

## Emirati Youth Selection of National Service Information Sources in the United Arab Emirates

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**ABSTRACT:** This study identified information sources on national service used by Emirati male youths since these sources could shape the views of recruits and the formation of positive or negative attitudes towards the service. It also compared the information sources used with future sources that youths intend to access that would reveal emergent information disseminators. Questionnaires were administered to 179 Emirati male participants distributed across three demographic groups. Results showed that across groups, Institutional sources were least selected while Social sources were most used. Moreover, older youths' main information sources were Social; limited to family members and close social contacts whereas younger youths' sources were wider; including Social and Institutional sources. It also found that youths would rely on both Social and Institutional sources in future information-seeking behavior and the Military Recruiter is an emergent information disseminator for all groups. These findings could be used to develop advertising strategies and public awareness campaigns that promote the relevance of national service to youths and the Emirati community that could ensure sustainability of the program.

**KEYWORDS** -Emirati youths, information sources, national service, social network analysis, United Arab Emirates.

### I. INTRODUCTION

National service was first introduced in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2014 and Emirati male youths eligible for draft are faced with uncertainties such as adjustment to the service culture, impact of service period on education and job-seeking, separation from family and friends, and personal safety. Such uncertainties about the service would lead draftees to seek information to alleviate this anxiety. Unlike the situation in 2014 when draftees lacked information sources and opportunities to interact with service alumni, by 2019 more Institutional and Social information sources on national service were available to future recruits that could influence their expectations and perceptions of national service. Hence this study identifies information sources on national service used by Emirati youths and compares them to sources they intend to access in the future.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 National service in the United Arab Emirates

National service was first introduced in the UAE in 2014 through the Federal Law No.6 of 2014 on the National Military Service and Reserve Force that required all male citizens (Emiratis), aged 18 to 30 years, who are able-bodied and not eligible for permanent exemption, to be drafted into service. Recruits who completed the service become part of the reserve forces and can be called for further training or duty. Since the law's inception, several amendments were made to service length, obligation, and academic deferment. In 2019, service length was 16 months for male Emiratis with high school qualifications and above [1]. In 2022, the Ministry of Defense announced a reduction of service length to 11 months for high school graduates while youths leaving school without qualifications must serve three years [2]. From 2016, male Emiratis, aged 30 to 40 years, who are older than the upper limit of draft age could volunteer for 15-week service duty. Voluntary service was also extended to include those who have an Emirati mother and a foreign father [3]. Academic deferment for pursuing higher education ended in 2020 when the National Service and Reserve Authority (NSR); a government body created by the Federal Law No.6, announced that high school graduates, with grades of 90% or higher who plan to enroll in the university, must first complete a four-month basic military training course after which they are allowed to start university studies [4]. In 2014, the draft captured a wider male youth demographic that included high school and university graduates, unemployed and employed youths aged 18 to

30 years. Over time, the profile of draftees changed as proportionately fewer employed/unemployed individuals and more high school/university graduates now fill the ranks. It is anticipated that eventually all draftees would be drawn from high school graduates with the ending of academic deferment.

Future conscripts' perceptions of the military influence their expectations of and subsequent adjustment to service life [5]. When national service was first introduced in 2014, Emirati draftees lacked opportunities to interact with those who had served or were currently serving, whose attitudes and experiences could influence their expectations and perceptions of national service. However, six years later in 2019, the conscription program had graduated over 12 batches of male recruits who would become the Emirati community's influencers or information sources on national service. Hence, this study identifies information sources on national service used by Emirati youths and compares them to sources the youths intend to access in the future.

## 2.2 Studies on use of information sources

Research on information sources covers a spectrum of fields such as consumer behavior, health and safety, education, and military recruitment. Mihalik et al. [6] compared information sources utilized by Japanese and German tourists in their selection of top five overseas vacation destinations. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 1,199 Japanese and 1,212 German participants who were 18 years and above, had travelled and planned to travel overseas in the near future. Institutional and social information sources were selected of which the former included travel agents, tour operators, brochures, airlines, governments while the latter were family and friends. The statistical results showed that both participant groups used travel agents most as their information source on vacation destinations. Also, Japanese participants used the print medium more while German participants relied more on word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends. The results identified the increasingly important role played by travel agents in disseminating destination information to travelers.

Compared to the occurrence of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (COVID-19) pandemic happened at a time replete with new information channels such as social media and networks (YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Piltch-Loeb et al. [7] examined the use of media channels (traditional and social) for COVID-19 vaccine information and the impact of these sources on vaccine acceptance. Online surveys via mobile phones were conducted and the 2,650 participants were US residents in a vaccine priority group (healthcare/frontline workers). Most were aged 25 to 44 years, male and Caucasian. The statistical results showed that traditional information sources (TV, newspapers) increased the likelihood of vaccine acceptance (regardless of trust level) but use of social media as the sole information source decreases vaccine acceptance. Another study in Italy which examined the effect of information sources on attitude towards COVID-19 vaccination found similar results [8]. 1,011 participants aged 18 to 70 years from the Emilia-Romagna region in Italy were surveyed online. The statistical results showed that use of social media increases vaccine hesitancy towards COVID-19 vaccination, while the opposite effect was observed for institutional websites. The findings in both studies suggest that social media channels should be given a larger role in disseminating accurate vaccine information to the public.

Simões & Soares [9] examined information sources used by students in their university decision-making process. 1,641 first year students at a Portuguese university were surveyed about their perceptions of sources when applying to a higher education institution. Participants ranked three most used sources that included (1) interpersonal (current university students, alumni, teachers); (2) marketer controlled (official guides, promotional visits to secondary schools, university brochures and leaflets, and website); (3) the consumers' direct inspection of the good/service (i.e. organized campus visits) and; (4) third-party independent (i.e. media/publicity and secondary school counsellors). The findings revealed that the three most used sources of information were university website (institutional); current university students and alumni; and teachers (social). The findings can guide professional student recruitment services in their choice of advertising method to attract prospective university students. A more recent study [10] examined the choice factors and use of information sources delivered via word-of-mouth (WOM) in its survey of 509 senior high school students in Ho Chi Minh City who were considering applying to universities. Statistical results showed that parents are the most influential information source for respondents who wished to study abroad and domestically in Vietnam followed by university websites. For respondents intending to study domestically, WOM or social sources are ranked second (teachers, school advisors) and third (siblings, relatives) most influential information sources. Social media was a more important information source for respondents intending to study internationally than domestically.

In many ways, youths' access of information sources in their university decision-making process is similar to Emirati youths' use of information sources before being drafted into national service. University selection is an important life decision to youths with long-term effects on income and careers. Hence, university selection is considered a high-risk decision and information-seeking is a strategy used to reduce risk and increase the chances that a right decision had been made. *Information seeking behaviour* refers to the purposive

seeking of information due to a need to satisfy some goal [11]. Information sources available for potential students include institutional sources (university websites, brochures, recruiters) and social (alumni, friends, family, social media). Similarly, Emirati youths eligible for draft are faced with uncertainties such as adjustment to the service culture; its regimentation and discipline, the impact of service period on education and job-seeking, separation from family and friends, and personal safety. Such uncertainties about the service would lead draftees to seek information from institutional and social sources to alleviate this anxiety. Hence, information-gathering is a strategy used to reduce uncertainty and it is a form of anticipatory behavior [12] which youths adopt to prepare for a future event i.e. enlistment in national service.

### 2.3 Research on use of information sources on the military and national service

Unlike the UAE, the US military has long experienced a combined draft and volunteer force. When the last draft call ended in 1972, an all-volunteer force was adopted. This change led to increased attention by the Department of Defense (DoD) on recruiting high school graduates to fill manpower needs. The Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) was implemented from 1975 to 1999 by the DoD to examine enlistment trends. Lehnus & Wilson [13] reported pre-1996 YATS data on information sources of American male youths that influenced their perception of military service and the most cited sources were Friend (peer); Movies/TV; Father; Older friend. A more recent study examined the major influencers and information sources used by American youths in military career decision-making [14]. The study utilized secondary archival data from a national survey (High School Longitudinal Survey of 2009) of 25,000 high school freshman (aged 14 to 15 years) from 944 US schools. It also interviewed high school juniors (aged 16 to 17 years) and new US Air Force recruits (aged 17 to 21 years) (N=68). Social network analysis identified influencers and information sources that included family, teachers, friends, military, Internet, others. It found that Parents (Father, Mother) were the primary sources across groups while Friends were the main information source for high school juniors.

A UAE study [15] examined Emirati youths' preferred information sources on military service four months post-implementation of the service law in 2014 and two months after the first batch of recruits enlisted. It surveyed two groups of Emirati male youths who were high school students aged 16 to 17 years and employed/unemployed Emiratis aged 18 to 28 years (N=40 per group). The participants were eligible for draft but had not yet served at the time of data collection in 2014. Participants were asked to rank their most to least preferred sources of information on military service ranging from people, governmental and media sources. The findings showed that Father was the most preferred information source for both groups. Moreover, high school participants' main information sources were limited to immediate family relations (parents) and close social circles (friends), while the older employed/unemployed participants' sources are more diverse, extending to non-family contacts such as military recruiter and government websites. Similar to the US studies, the study found that Emirati high school participants' most influential information sources are concentrated on Father and Friends.

By 2019, six years post-implementation of national service in the UAE, a number of institutional and social information sources on national service were available to future recruits. Institutional information sources include government websites, mass media and military recruiters while social information sources include national service alumni who may constitute the recruits' friends, family members, work colleagues, and social media contacts. In contrast to 2014 when the service was first implemented, a large pool of alumni (reservists) was available in 2019. By 9 June 2022, the National Service and Reserve Authority graduated the 17th national service male batch and the 11th female service batch who had completed basic military training. Assuming that youth perceptions of national service are typically based on their socialization experiences at home, in school and society [16], this study identifies information sources on national service used by Emirati youths since these sources could shape the views of enlistees and the formation of positive or negative attitudes towards national service. This study also compared information sources on national service used by Emirati youths with the sources youths intend to access in the future. This comparison would reveal emergent information disseminators that the UAE military could utilize in promoting the relevance of national service to youths and the wider Emirati community that could ensure sustainability of the program.

## III. METHOD

### 3.1 Sample

Participant selection criteria reflected the male youth demographic groups captured by the draft in 2019 i.e. high school students, undergraduates, unemployed/employed youths (Table 1) and this purposive sample is not intended to be statistically representative. Groups 1 to 3 were all male Emiratis who have not served but would be obliged to serve after high school/college graduation and unlikely to be permanently exempted at the time of data collection. Group 1 were high school students; Group 2 were undergraduates and Group 3 were either employed, unemployed or studying part-time.

**Table 1.** Groups 1 to 3 Emirati participant criteria

Characteristics	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Education	High school students	Undergraduates	Employed/unemployed/part-time studies
Age (in 2019)	16 – 17 years	18 – 28 years	18 – 28 years

### 3.2 Instruments, data analysis and ethics

Three questionnaires were developed with slight variations of questions for each participant group. Each questionnaire contained closed questions on demographics and the constructs examined. In this qualitative study, construct validity as the appropriateness of the questions for eliciting the required information, was addressed at the piloting stage which identified a general difficulty in understanding the questionnaires' instructions and questions worded in English. Hence, the final questionnaires were printed in English and Arabic so that participants would have recourse to the language they were more comfortable with. To identify information sources on national service used and to compare them with the sources participants intend to access in the future, two closed questions were asked that required participants to a) select the sources they had used in 2018 or 2019 (data collection period); and b) select the sources they will use for information on national service. The information sources items listed in the questions were adapted from YATS [13]. Quantitative data from closed questions were processed and presented as descriptive statistics and graphic representations as network sociograms.

The main ethical issues in this study were participant protection, confidentiality, and informed consent. Institutional Review Board approval for the study protocol was obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality of identity was ensured by not gathering real names of participants, using codes to replace names in data processing and publications. Assent was obtained from Group 1 since they were minors (below 18 years) and consent obtained from their parent/guardian. All participants read, understood and signed an informed assent/consent form (in English and Arabic) that included the project aims, assurance of confidentiality, assent/consent to voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from participation anytime without penalty.

### 3.3 Concepts and measures

In this study, the construct *information sources* refer to resources that provide information on national service, measured as individuals, mass media, Internet sites, and categorized as Institutional and Social sources (Table 2). The list of 13 sources used in the questionnaires was adapted from YATS [13]. *Institutional sources* provide information on national service that is regulated or controlled and include government websites, military recruiter, teacher, newspapers, TV/movies. *Social sources* provide information that are based on own opinion, personal experiences or hearsay and would not have the authority to disseminate official information on national service. Social information sources include parents, family members, friends, work colleagues, Internet sites, TV/movies. TV/movies is regarded as both an institutional and social information source since this media may convey official and unofficial information on the service to the public.

**Table 2.** Institutional and Social information sources on national service

	Institutional	Social
Father		x
Friends <sup>1</sup>		x
Relatives		x
Military recruiter	x	
Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>		x
Mother		x
Brother/Sister		x
Government websites	x	
Internet sites <sup>3</sup>		x
Teacher <sup>4</sup>	x	
Work colleagues <sup>5</sup>		x
TV/movies	x	x
Newspapers	x	

<sup>1</sup>same age or younger; <sup>2</sup>older friends; <sup>3</sup>YouTube, Blogs, Forums; <sup>4</sup>Teacher option applies to G1/G2; <sup>5</sup>Work colleagues option applies to G3

### 3.4 Data visualization: Social network analysis

Although social network analysis (SNA) can be used as a method for analyzing social structures, it is primarily used in this study as a visualization tool for representing actors and relations in information networks through sociograms. A *sociogram* is “one kind of graphic display [in two-dimensional space] that consists of points (or nodes) to represent actors and lines (or edges) to represent ties or relations” [17, p.21] (Fig. 1). The construction of a sociogram enables not only the visualization of actors and ties in a group, but also depicts the

directional nature of interpersonal relations to illustrate sources of influence [18] and path of information diffusion. Sociograms were utilized in Moreno et al. [19] to display group and subgroup structures in classrooms based on friendship choices made by students. The fundamental concern of SNA in the nature of relational ties is captured by a *sociometric star* (Fig. 2) representing “the recipient of numerous and frequent choices from others and who, therefore, held a position of great popularity and leadership” [20, p.10]. Variations in sociograms included not only directed ties, but also the use of different shapes, locations, and/or colors to highlight significant network structural features [21]. Further sophistication in the interpretation and visual display of relational properties were introduced by the assignment of numbers to indicate quantity/frequency in *valued graphs* (Fig. 3).

While sociograms could show immediate ties between nodes, for larger datasets encompassing many actors, types and number of ties, mathematical representations as matrices offer clearer displays of network features. Studies have examined *affiliation networks* whereby “one set of actors is measured with respect to attendance at, or affiliation with, a set of events or activities” [22, p.40]. Such data are captured by case-by-affiliation matrices where cases are represented by rows, and affiliations of cases (in events, activities or organizations) are represented by columns.

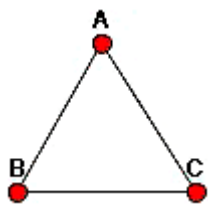


Figure 1. A sociogram

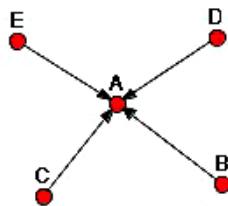


Figure 2. A sociometric star

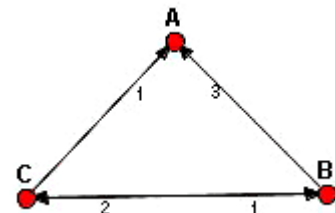


Figure 3. A directed and valued graph

In this study, *directed*, *valued* ties are fundamental to examining the information-seeking behavior of groups in terms of the direction and frequency of choices (ties) made by groups and received by information sources. The processing of quantitative relational data in *case-by-affiliation* matrices at group level and visualization of data as sociograms is supported by NetMiner 4.4 [23]. The concepts and assumptions underlying data visualization as sociograms are explained below [22]:

- A *node* represents a social unit which is a group (participants) or an information source; both of which are differentiated by shape.
- A *tie* represents a connection/link between two nodes (group, information source).
- A *connection* exists between a pair of nodes which has a tie incident to each other.
- A *Transmitter* node has only ties originating from it i.e. originator of choices of information sources (group).
- A *Receiver* node has only ties terminating at it i.e. recipient of choices made by the group.
- An *Isolate* node has no ties incident to and from it.
- Ties are *directed* and *asymmetrical* (one way) i.e. only ties are sent from the group to an information source (out-ties). Directed ties are represented with arrows.
- Ties are *valued* and the value represents the weight of the tie which is the sum of choices made for an information source by the group.
- The *strength* of a tie is represented by its weight and illustrated by its length and width i.e. thicker and shorter ties from group to source represent information sources that are chosen more often.
- A *relation* refers to the type of tie that exists between a pair of nodes i.e. information acquisition behavior whereby a group selects one or more information source.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total sample was 179 Emirati participants distributed across three demographic groups (Table 3). Group 1 participants were high school students, aged 16 to 17 years in 2019. All were single; 98.2% had an average monthly allowance below US\$5,450; and most expected to graduate in 2019 (59.6%). Group 2 were full-time university undergraduates, aged 18 to 28 years in 2019. Most were single (98.3%); with an average monthly allowance below US\$5,450 (94.1%); and expected to graduate between 2019 and 2020 (48.2%). Group 3 participants were either employed, unemployed or studying part-time, aged 18 to 28 years in 2019. Most were single (91.5%); with an average monthly allowance above US\$5,450 (60%).



**Table 3.** Participant demographics: Groups 1 to 3

Demographics		Group 1 <sup>1</sup>	Group 2 <sup>1</sup>	Group 3 <sup>1</sup>
Age(in 2019)		16-17yrs	18-28 yrs	18-28 yrs
Marital status	Single	100%	98.3%	91.5%
	Married	0%	0%	8.5%
AV monthly income <sup>2</sup>	Above US\$5,450	1.8%	5.9%	60.0%
Expected year of graduation	In 2019	59.6%	28.6%	-
	In 2020	25.5%	19.6%	-
Employment	Employed	-	-	31.3%

<sup>1</sup> % based on number of participants per group. Groups 1 & 2: N=60 each; Group 3: N=59. <sup>2</sup> 1 USD = 3.67AED (30 July 2022).

**4.1 Information sources on national service used by participants**

Participants were asked to select information sources on national service they had used in 2018 or 2019 (data collection period). Across all groups, Institutional sources (TV/Movies, Newspaper, Teacher) were least chosen while Social sources (Friends-same age/younger, Relatives) were most used (Table 4, Figs. 4-6, full dataset in Appendix 1 Table A-1). The selection of *Friends* (same age/younger) by older participants (Groups 2 and 3) may be because these friends could have enlisted earlier while the participants opted for academic deferment and these friends could share information on their service experiences. However, in the case of high school participants (Group 1), *Friends* who are their peers would not have been drafted yet and would not have direct experiences of the service. Instead, this source functions as a *bridge* for Group 1 to other acquaintances who could have information on national service. In SNA, a *bridge node* functions as a link between network clusters that otherwise would not have any connection [24]. According to Granovetter's (1973) theory on The Strength of Weak Ties [25], in examining the spread of information through social networks, distant acquaintances are likely to have new or more valuable information than close friends. Hence this finding suggests that bridge nodes (as Friends/peers of Group 1) serve a crucial role as they facilitate an acquaintance that may lead to information exchange between individuals who had not known each other before.

**Table 4.** Youth information sources on national service in 2019 (Top four sources: Ranked)

Group 1	Mean <sup>3</sup>	Group 2	Mean <sup>3</sup>	Group 3	Mean <sup>3</sup>
Father	0.80	Friends <sup>1</sup>	0.85	Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	0.78
Friends <sup>1</sup>	0.68	Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	0.72	Friends <sup>1</sup>	0.69
Relatives	0.60	Relatives	0.62	Relatives	0.69
Military recruiter	0.58	Father	0.52	Brother/Sister	0.42

<sup>1</sup>same age or younger; <sup>2</sup>older friends; <sup>3</sup>Mean based on number of choices made for each source/N of participants in each group.

The selection of *Relatives* (Cousin, Uncle, Aunt) as a primary Social source by all groups may be because they are likely to include national service alumni. Also, the preference of Emiratis to work in the government sector [26] meant that *Relatives* would likely include UAE military personnel who could advise on service expectations and conditions.

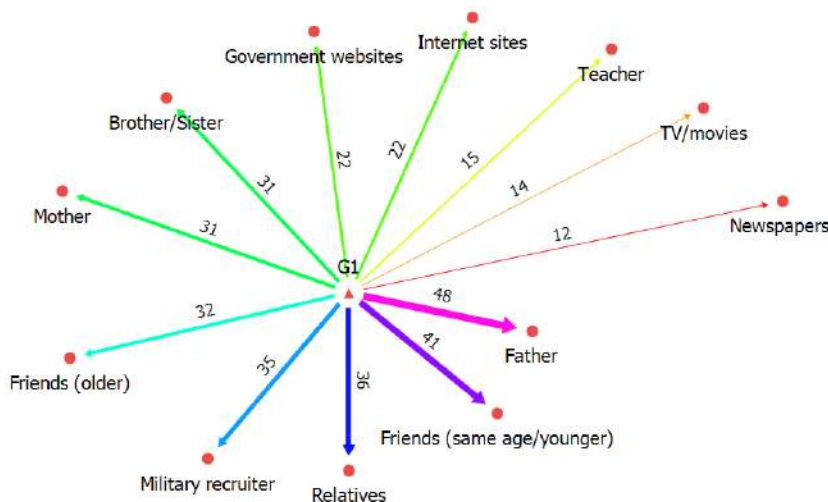


Figure 4: Information sources used on national service in 2019 – Group 1

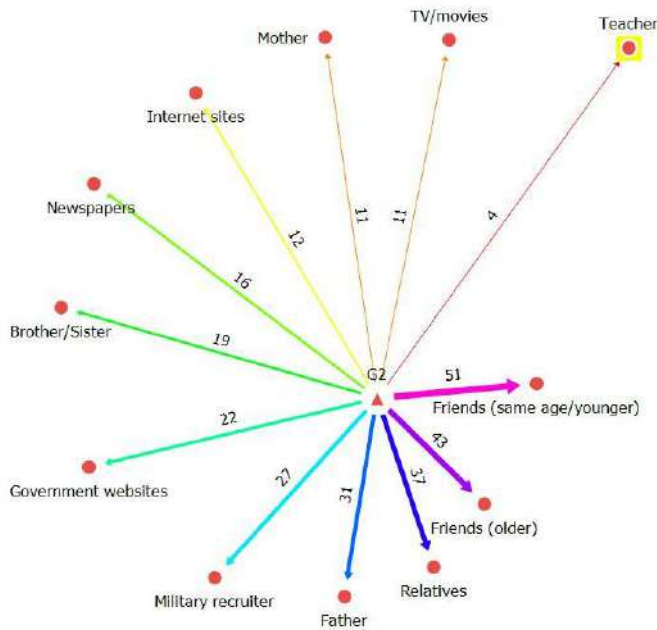


Figure 5: Information sources used on national service in 2019 – Group 2

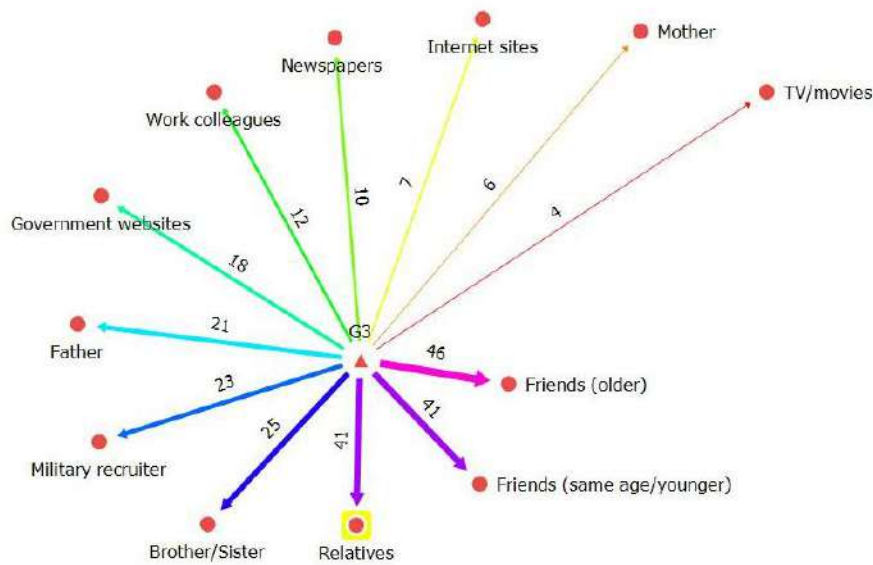


Figure 6: Information sources used on national service in 2019 – Group 3

A between group comparison showed that *Father* and *Friends* (same age/younger) were information sources used most by Group 1. This finding was consistent with the literature [14] which found that *Father* and *Friends* were primary sources for American high school students in military career decision-making. In contrast, *Friends* (same age/younger or older) were information sources used most by Groups 2 and 3. Unlike earlier findings [15], this study found that the older participants’ main information sources were Social and limited to family members (*Father*, *Siblings*, *Relatives*) and close social contacts (*Friends*-peer/older), whereas the younger high school participants’ sources were wider; including Social (*Father*, *Friends*, *Relatives*) and Institutional (military recruiter) sources. It would seem that older participants (Groups 2 and 3) displayed a more targeted information-seeking behavior which concentrated on sources most likely to yield relevant and direct information on national service as *Siblings*, *Relatives*, *Friends* who may include service alumni.

The results showed that *Father* was utilized more by Groups 1 and 2 compared to Group 3 for service information. The selection of *Father* as one of the top four information sources may be attributed to the patriarchal structure of Arab families [27] and that the fathers could be employed in the military and offer advice on enlistment. Demographic data showed that most Group 3 participants were older than Group 2: 81.4%

of Group 3 participants were aged 22 to 25 years while 63.3% of Group 2 were aged 18 to 21 years. Hence, Group 3's lesser reliance on *Father* as a source may reflect an understanding that given the brief UAE national service history (from 2014) and draft age (18 to 30 years), it is unlikely their fathers would have been drafted for service or even qualify for voluntary service.

**4.2 Emergent information disseminators on national service**

To identify future use of information sources on national service, participants were asked to select the sources they would use after 2018 or 2019. A comparison between information sources used and the future sources participants would access showed that for Group 1, *Father* remained the most selected source while *Friends (Older)* replaced *Friends (same age/younger)* as one of the top four information sources that participants would use in the future (Tables 5-6, Figs. 7-9, full dataset is in Appendix 1 Table A-2). For Group 2, *Friends (older/same age/younger)* and *Relatives* remained the most selected sources but *Military Recruiter* replaced *Father* as one of the top four future information sources. The same trend is reflected in Group 3 except that *Military Recruiter* replaced *Brother/Sister* as one of the top four future information sources.

**Table 5.** Youth future information sources on national service (Top four sources: Ranked)

Group 1	Mean <sup>3</sup>	Group 2	Mean <sup>3</sup>	Group 3	Mean <sup>3</sup>
Father	0.68	Friends <sup>2</sup>	0.57	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	0.63
Relatives	0.65	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	0.57	Relatives	0.58
Military recruiter	0.62	Relatives	0.55	Military recruiter	0.58
Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	0.53	Military recruiter	0.50	Friends <sup>2</sup>	0.49

<sup>1</sup>older friends; <sup>2</sup>same age or younger; <sup>3</sup>Mean based on number of choices made for each source/N of participants in each group.

**Table 6.** Trends in youth information sources in 2019 and future (Top four sources: Ranked)

Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
2019 sources	Future sources	2019 sources	Future sources	2019 sources	Future sources
Father	Father	Friends <sup>1</sup>	Friends <sup>2</sup>	Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>
Friends <sup>1</sup>	Relatives	Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	Friends <sup>1</sup>	Relatives
Relatives	Military recruiter	Relatives	Relatives	Relatives	Military recruiter
Military recruiter	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	Father	Military recruiter	Brother/Sister	Friends <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>same age or younger; <sup>2</sup>older friends.

Two patterns in the data emerged in the comparison of information sources used by participants and future sources. Across groups, participants would rely on both Social and Institutional sources in future information-seeking behavior. Moreover, the *Military Recruiter* is an emergent information disseminator and would become a more important information source to all groups. From an SNA perspective, it is important to note that there were no *Isolates* in the networks i.e. nodes with no ties incident to and from it. Given the assumptions that information sources are represented as *Receiver* nodes and ties are *asymmetrical* (one way); sent from the group (*Transmitter* node) to one or more information source, the presence of an *Isolate* would indicate an unused source which could limit the acquisition of information by groups.

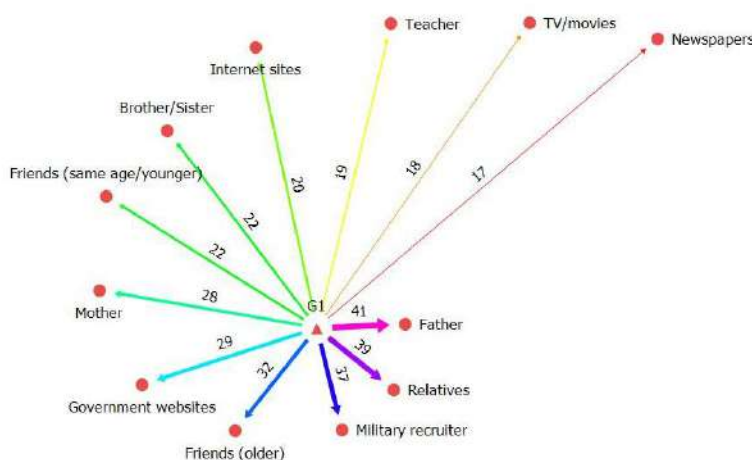


Figure. 7: Future information sources on national service – Group 1



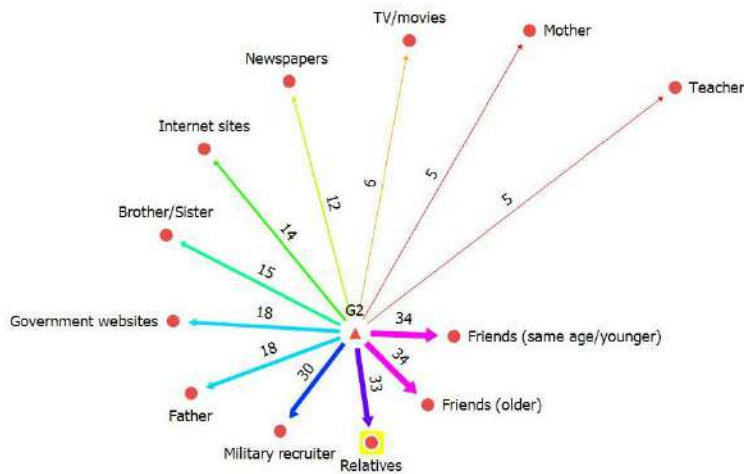


Figure 8: Future information sources on national service – Group 2

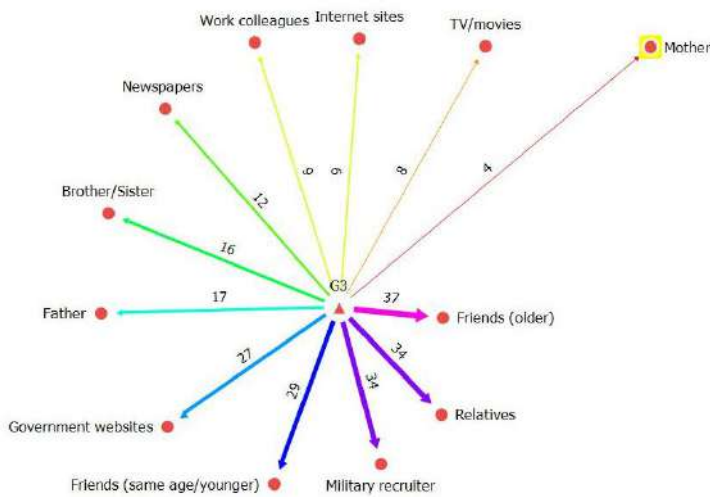


Figure 9: Future information sources on national service – Group 3

**V. CONCLUSION**

This study identified information sources on national service used by Emirati youths and compared them to sources the youths intend to access in the future. The results on information sources utilized showed that across all groups, Institutional sources were least selected while Social sources were most used. It also found that older participants’ main information sources were Social and limited to family members and close social contacts whereas the younger high school participants’ sources were wider; including Social and Institutional sources. A comparison of the information sources used with those participants intend to access showed that youths would rely on both Social and Institutional sources in future information-seeking. Moreover, the *Military Recruiter* is an emergent information disseminator and would become a more important information source to all groups. These findings could be used to develop advertising strategies and public awareness campaigns that promote the relevance of national service to youths and the wider Emirati community that could ensure sustainability of the program. Although the scope of this work is limited to Emirati youths and their selection of information sources, future work could examine the sources utilized by parents and assess their level of trust in the sources. Moreover, the spread of information through *Friends*, as bridge nodes connecting network clusters that otherwise would not have any connection, could be further studied in order to build larger-scale information networks.

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## APPENDIX 1

**Table A-1.** Youth information sources on national service in 2019 (Ranked)

Group 1	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Group 2	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Group 3	Mean <sup>4</sup>
Father	0.80	Friends <sup>1</sup>	0.85	Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	0.78
Friends <sup>1</sup>	0.68	Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	0.72	Friends <sup>1</sup>	0.69
Relatives	0.60	Relatives	0.62	Relatives	0.69
Military recruiter	0.58	Father	0.52	Brother/Sister	0.42
Friends (older) <sup>2</sup>	0.53	Military recruiter	0.45	Military recruiter	0.39
Mother	0.52	Government websites	0.37	Father	0.36
Brother/Sister	0.52	Brother/Sister	0.32	Government websites	0.31
Government websites	0.37	Newspapers	0.27	Work colleagues	0.20
Internet sites <sup>3</sup>	0.37	Internet sites <sup>3</sup>	0.20	Newspapers	0.17
Teacher	0.25	Mother	0.18	Internet sites <sup>3</sup>	0.12
TV/movies	0.23	TV/movies	0.18	Mother	0.10
Newspapers	0.20	Teacher	0.07	TV/movies	0.07

<sup>1</sup>same age or younger; <sup>2</sup>older friends; <sup>3</sup>YouTube, Blogs, Forums; <sup>4</sup>Mean based on number of choices made for each source/N of participants in each group.

**Table A-2.** Youth future information sources on national service (Ranked)

Group 1	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Group 2	Mean <sup>4</sup>	Group 3	Mean <sup>4</sup>
Father	0.68	Friends <sup>2</sup>	0.57	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	0.63
Relatives	0.65	Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	0.57	Relatives	0.58
Military recruiter	0.62	Relatives	0.55	Military recruiter	0.58
Friends (older) <sup>1</sup>	0.53	Military recruiter	0.50	Friends <sup>2</sup>	0.49
Government websites	0.48	Father	0.30	Government websites	0.46
Mother	0.47	Government websites	0.30	Father	0.29
Friends <sup>2</sup>	0.37	Brother/Sister	0.25	Brother/Sister	0.27
Brother/Sister	0.37	Internet sites <sup>3</sup>	0.23	Newspapers	0.20
Internet sites <sup>3</sup>	0.33	Newspapers	0.20	Work colleagues	0.15
Teacher	0.32	TV/movies	0.10	Internet sites <sup>3</sup>	0.15
TV/movies	0.30	Mother	0.08	TV/movies	0.14
Newspapers	0.28	Teacher	0.08	Mother	0.07

<sup>1</sup>older friends; <sup>2</sup>same age or younger; <sup>3</sup>YouTube, Blogs, Forums; <sup>4</sup>Mean based on number of choices made for each source/N of participants in each group.