period. The actual sample was composed of seven respondents for an overall response rate of 28 percent. The sample effectively constituted a convenience or accidental sample.

Socio-demographic items were aggregated and analyzed using frequency counts to describe the sample's characteristics. Selected socio-demographic items were examined to determine family life cycle stages for each respondent. Responses to psychographic statements were analyzed to determine selected life style dimensions of the sample.

Summary of Major Findings

From the analysis, it was determined that the sample showed general similarity involving six characteristics. These were: sex, education, income, type and length of residence, and occupation.

The respondents were found to be predominantly male with some college education. The respondents generally had total household income of less than \$15,000 per year. In

terms of residency, most of the respondents lived in local communities rather than in government provided housing. Those living in local communities were most often renters.

It was noted that the respondents had been assigned to the base for periods ranging from 9 months to 38 months. Regardless of the length of their assignment, all of the respondents had changed their residence within the past year.

The occupational level of the respondents could be termed as white collar with all respondents working in either an electronics technical specialty or a clerical position. Further, the respondents were at either the intermediate or fully qualified levels in their specialties.

The analysis showed that other characteristics provided a basis for subdividing the sample according to several other socio-demographics features.

In terms of age and rank over half the sample was composed of young, low ranking personnel. This portion of the sample was under age 30 and was mostly in the rank of Airman First Class. A smaller segment of the sample consisted of older personnel in higher ranks. This segment was over 31 years of age and was in the rank of Sergeant and above.

In addition, it was found that the sample could be segmented into two groups according to marital status. One segment, forming less than half of the sample, consisted of

respondents who were single and had never married. The other group was composed of respondents who were or had been married. This segment formed over half the sample and included those who were separated or divorced.

Three stages of the family life cycle were represented in the sample: Stage I - Young Single which was appropriate for two respondents; Stage II - Early Marriage with one respondent; and, Stage IV - Children in high school which had two respondents. It was found that two respondents could not be readily assigned to any family life cycle stage. One respondent met the marital status and age criteria for Stage I; however, since the respondent had a 10 year old dependent child, Stage II could have been considered equally appropriate based on the child's age. Another respondent met the age and children criteria for Stage II but was divorced and no longer met the marital status criterion.

Finally, concerning life style dimensions, analysis suggested that the respondents could be characterized as being more inclined towards risk than safety in their outlook. Moreover, the analysis indicated the respondents tended towards adaptiveness rather than rigidity and were open to learning as opposed to being dogmatic.

Conclusions

Several conclusions were drawn from the data. Because of the nature of the final sample, the conclusions could

not be generalized beyond the sample.

It was found that some characteristics were appropriate to meet the first objective of the study, a socio-demographic description of the sample. The sample largely shared the same gender, educational level, income, type of housing, mobility and occupational characteristics. The conclusion was that the sample of counselees could thus be profiled as male and well-educated but with incomes toward the lower levels of the military pay scale. Most of the sample lived off the base in rental housing and appeared fairly mobile, having moved at least once in the past year. Finally, the sample was composed of skilled personnel employed in white collar types of occupations.

Further concerning the initial objective, the sample differed when analyzed on the basis of age, rank and marital status. It was concluded that the sample consisted of two subgroups, a youthful segment and an older segment. The youthful segment was composed of lower ranking personnel who had never been married. The older segment consisted of personnel in higher enlisted ranks who were or had been married.

The second objective was to identify family life cycle stages. Three different life cycle stages were represented in the sample at approximately the same frequency. It was concluded that no particular stage of the family life cycle predominated. It found, also, that a part of the sample did not fit into the defined stages of the family life

cycle. The view was that this lack of fit resulted from the nuclear family type used as the basis for identifying life cycle stages.

Concerning the third objective of describing life style dimensions, the respondents appeared to be risk takers rather than safety seekers. At the same time, however, the respondents appeared to be adaptive learners rather than rigid and dogmatic.

In summary, even though the possibilities for generalization were limited, the conclusions relating to the older, higher ranking segment and the presence of life cycle stages other than I and II provided some evidence to suggest that a single profile may be inadequate as a descriptor of military counseling clients. Although the life style dimensions were tenuous, the conclusions suggested that this sample of counseling clients could be described as risk takers. The other two potential life style dimensions, adaptive and learning tendencies, suggested that the clients were amenable to the enabling process of counseling.

Recommendations

Although this study was circumscribed in concept and limited in results it provided grounds for making a number of recommendations to improve understanding of military consumers with financial problems.

1. It was recommended that additional research be

conducted concerning Air Force military personnel who receive financial counseling. The limited information developed in this study and the cited absence of significant data in the literature suggested a continuing need for such research for feedback into the Air Force Personal Financial Management Program.

2. It was recommended that the methodological approach used in the study be tested and refined or amended in further research.

3. It was recommended that future research be based on a random or representative sample from a larger target population to permit employment of appropriate analysis methods in the case of psychographics and to provide a substantial basis for generalization of findings. Such a target population might be obtainable by either extending the time period of the study at a single base or by using client populations from several Air Force bases. It was originally felt that the counselee population at one base would provide a representative basis for a preliminary description of Air Force counseling clients. The unexpectedly rapid attrition resulting from reassignments and discharges among the target population reduced the population available for study by 44 percent. Moreover, the voluntary nature of participation in the survey further reduced the potential sample. Those conditions should be carefully considered in the design and execution of future research.

4. It was recommended that future research include some measurement of financial conditions. Addition of such information may serve to provide a more complete description of financially distressed military personnel by linking socio-demographics and life style dimensions with degrees of financial difficulty.

5. It was recommended that comparative research be conducted to determine the impact of financial counseling on financial behavior. A study of individuals with financial problems in contrast to those without financial problems may be useful in determining whether or not improved financial behavior is attributable to the enabling educational interactions of the counseling process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
NUMBER OF ENLISTED PERSONNEL ASSIGNED

APPENDIX A

NUMBER OF ENLISTED PERSONNEL ASSIGNED

Pay Grade	Rank	Number of Personnel
E-1	Airman Basic	57
E-2	Airman	223
E-3	Airman 1st Class	1281
E-4*	Senior Airman	505
E-4*	Sergeant	743
E-5	Staff Sergeant	1280
E-6	Technical Sergeant	720
E-7	Master Sergeant	414
TOTAL		5223

* Pay grade E-4 consists of two rank categories. Enlisted personnel with less than four years service carry Senior Airman rank; those with over four years service carry the rank of Sergeant.

APPENDIX B
COUNSELING REFERRALS

APPENDIX B

COUNSELING REFERRALS

Pay Grade	Rank	Voluntary Referrals	Directed Referrals	Total
E-1	Airman Basic	1	1	2
E-2	Airman	1	8	9
E-3	Airman 1st Class	0	6	6
E-4*	Senior Airman	0	2	2
E-4*	Sergeant	0	3	3
E-5	Staff Sergeant	0	2	2
E-6	Technical Sergeant	0	0	0
E-7	Master Sergeant	1	0	1
TOTAL		3	22	25
PERCENT		12	88	100

* Pay grade E-4 consists of two rank categories. Enlisted personnel promoted to E-4 with less than four years service carry Senior Airman rank; those with over four years service carry the rank of Sergeant.

APPENDIX C
SOCIAL SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE

**S O C I A L
S E C U R I T Y
Q U E S T I O N N A I R E**

Department of Housing, Design and Consumer Resources
and
Center for Consumer Services
Oklahoma State University

How important are the following Social Security Programs?

	Very Im- portant				Very Unim- portant
1. Retirement	5	4	3	2	1
2. Disability	5	4	3	2	1
3. Survivors Benefits	5	4	3	2	1
4. Health	5	4	3	2	1
5. Supplemental Security Income	5	4	3	2	1

For each of the following questions respond from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree)

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
1. I think people covered by Social Security should pay more to cover increased cost of the system.	5	4	3	2	1
2. (I believe) think all federal retirement systems should be collapsed into one.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I think there should be no major reduction in Social Security benefits.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I like the idea of trading Social Security for a totally new system.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I believe Social Security should be liquidated and individuals given full responsibility for their own retirement.	5	4	3	2	1

Social Security benefits should be frozen to provide financial stability.

1. True
2. False

At what age should retirement be set under Social Security?

1. 65 yrs.
2. 68 yrs.
3. 70 yrs.
4. 72 yrs.
5. 75 yrs.

I believe companies should be required to pay all the Social Security tax rather than employees paying half.

1. True
2. False

Overall, how satisfied are you with the Social Security Program?

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

For each of the following items respond from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree)

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree
1. I seldom change the pictures on my walls.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I am not interested in poetry.	5	4	3	2	1
3. It is unpleasant seeing people in strange weird clothes	5	4	3	2	1
4. I am continually seeking new ideas and experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I much prefer familiar people and places.	5	4	3	2	1
6. When things get boring I like to find some new and unfamiliar experience.	5	4	3	2	1

7. I like to touch and feel a sculpture. 5 4 3 2 1 \
8. I don't enjoy doing daring foolhardy things just for fun. 5 4 3 2 1
9. I prefer a routine way of life to an unpredictable one full of change. 5 4 3 2 1
10. People view me as quite an unpredictable person. 5 4 3 2 1
11. I like to run through heaps of fallen leaves. 5 4 3 2 1
12. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening. 5 4 3 2 1
13. I prefer friends who are reliable and predictable to those who are excitingly unpredictable. 5 4 3 2 1
14. I prefer an unpredictable life full of change to a more routine one. 5 4 3 2 1
15. I wouldn't like to try the new group-therapy techniques involving strange body sensations 5 4 3 2 1
16. Sometimes I really stir up excitement. 5 4 3 2 1
17. I never notice textures. 5 4 3 2 1
18. I like surprises. 5 4 3 2 1
19. My ideal home would be peaceful and quiet. 5 4 3 2 1
20. I eat the same kind of food most of the time 5 4 3 2 1
21. As a child, I often imagined leaving home just to explore the world. 5 4 3 2 1
22. I like to experience novelty and change in my daily routine. 5 4 3 2 1
23. Shops with thousands of exotic herbs and fragrances fascinate me. 5 4 3 2 1
24. Designs and patterns should be bold and exciting. 5 4 3 2 1
25. I feel best when I am safe and secure. 5 4 3 2 1
26. I would like the job of a foreign correspondent of a newspaper 5 4 3 2 1
27. I don't pay much attention to my surroundings. 5 4 3 2 1
28. I don't like the feeling of wind in my hair. 5 4 3 2 1
29. I like to go somewhere different nearly every day. 5 4 3 2 1
30. I seldom change the decor and furniture arrangement at my place. 5 4 3 2 1
31. I am interested in new and varied interpretations of different art forms. 5 4 3 2 1
32. I wouldn't enjoy dangerous sports such as mountain climbing, airplane flying, or sky diving. 5 4 3 2 1
33. I don't like to have lots of activity around me. 5 4 3 2 1

34. I am interested only in what I need to know. 5 4 3 2 1
35. I like meeting people who give me new ideas. 5 4 3 2 1
36. I would be content to live in the same house the rest of my life. 5 4 3 2 1
37. I like continually changing activities. 5 4 3 2 1
38. I like a job that offers change, variety, and travel even if it involved some danger. 5 4 3 2 1
39. I avoid busy, noisy places. 5 4 3 2 1
40. I like to look at pictures that are puzzling in some way. 5 4 3 2 1

Background information:

How old are you?
 ___ years old

Please choose the category that best represents your current marital status.

1. Never married
2. Married for the first time
3. Remarried
4. Separated
5. Divorced
6. Widowed
7. Other

How would you describe the place where you live?

1. Large city (250,000 or more)
2. Small city (less than 250,000)
3. Suburb
4. Rural

Which one of the following best describes your occupation?

1. Professional/Technical
2. Semi-Professional
3. Farmer and Farm Manager
4. Manager, Official, and Proprietor
5. Clerical
6. Sales
7. Craftsman, Foreman
8. Operator
9. Farm Laborer
10. laborer
11. Domestic Service Worker
12. Other Services
13. Retired
14. Other _____

What is your sex?

1. Male
2. Female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Grade school or less
2. Some high school
2. High school
4. Some college
5. College
6. Some graduate or professional school
7. Received a graduate degree

What is the annual total income of your household? (Include income from all members and all sources)

1. Less than \$5000
2. \$5000 to \$9999
3. \$10,000 to \$14,999
4. \$15,000 to \$19,999
5. \$20,000 to \$24,999
6. \$25,000 to \$29,999
7. \$30,000 to \$39,999
8. \$40,000 to \$49,999
9. \$50,000 or more

Are you?

1. White
2. Black
3. American Indian
4. Other

APPENDIX D
COUNSELING CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

For each of the following items respond from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree):

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I seldom change the pictures on my walls. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I am not interested in poetry. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. It is unpleasant seeing people in strange weird clothes. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I am continually seeking new ideas and experiences. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I much prefer familiar people and places. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. When things get boring I like to find some new and unfamiliar experience. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. I like to touch and feel a sculpture. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I don't enjoy doing daring foolhardy things just for fun. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. I prefer a routine way of life to an unpredictable one full of change. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. People view me as quite an unpredictable person. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. I like to run through heaps of fallen leaves. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. I prefer friends who are reliable and predictable to those who are excitingly unpredictable. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. I prefer an unpredictable life full of change to a more routine one. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. I wouldn't like to try the new group-therapy techniques involving body sensations. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

16. Sometimes I really stir up excitement.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I never notice textures.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I like surprises.	5	4	3	2	1
19. My ideal home would be peaceful and quiet.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I eat the same kind of food most of the time.	5	4	3	2	1
21. As a child, I often imagined leaving home just to explore the world.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I like to experience novelty and change in my daily routine.	5	4	3	2	1
23. Shops with thousands of exotic herbs and fragrances fascinate me.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Designs and patterns should be bold and exciting.	5	4	3	2	1
25. I feel best when I am safe and secure.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I would like the job of a foreign correspondent of a newspaper.	5	4	3	2	1
27. I don't pay much attention to my surroundings.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I don't like the feeling of wind in my hair.	5	4	3	2	1
29. I like to go somewhere different nearly every day.	5	4	3	2	1
30. I seldom change the decor and furniture arrangement at my place.	5	4	3	2	1
31. I am interested in new and varied interpretations of different art forms.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I wouldn't enjoy dangerous sports such as mountain climbing, airplane flying or sky diving.	5	4	3	2	1

33. I don't like to have lots of activity around me.	5	4	3	2	1
34. I am only interested in what I need to know.	5	4	3	2	1
35. I like meeting people who give me new ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
36. I would be content to live in the same house the rest of my life.	5	4	3	2	1
37. I like continually changing activities.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I like a job that offers change, variety, and travel even if it involved some danger.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I avoid busy, noisy places	5	4	3	2	1
40. I like to look at pictures that are puzzling in some way.	5	4	3	2	1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How old are you?

_____ years old.

Please choose the category that best represents your current marital status:

1. Never married
2. Married for the first time
3. Remarried
4. Separated
5. Divorced
6. Widowed
7. Other _____

How would you describe the place where you live?

1. Large city (250,000 or more)
2. Small city (less than 250,000)
3. Suburb
4. Rural

What is your sex?

1. Male
2. Female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Grade school or less
2. Some high school
3. High school
4. Some college
5. College
6. Some graduate or professional school
7. Received a graduate degree

If you attended high school, which of the following best describes your high school location?

1. Large city: inner city
2. Large city: suburban
3. Small city
4. Rural

What is the annual total income of your household? (Include income from all members and all sources.)

1. Less than \$5000
2. \$5000 to \$9999
3. \$10,000 to \$14,999
4. \$15,000 to \$19,999
5. \$20,000 to \$24,999
6. \$25,000 to \$29,999
7. \$30,000 to \$39,999
8. \$40,000 to \$49,999
9. \$50,000 or more

Are you?

1. White
2. Black
3. American Indian
4. Other _____

If you have children, how many do you have? _____

Please list their ages:

What is your rank?

My rank is _____

What is your specialty and specialty level?

My specialty & level are:

Do you?

1. Live in Government quarters
2. Own home
3. Rent

How long have you lived at your current address?

_____year(s) _____months

How long have you been assigned to your current base, post or station?

_____year(s) _____months

VITA

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Master of Science

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