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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Brian K. Ward Sr.

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
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2018

Abstract

A Phenomenological Study of the Transition of Veterans into the Civilian Workforce

by

Brian K. Ward Sr.

MA, Spring Arbor University, 2011

BS, Spring Arbor University, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

November 2018

Abstract

Military veterans face various challenges during their transition into the civilian workforce, including mental health problems. Veterans experience challenges like emotional trauma and physical distress while transitioning into the civilian workforce. The challenges result from the nature of the civilian work. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the challenges among veterans in California and Michigan while transitioning into the civilian life. The study participants included 30 veterans from California and Michigan who had retired and those who were expecting to retire from the military within six months at the time of conducting the study. Schlossberg's 4S transition theory was used as a conceptual framework. Data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to develop themes for each research question. The findings indicated that transition challenges were related to emotional trauma and physical distress. Themes identified in relation to coping strategies that veterans can use to cope with the transition challenges include physical exercise, social interaction/open communication, and mutual support. The results of this study have significant social change implications. Leaders in the military and civilian workforce, government, and future military veterans could benefit from the findings by understanding the traditional challenges faced while transitioning into the civilian workforce. The study's findings could benefit policymakers and senior leaders in developing and implementing strategies that ensure smooth transition by military veterans into the civilian workforce.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Valerie, Victoria, and Victor Ward who had been with me from the start to the end of this doctoral journey. Their sacrifices, support, commitment, and prayers throughout the project allowed me to work hard and see its success. The dissertation is mainly dedicated to my lovely wife Valerie Ward for her sacrifice and commitment while I was working on the dissertation. I also extend my dedication to my entire family and dearest friends for their prayers and significant support and encouragement while conducting this dissertation. They showed me their happiness and wanted the best for me throughout this project. Their support and motivation assisted in the successful accomplishment of this goal. In conclusion, I know my success throughout the project was all accomplished through God's guidance. I sought assistance from God from the start to the end of this journey and God truly answered my prayers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study (APA Level 0 Heading)

Introduction

The military career is one of the most arduous and challenging (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014). Unemployment among veterans is deemed to be escalating (Plumer, 2013). The act of returning to the civilian workforce and assuming an active duty has posed a lot of challenges for veterans (Abrams & Kennedy, 2015). Parham and Gordon (2016) showed that about 72% of 1700 veterans surveyed indicated that they did not face any difficulty in gaining entry into the civilian workforce after active service in the military but about 28% of this population has faced prolonged difficulty.

The unemployment rate of veterans from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars stood at 9.9% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in March 2013 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2014). This means about 200,000 veterans are unemployed out of 2.6 million. One reason for the difficulty is a lack of transferable skills and veterans' traumatic injuries which makes it hard for them to reintegrate into the civilian jobs (Daywalt, 2014).

Even if the federal government and the private sector have offered the needed support for transition, there is a need to further understand how to create a smooth and effective transition for veterans into the civilian workforce so that the unemployment gap is reduced (Castro & Kintzle, 2014). Hachey, Sudom, Sweet, MacLean, and VanTil (2016) suggested that in future, researchers should focus on a variety of factors like education and demographic differences to assess the experience of veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce. These factors would be investigated from veterans' personal

perspectives and through the lens of the structures put in place, that is, the perceptions of employers about transitioning into the civilian workforce, the structure of the military adopted by veterans before their deployment and the employment of these veterans in society. I focused on various challenges that veterans face during the transition into the civilian workforce. Specifically, I examined the problems of concerns including emotional trauma and physical distress that veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning back into the civilian workforce. Additionally, I focused on the impact of transitioning from the military workforce into the civilian workforce on veterans and means of coping with the challenges that they face while transitioning.

Background of the Problem

According to McAllister, Mackey, Hackney, and Perrewé (2015), 48% of veterans face problems when trying to reintegrate into the civilian workforce. They tend to experience stress and strain, perhaps due to the incongruence between the civilian work setting and veterans' military identities. Furthermore, Demers (2011) indicated that there is distress among veterans when transitioning from the military life to the civilian culture. To some extent, when coming back to society, veterans feel like they are misunderstood and tend to feel different from the rest of the civilians.

Ahern et al. (2015) indicated that it is vital to realize the nature of veterans' transition into the civilian life and the challenges they experience. Veterans have been commonly exposed to numerous traumatic situations and the constant risk of injury. Thus, the transitioning challenges are long-term concerns.

Veterans have a potential of contributing to the civilian workforce through nontechnical or soft skills, for example, leadership. But civilian employers find it challenging to incorporate veterans' soft skills because the civilian workplace and the military cultures are distinct (Hardison et al., 2015). For example, according to Parham and Gordon (2016), when veterans are hired in public schools, some of the educators have been biased against them. The veterans cited that there is discrimination against military members when it comes to hiring in the civilian workforce.

Szelwach, Steinkogler, Badger, and Muttukumaru (2011) asserted that women veterans seeking employment likewise tend to experience challenges that entail the lack of employment openings and geographical barriers like lack of poor public transportation and long travel distance. The challenges tend to be worsened by complex problems, such as physical and traumatic stress. In 2018, the unemployment rate of veterans stood at 3.8% nationally (United States Department of Labor, 2018).

According to Ostovary and Dapprich (2011), veterans' unemployment rates increased between 2002 and 2005 by approximately 58%. Veterans transitioning back into the civilian workforce from the military life are required to adapt to a new work environment, tasks, reporting structure, and relationships. Department of Veterans' Administration has attempted to address the issue of unemployment. To some extent, the collaboration among employers, the government, educational institutions, and veterans has yielded positive effects. According to Johnson (2015), since September 11, 2001, approximately 1.3 million U.S. veterans have transitioned back into the civilian life; however, only about 14% have been able to secure employment with civilian jobs.

Observers are worried about the increase in veterans' unemployment. For example, the unemployment rate among Gulf War II veterans in July 2017 was 4.5% compared to 8% of the general population (United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Due to increased unemployment rates for military veterans, one would expect the federal government to take steps necessary to facilitate the hiring of veterans. However, the U.S. Congress has been unable to pass any significant legislation addressing the issue of veterans' unemployment (Eiler, 2013).

Faberman and Foster (2013) estimated that veterans have performed fairly poor within the labor market during as well as after the Great Recession between 1989 and 2012. During this period, the unemployed veterans accounted for 13.9% of the total labor force that was employed. The unemployment rates of the veterans remained high before sharply falling in 2012 due to mismatch in skills between military and civilian skills. Faberman and Foster (2013) asserted that potential employers are aware of the issues. New veterans tend to be younger as well as less educated when compared with average workers. Thus, new veterans have high unemployment rates within the general population.

It has been argued that a military background tends to impede employment as a result of health effects and age. The unemployment rate is higher in veterans with psychological thoughts of military services and older age veterans when compared with the young veterans (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2007). Bullock, Braud, Andrews, and Phillips (2009) indicated that veterans tend to face traumatic events in their line of duty

and some veterans experiencing unemployment may have posed traumatic effects, which, in turn, is likely to hamper their reintegration into the civilian workforce.

Veterans tend to lack confidence when it comes to basic occupations. Some veterans find it challenging when trying to relate to civilian workforce. Employers are supposed to focus on hiring and training veterans so that they can realize their full potential in the civilian workforce (Timm, 2015). Lou (2014) indicated that military veterans have remained among the top groups with high unemployment rates, which is attributed to the failure of business to hire veterans. There is considerable skepticism about skill shortage among the veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce. This is because veterans have transferrable skills that may be applicable in civilian jobs (Davis, 2017).

The unemployment of veterans has been consistently high, both statewide and nationally, when compared to that of their non-veteran counterparts. Veterans still report difficulties when seeking employment (Gonzalez, Henriquez, & McKennon, 2014). Further, deployment to war zone sometimes results in psychological and physical trauma that may make it challenging to obtain employment. There are also many cases of skills mismatch, where the veteran's skills do not meet those required to perform civilian tasks. It is evident that military veterans are unable to join the labor market because of inadequate experience and education. Some of the veterans fail to further their education after joining the military service (Gonzalez et al., 2014).

According to Zillman (2013), minimizing unemployment among young veterans could prove to be challenging in the coming years because the number keeps increasing.

This has been attributed to the de-escalation of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq when thousands of military veterans were returned to civilian life. To enhance the employment of veterans would require substantial public awareness about the issues they face. The unemployment reduction has not been spread equally among the military veterans. For example, unemployment among young veterans has been high. The inequity in unemployment reduction among veterans is the knowledge gap this study aimed to fill. As suggested by Hachey et al. (2016), a variety of factors need to be explored to adequately assess the experience of veterans when transitioning into the civilian life. This qualitative study sought to explore issues such as emotional trauma and physical distress that veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning back into the civilian workforce.

Problem Statement

The challenges facing veterans in transitioning into the civil society have become an issue. Any career in the military is a challenging and arduous one and returning to the civilian workforce poses significant challenges (Ahern et al., 2015). According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2011 on a sample of 1,853 veterans, 1,334 (73%) of them did not have trouble in adjusting to the civilian workforce (Morin, 2011). The remaining 27%, however, were reported to have difficulties such as emotional trauma and physical distress in transitioning from the military life to civilian employment.

The readiness of veterans transitioning back into the civilian workforce needs to be evaluated based on their knowledge, abilities, and skills (Blore, 2014). The general

problem is that veterans are facing challenges such as emotional trauma and physical distress while transitioning back to society (Oster, Morello, Venning, Redpath, & Lawn, 2017). This is consistent with the findings of Zoli et al. (2015) which established that some veterans suffered from emotional trauma, physical distress, and disabilities as a result of the injuries they suffered while serving. The specific problem is that veterans in California and Michigan may be experiencing emotional trauma and physical distress as they transition into the civilian workforce. Ex-military men and women have found that returning to the civilian workforce was demanding.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore issues including emotional trauma and physical distress that veterans in California and Michigan encounter in transitioning back into the civilian workforce. Exploring transition challenges with a focus on emotional trauma and physical distress helped to increase the understanding of the problems related to veteran's transitioning back into the civilian workforce.

Research Questions

To capture and examine veterans' personal experiences, perceptions, descriptions, and motivations regarding transition to the civilian workforce, a qualitative, exploratory, phenomenological approach was used. The overarching research question of the study was: What challenges are encountered by veterans when transitioning back to the civilian workforce? The following research questions guided the study;

RQ1: What challenges do veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

RQ2: How do veterans cope with the challenges that they face while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Schlossberg's transition theory, which was developed in 1984 to facilitate an understanding of adults' reaction to change during a transition. The model presents researchers with an effective means of analyzing a transition process (Schlossberg, Goodman, & Anderson, 2012). The Schlossberg Transition Theory comprises of four principles which are denoted as 4S. The principles are situation, self, support, and strategies (Byrd, 2017). The key principle of situation reflects the type of transition that is taking place and the reason why the transition occurs. The principle of self is based on expectations and motivations during transition process. The principle highlights the past experiences and how they influence transition (Pellegrino & Hoggan, 2015). The key construct of self also discusses the strengths and weaknesses of an individual during transition. The principle of support involves systems or people who are helpful. The principle of strategies refers to how individual evaluate transition and how to gain control over transition process. This principle reflects the plan of coping with and accepting transition process (Pellegrino & Hoggan, 2015).

The current study was grounded in the transition theory by Schlossberg. I used Schlossberg transition theory as a suitable lens to examine the topic of interest, that is, the

transition of veterans into the civilian workforce. This is because the theory provides a framework that enabled me to categorize individual aspects of the transition process and organize them in a meaningful manner. Additionally, the transition theory attempts to describe the way adults face life changes or transition. The theory further categorizes transition into four distinct aspects; situation, self, strategies, and support (4s) (Schlossberg et al., 2012). The theory explores the transition challenges experienced by military personnel. The theory has been applied previously to establish veteran's experience when transitioning into the civilian workforce (Schlossberg et al., 2012).

In addition, the framework is suitable for understanding the perceived coping strategies as well as demands used by individuals during transition. Using this framework, transition is termed as an event that leads to changes in assumptions, roles, routines, work, and economics. According to Schlossberg et al. (2012), transitions can be grouped as anticipated event transitions, unanticipated event transitions, and non-event transitions. Anticipated event transitions are events that predictable and occur expectedly while unanticipated transitions are events that are not scheduled but took place unexpectedly. Non-event transitions are events that a person expects to happen but did not occur (Patton, 2016).

Schlossberg et al. (2012) described transition in accordance with personal, interpersonal, and community relationships. It is vital to understand the types of transitions that veterans go through to help them recognize the best transition strategies to employ. Additionally, the framework was founded on personal appraisal of the change, for example, how individuals respond to changes during the transition process.

Moreover, the framework has been used to demonstrate how veterans cope with challenges during the transition process (Lazarowicz, 2015; Livingston Havice, Cawthon, & Fleming, 2011). The transition theory outlines four types of transitions: anticipated and unanticipated event as well as non-events. The theory is relevant when addressing the transitional challenges of military veterans. Therefore, theory served as a foundation for understanding the experience of the selected sample of military veterans. In addition, the theory provides essential tools that facilitate enhanced coping as well as adaptation to the change. In the anticipated phase, an individual is involved in key events that were predictable. Concerning the unanticipated phase of transition, individual tend to face unexpected transition through life. This tends to disrupt their normal routines (Schlossberg et al., 2012). A more detailed analysis of the framework is provided in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

In this research study, I used a qualitative methodology. A qualitative methodology involves carrying out an exploratory research that focuses on identifying a problem; the information gathered is then used to develop a hypothesis. According to Mukhopadhyay and Gupta (2014), a qualitative methodology is the most appropriate research method to use when the researcher seeks to understand or explore phenomena. Qualitative data provides a rich data and a detailed picture he/she can use to establish why individuals act in a certain way and how they feel about these actions (Park & Park, 2016). This makes qualitative methodology the most appropriate in this case since I aim to understand the challenges that the veterans go through while seeking employment in

the civilian workforce. According to Park and Park (2016), the qualitative methodology is the best method to understand feelings underlying a certain phenomenon and perceptions that influence the behavior of individuals. Since this research study sought to measure the behavior, attitude, and experiences of the veterans who transition into the civilian workforce, the methodology was the most appropriate. Moreover, qualitative methodology was appropriate over quantitative method since I used textual data.

I used a phenomenological research design in this present study. Such a design attempts to understand individual's perspectives and understandings of a certain phenomenon. Phenomenological research design focuses mainly on people's experience regarding a situation or how these individuals interpret such experiences. According to Stierand and Dörfler (2012), a phenomenological research design helps in obtaining actual information from individuals based on their sentiments and experiences. It facilitates the gathering of deep insight regarding perceptions. This is gained from experiences from individuals perspectives. In phenomenological study, the collected information is used to gain a comprehensive account of the phenomenon. All these features made phenomenological research design the best suited for the current study.

The study's 30 participants were from California and Michigan. Palinkas et al. (2015) postulated that in a qualitative phenomenological study, a smaller sample of 20 to 30 participants is required to achieve data saturation; my sample of 30 participants was sufficient for data saturation. The participants included veterans who had already retired and those who were expecting to retire from the military within the next six months from the time in the study. California and Michigan were selected because they have a large

veteran population that has transitioned from the military to the civilian life. The various personal challenges affecting former military personnel that could hinder their effort to switch from the military workforce to the civilian workforce were explored. The study also explored full integration into the private work sector, including the requirements for the individual transition. It was important to assess what could hinder this transition. The assessment brought to light the situations that face the military personnel in their effort to adapt to the civilian life and work (Robertson & Brott, 2014).

Operational Definitions

The section provides definitions of all the key terms used throughout the paper for clarity.). The definitions are presented below.

Military veterans. In this study, veterans are those men and women who have served in the military and have been deployed from the same. These persons have the option of joining the civil service to serve the country again and earn a living.

Veteran Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act (VOW). This is a regulation that was passed by the U.S. government to reward those organizations that absorbs the U.S. ex-militia

Transition Assistance Program (TAP). A program that was instituted to help in the support of recruiting the veteran military into the workforce by ensuring that they get a smooth transition into the civilian workforce (Li, 2015).

Employee Assistance Program (EAP). A program stipulated to help the veterans to smoothly transition into the civilian workforce (Plumer, 2013).

Assumptions

The section presents key assumptions of the research study. According to Simon and Goes (2013), assumptions are elements that are out of control. There were various assumptions in this research. First, it was assumed that the responses provided by the respondents would be true. Also, it was believed that the respondents would be honest and accurate when presenting their answers to the questions (Arendt & Sapp, 2014).

Second, the questions asked of the veterans were assumed to be impartial since the respondents might be biased in answering the questions. Third, it should be noted that during the study, the views and perception of the respondents might have been reviewed with keen attention to unveil key context that address the questions (Brock et al., 2013).

Fourth, it was assumed that personal judgement or prejudice was not seen on the part of the interviewee which may interfere with the information provided in the data collected. For example, while asking the questions about the behavior of the veterans, it was assumed that this question was not marred by biases due to the ill feelings and traumatized experiences of the participants. Instead, the questions were expected to unveil some of the vital aspects of the military veterans that were important for the study (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). To mitigate the bias, I informed the respondents that their responses would not be considered right or wrong but only help in addressing the problem under study.

Fifth, the main aim of this study was to explore the transition of the military veterans into the civilian workforce. From this perspective, it was assumed that the conclusion and recommendations drawn for this research were solely based on the

research findings which is pegged on the data from the data collection and analysis. Since this is a qualitative research study, the respondents' opinions are assumed to be personal.

Scope and Delimitations

Mirza, Pourzolfaghar, and Shahnazari (2013) argued that scope facilitates the realization of the study within the available resources and specified schedules. The focus or scope of the current study was mainly on veterans in California and Michigan and their transition challenges. The career life of the veterans was explored to give a substantial information on how best they can be helped throughout the transition. The integration of these veterans into the civilian workforce was explored in the subsequent research question with a keen attention to the challenges that these veterans faced while trying to change careers (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). The timeframe for this research was also delimited as it entailed a lot of research work while the stipulated time of three months was minimal for the whole process (Arendt & Sapp, 2014).

Delimitations entail characteristics that tend to limit scope as well as define the key boundaries of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The first delimitation of the study was to that only military veterans who have retired or retiring in the next six months before the commencement of this study were included. One of the main reasons why I chose the military veterans for this study was due to the fact that the major portion of these individuals formed part of the population that is unemployed in the United States (Brock et al., 2013). This reduced efforts required to further collect data from many military officers in the country. The second delimitation was that the sample size was delimited to 30 military due to significant time and comprehensive efforts undertaken to

collect and analyze the data. The data collected were only based on emotional trauma and physical distress as perceived by the participants.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses in the study that are out of researcher's control (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study was subjected to a number of limitations, relating to both the research design and the resources needed for this study. The first limitation was the current study was limited to California and Michigan states as the case study which might be contextually different from other states across the United States. As a consequence, the findings obtained in the current study might not be applicable to other states. Also, the findings may not be generalized. Since the study was qualitative in nature, interviews were used as data collection methods. Thus, the second limitation was that the participants who engaged in interviews might have provided biased views rather than actual meanings in order to become competent to the researcher. To address this limitation, I informed the participants about the aims of the research and as such there were no right or wrong answers to the posed questions. The third limitation was that purposive sampling was used in recruiting the participants. As such, there was possibility of selection bias in the study. The limitation was addressed by use of experiences as presented in employment history.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Theory

The transition of veterans into the civilian workforce is characterized by various challenges (Harrod et al., 2017). The purpose of this study was to explore the difficulties

that limit veterans from California and Michigan from entering the civilian workforce. The significance of study to the theory was that the study helped in exploring the 4S of Schlossberg's theory identify and address the key challenges faced by veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce. The findings of the study played a significant role in adding to the existing body knowledge regarding the reasons for transition (Schlossberg's principle of situation) in relation to the transition challenges of veterans into the civilian workforce. The study findings also expound on the Schlossberg's principle of self where the results clearly discussed past experiences and how they influence transition into the civilian workforce based on veteran's perceptions. Also, the findings of this study add to the existing body of literature regarding the Schlossberg's principle of strategies. The study's findings expound on coping strategies that would assist military veterans to cope with and accept transition process into the civilian workforce.

Significance to Practice

The many challenges these veterans face in their new roles have been identified as the main reason for the low transition rate (Harrod et al., 2017). The information gathered in this study brought to light the issues veterans face during transition practice which makes it is difficult for them to adapt in the civilian life and fit into the civilian workforce. Such information was valuable to leaders and policymakers in the military and civilian jobs. The findings of the current study provide significant information that would help leaders and policymakers to establish policies that ensure smooth transitioning. The study findings provide significant information to the government on

relevant efforts to take and to develop policies for smooth transition of veterans to the civilian workforce.

Significance to Social Change

This study has implications for social change. (a) The results of this study are expected to encourage social change to employers and employees in military and civilian workforce. The study findings might help employers to encourage and implement change that would enhance hiring of veterans seeking employment because employers could now be able to understand the issues that limit a smooth transition for veterans. (b) The study helps veterans, government, and the private sector understand the issues that the veterans go through during the transition from the military workforce to the civilian workforce. This information helps to develop strategies that would counter the issues and ensure a smooth transition; hence improving adjustments and living standards of veteran in civilian jobs. (c) The study provides comprehensive information about the issues that veterans are likely to encounter during transition into new ventures such as civilian careers, small business, and private and public sectors employment. This might help in encouraging veterans for social change in which they could engage in training to acquire additional skills needed in the civilian jobs. (d) The study provides veterans interested in joining the civilian workforce with comprehensive information about the issues that they are likely to encounter in the new venture. Understanding transition issues might help military veterans to adopt appropriate strategies to cope with the transition challenges and accept the transition.

Summary and Transition

The section presents the key points of Chapter 1. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore challenges such as emotional trauma and physical distress among California and Michigan when transitioning into the civilian workforce (Barnes, 2014). A phenomenological approach was applied in this study to understand veterans' personal experiences, perceptions, descriptions, as well as motivations on such experiences.

Veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce tend to face numerous challenges. For this reason, the number of the unemployed military veterans has continued to increase. There are numerous hurdles that the veterans face when trying to obtain civilian employment. The number of veterans who leave the armed forces is believed to be rising. Military careers are among some of the challenging in the United States. The study provided a comprehensive explanation of some of these problems faced by veterans entering the civilian workforce. Additionally, the assessment shed light on situations that the veterans face in their attempt to adapt to civilian life.

Chapter 2, the literature review, covers the previous work done by various scholars on the topic under study. Also covered was information about veterans' perceptions, and views and study's recommendations, in which the topic of the study were highlighted. The transition of the veterans into the civilian workforce is discussed in detail, while highlighting some of the challenges they face, their success stories, and the notion of what can be done to improve the problem. The conceptual framework is discussed in this section along with its importance in the field of research.

Chapter 3, methodology, provides a detailed analysis of the research design and how the method was best suited to this study. The research questions and their authenticity and effectiveness in addressing the issue at hand are discussed. The chapter also covers the setting, the data collection method, and the population and sample. The last part of the chapter discusses the data analysis technique and how it helped in the restructuring and unveiling some of the vital aspects of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings organized according to the research questions. Chapter 4 also provides a summary of the research findings. In Chapter 4, the research findings are presented based on the research questions that were employed on this present study. Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the results and proposes further research that could be done on the research problem to highlight aspects of transition.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Given the differences between military and civilian life (Demers, 2011), veterans face challenges when transitioning back into the civilian workforce, including emotional trauma and physical distress (Morin, 2011; McAllister et al., 2015). Thus, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore challenges, including emotional trauma and physical distress, that veterans in California and Michigan encounter when transitioning back into the civilian workforce.

This chapter covers the following topics: an analysis of the military veterans' unemployment in the United States with respect to gender and socioeconomic indicators. The published literature is substantial in terms of unveiling some of the most fundamental areas of concern to the subject of veterans' transitioning; the major problems are the inadequacy of the assistance programs and the notion of mismatched skills and careers (Brock et al., 2013). In this chapter I discuss the need to strengthen the transition assistance program through the full involvement of the various stakeholders, such as the government and private sector employers (Coll & Weiss, 2016). The conceptual framework is strengthened by facts and figures which afford this research a high level of authenticity and accuracy. The last part of the literature review is the conclusion which provides a summary of the findings of the literature review and the basis for arguments of the findings and how substantial they are in unveiling the real tenets of the topic of the study (Brock et al., 2013).

Literature Search Strategy

For the literature review, I iteratively searched the following academic databases for English-language peer-reviewed journal articles and other dependable sources for the period 20xx–20xx: ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar. The following keywords were used with success; *veterans' transition into the civilian workforce, military workforce and civilian workforce, veterans' transition into the civilian workforce challenges, emotional trauma among veterans, physical distress among veterans as transitioning challenges to civilian workforce.*

Conceptual Framework

The Schlossberg's transition theory was initially proposed in 1981. The theory was used to explain the way adult's experience transitions or changes. Schlossberg developed the theory after the examination of a broad array of study previously undertaken by past researchers. She added her own insights and then came up with a framework that aims at offering solid foundations people within human services occupations (Goodman et al., 2006). Schlossberg et al. (2012) defined transition as an event that result in changes in relationships, assumptions, roles, and routines. The model can be championed as a means of analyzing individual's adaptation and movement.

According to Schlossberg et al. (2012), there are four key factors that impact how a person tends to cope with the process of transitioning. This entails self, situation, coping strategies, and support, known as 4S system. Situation refers to the kind of transition either unanticipated or anticipated, how the event occurs as well as the effect of the transition on the person's life. On the hand, self tends to denote demographic and

individual characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age that influence the perceptions of a given event. Support facilitates the mobilization of resources needed to eliminate stress. The kinds of supports were supposed to facilitate the handling of stressful events. On the other hand, strategies refer to approaches used by an individual to cope with or respond to stress. Goodman et al., (2006) stressed that how a person responds to a given transitional event is determined by the balance as well as interaction of strategies, supports, self, and situation.

Each transition is discreet and tends to be viewed differently by every person. Thus, people appraise similar events differently. Control largely determines the appraisal, change of role, timing, and concurrent stress or experience that triggers the transition process. Experience with a similar transition determines how an individual successfully copes with the current transition (Goodman et al., 2006). Additionally, there are numerous factors that impact a person's capability of dealing with transition. The nature of transition process may influence the success of the overall transition process. Besides, Schlossberg's theoretical model has been used in the past to examine the resources and assets which veterans can access as well as difficulties they face during the transition process (Schlossberg et al., 2012). Schlossberg's Transition Theory encompasses three key aspects that relate to time. The initial phase entails approaching the transition. The theory focuses on the transition, the effect on individual encounter as well as the perception of the transition. This part of the theory focuses on the affected person considering the available coping resources. The coping resources tend to be tied to 4S.

The other aspect of this theory entails taking charge of the transition. This revolves around strengthening of the resources among individuals in the transition process.

Applicability of the Model

In this current study, I found the theory applicable to this study. The study sought to understand the transition of veterans from the military life to the civilian workforce via the lens of Schlossberg's Transition Theory. The theory is applicable for this population. Additionally, the model has been widely used among sub-groups such as retiring adults, returning veterans, and adults experiencing career loss. For example, Griffin and Gilbert (2015) applied this model to assess how a better transition of veterans can be realized. The authors applied the model to frame their qualitative analysis. They further assessed how various institutions may influence the transition of veterans.

The transition theory has been used to address the transition of veterans. Therefore, it is evident that the transition model has framed many studies. For example, Wheeler (2012) focused on the transition of veterans to a community-based college. The study revealed that veterans displayed distinct reactions during the transition process in terms of the services offered. This was classified within the 4S structure. The findings of the study indicated that the transition theory can be used to effectively identify why individuals take actions over their counterparts. The theory focusses on various roles that facilitate change during as well as the completion of the transition process. The theory posits that experienced changes tend to prompt strategies and process for coping with the changes as well as their aftermath. Furthermore, I viewed the model as a suitable lens in this current study. I managed to realize some of the challenges that veterans experience

when transitioning from the military life into the civilian workforce. For this study, the model theory offers insights into the phenomenon of how veterans transition from the military life to the civilian life.

Literature Review

In this section, I present a detailed review of past literature in regard to the topic of interest. I review similar studies as well as literature that are in support with the research problem. The section is structured using various subtopics.

Veteran Transition into the Civilian Workforce

The military structure of management is quite different from that of the civilian workforce management structure. This difference is seen on the fact that for of military, the prevalent used management style is the bureaucratic structure with a top-down authority flow with high-end authoritative leadership (Schlossberg, Goodman, & Anderson, 2012). The civilian workforce management structure appreciates mostly a transformational leadership structure with a slice diagonal management structure where every employee is entitled to make a decision that is deemed right, and they are held responsible for the same (Snyder, Wick, Skillman, & Frogner, 2016). The wide gap in terms of management structure brings on board the difficulty in creating a smooth transition of the veterans into the civilian workforce. While still in their active duties in the military, these veterans usually face a lot of injuries while undertaking their duties (Robertson & Brott, 2013). In this context, they succumb to various illnesses owing to the nature of the military work they are involved in. The experiences they undergo during their military operations are at time quite traumatizing. The trauma in most cases brings

with them the mental illness and many health complications (Troutman & Gagnon, 2014). The civilian workforce employers therefore must deal with the cost associated with these health complications when they absorb these veterans. Due to the high costs incurred, these employers usually decline recruiting the veterans as the cost of managing them is deemed to be quite high and would eat into the profits of the company as a whole (Van Til et al., 2013).

In investigating the personal challenges, the veterans face while seeking employment in the civilian workforce, there is the problem of the mismatch of career and professional skills. The veterans in most cases have skills, expertise and experience that differ from that which is required by the employers in the civilian workforce (Weaver, 2013). At one point the veteran can opt to engage in employment which requires skills that they do not possess. Due to high competition that they get from the potential civilian workforces who are non-veterans, they miss these employment opportunities due to lack of skills and experience which are readily available and are being provided by the young energetic potential employees in the market (Williams, 2013). It should be noted that other youthful job seekers tend to be preferred by the civilian employers than the veterans since they can be easily trained, and they have the right skills for the job. The veterans have less or unrequired skills in the civilian job market making them less competitive thereby reducing their chances of getting a job and impeding this transition (Ysasi, Graf, Brown, & Sharma, 2016).

In exploring the predicaments that the veterans face during the transition into the civilian workforce, there is need to investigate the effectiveness of the Department of

Labor's Veterans' employment program. One of the stipulations of these programs as required by the law is that the employers while recruiting the veterans should inculcate the program of job training and development, placement and giving of support services (Zoli, Maury, & Fay, 2015). While recruiting the veterans, it is required by the law that these employers offers all these programs to the veterans to allow for smooth and appropriate transition. However, these programs have huge cost implications which are seen to have negative effects on the profitability of these companies. An alternative for recruitment is available for these employees as they tend to give much attention to the notion of cost reduction and opt to employ the already trained, young and energetic citizens while trying to reduce these costs (Abrams & Kennedy, 2015). According to Ahern, Foster and Head (2015), it is affirmed that only a few of the human resource professionals are aware of the Department of Labor's Veterans' programs.

Most of the employers were therefore not inculcating them in their recruitment program and hence making these individuals not cope with the new job environments (Ahern et al., 2015). Only 14% of the employers utilized this program which though quite successful in creating a smooth transition, is practiced in a small scale. Further, only 9% of the employers utilize the military veteran's programs to contain the disabled veterans into their organization. It should be noted again that the success of these program depends on their effectiveness in molding their behavior (Allen, Armstrong, Saladiner, Hamilton, & Conard, 2014). In the current inclusion of the people with disability into the employment world, many companies pride themselves of attaining this objective of inclusion. It would be proper as well to inculcate and extend this program to the military

veterans as well to attain an all-inclusive human resource within the company. The structure of including the military veterans who are disabled into the civilian workforce is still not up to date (Anderson & Goodman, 2014).

This section explains some of the facts about the veteran transition into the civilian workforce that is deemed to be quite important in understanding the whole study. As mentioned earlier, this study explores the facts surrounding the veterans' transition in terms of obstacles, benefits, success stories and what to be done to improve on this course (Brock et al., 2013). In human resource (s) management, there is need to create an all-inclusive ambience for every employee in the organization. As a country, it is necessary ensure that every citizen in the country have the equal opportunity for employment. The sustainability of every country is based on how they integrate every citizen into the workforce in every sector (Biggs, 2014).

Most of the companies have tried to create an advent of inclusion of every citizen in the provision of equal employment opportunity. Putting the military veterans into this context, there are impediments that have been experienced while doing the transition from the military to the civilian workforce (Bosco, Murphy, Peters, & Clark, 2015). These predicaments emanate from both personal context and the general factor as dictated by the perception of the civilian workforce employers. Additionally, the government, the private sector and other non-governmental organizations have strived to make possible transition by inception of various initiatives that are critical for this course (Borah & Manser, 2016). The subsequent discussion is the background work done about this topic on veteran transition. Some of the background findings are geared towards

projecting on the real objective of the research and giving substantial evidence on the need to carry out the research in this area.

Summary of Factors that Hinder Veterans' Transition

Some of the factors that have been attributed to these problems entail the mental illness experienced by these military veterans as caused by the nature of their work. Due to the nature of their work, the military employees are usually put into hardship training to strengthen their defense skills (Castro & Kintzle, 2014). The thorough training and the opponents they face in the battlefield makes them vulnerable to various injuries which cause both the trauma and physical wellness. Additionally, the propensity to translate the military skills into the civilian workforce skill required by the management in the civilian workforce is still very low (Coll & Weiss, 2016). This low propensity is caused by the notion distinct difference in the management structure of the military and the civilian management structure. The military subculture is based on the authoritarian grounds where one is required to take orders without questioning their rationale (Cooper, Andrew, & Fossey, 2016).

The civilian management subculture is based on collective decision making and bargaining agreements where the authority is autonomously shared. High competition from the trained young and competent potential employees is also another factor that impedes the transition. Again, there is a big difference between the training of the military and that of the civilians. The civilians are taught from the scratch how to be competent in civilian workforce (Hall, Harrell, Bicksler, Stewart, & Fisher, 2014). A mismatch in terms of career skills and expertise is created in the event of transition

making the civilians better candidates than the veterans. The military workforce is taken through various training that makes them think and act differently than those people in the civilian workforce.

The social stigma and stereotypic perception of these veterans from the military also disallows them to uptake these employment opportunities in the civilian workforce (Cooper et al., 2016). The stigmatization comes from the fact that these military veterans are seen to be quite dangerous since most of them have killed and therefore they are traumatized and haunted by their deeds. In most cases, these people adopt a solitude life where they lack social life. These stereotypic perceptions not only deter the employers from recruiting them but also make the workmates in the civilian ambiance to fear them (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014). Changing of their career from the military service to the civilian service makes these veterans to be under-qualified for most of the job positions they seek. Changing of the career path means acquisition of a whole new and different skills which might be quite hectic for these veterans reducing their chances of attaining and even maintaining these jobs (Dyar, 2015).

Unemployment Rates for the Military Veterans

On the account of facts and figure in this issue, Figure 2.1 shows the trend on how the unemployment rates considering the veterans and the non-veterans for a comparison. Taking a critical look at the U.S. military, as these military members get back from Iraq and Afghanistan deployments and their number increase, the predicaments of getting employment becomes quite frustrating. The Figure 2.1 demonstrates the rate of unemployment for veterans.

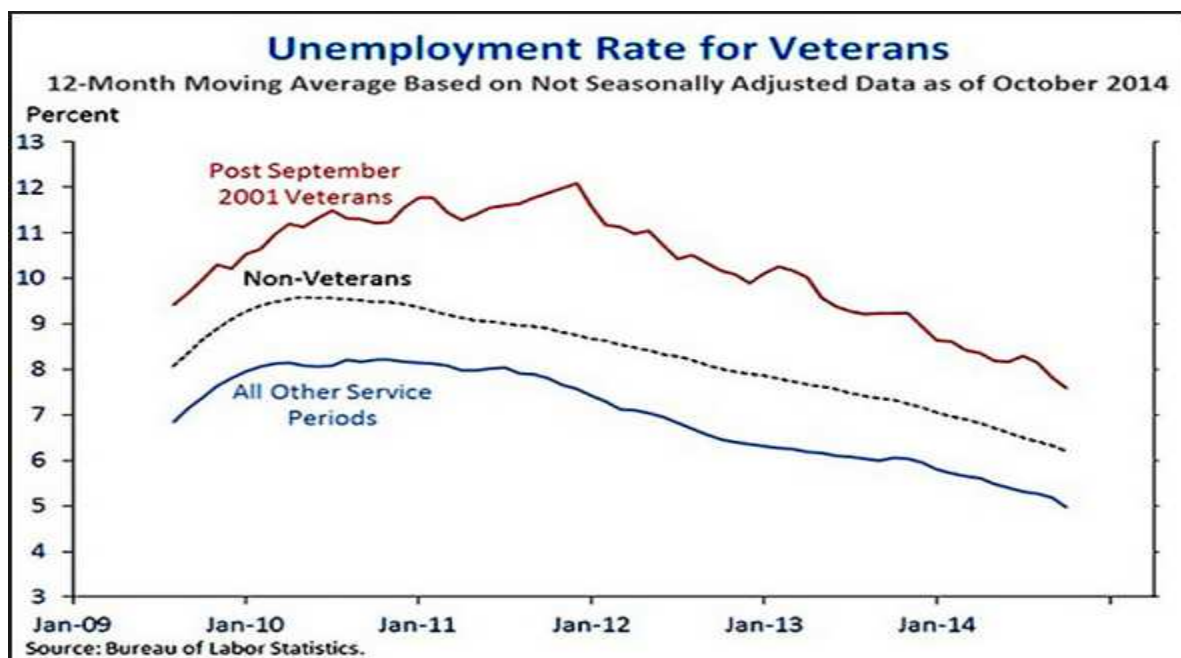


Figure 2.1. Rate of unemployment for veterans. Adapted from the “US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics”. Copyright [nd.] by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Adapted with permission from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

From the above graph got from the Department of Labor of United States, the military veterans unemployment rates is deemed to be quite higher than those of the non-veterans. Even though this unemployment trend is reducing, the rates for the military veterans is seen to be quite high in all the years from 2009 to 2014. Critical analyzing the Afghanistan and Iraq veterans that were serving years after 9/11, Weaver (2013) accentuated that the unemployment rates experiences by veterans might even be higher than statistics given by the U. S. government. Further investigation by this body found that the percentage of the military veterans that are unemployed was all-time high at 17% which is contrary to the statistics of the government which indicates 12% rate. This

percentage is worrying as the unemployment gap for these military veterans increases (Van Til et al., 2013). In the year 2007/2008 when the U. S. economy was struggling because of the global financial crisis. This economic slow down also created an advent of the widening of the employment gap among military veterans. The fact that most companies were reducing on the cost of training and ensuring that they get only the most competitive fellows for the job reduced the acceptability of these veterans and their recruitment into the civilian workforce (Troutman & Gagnon, 2014).

According to Snyder et al. (2016), the most important reason for the difficulty in the transition into the civilian workforce by the military veteran is the mismatch in the skills. Only individuals with the skills and experienced are needed in the corporate world. Even as these veterans are deployed from the active military service, they need to own the appropriate skills and expertise to understand how the corporate world works and use these skills to be productive in this field (Selber, Chavkin, & Biggs, 2015). As a national and strong economy, it is important for the government to understand how best to treat the menace that these long service military men and women are facing. In response to this menace, the non-profit organizations, the government, and the corporate sector has started instituting assistance programs that tries to unveil both the problems and the benefits that are linked to the recruitment of the military veterans (Schlossberg et al., 2012). This move is with a vision to help these member of the society fit best in these jobs in the civilian service.

The Government's Efforts on Veterans' Transition

According to the line of thought of the government, the most fundamental way of ensuring viability of these veterans into the civilian workforce is the transition assistance. The health of these ex-military depends partially on the perception of the public from the veterans benefits from their service while in active duty and should be appreciated (Schaffer, 2015). Additionally, it is based on the fact that the civilian employers in the corporate world would appreciate and respect their expertise and sacrifice. From the perspective of the companies, they feel they honor the country and respect the duty of these veterans of quality service (Robertson, Miles, & Mallen, 2014). However, looking at this issue in the business sense, the act of hiring the ex-military is deemed not to be a charity work per se, neither is it a course for being patriotic as a company. The employers, therefore, look into various issues at hand before employing these potential employees. According to Robertson and Brott (2014), being an American War veteran does not guarantee that you are a good employee and this does not guarantee that they are fit for the managerial role in the civilian world. It is important to understand, therefore, that title of being a veteran in the civilian context does not hold much water in terms of addressing the notion of being suitable for a job (Reppert, Buzzetta, & Rose, 2014). Other qualifications such as the need to have a good managerial and public relation skills is essential for one to qualify in this area.

The federal government has tried to address these problem with keen attention to improving the lives of these veterans. It has done this through inculcation of various legislation that would ensure that the employability of these veterans are increased a great

deal. Veteran Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act was instituted in the November 2011 to ensure creating of funding incentive directed to the companies that are deemed to hire veterans (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015). There was also the inception of the Returning Hero Tax Credit which gave up to \$5600 to the companies which hired the veterans. Yet another program called Wounded Warrior Tax Credit gave credit of up to \$9,600 to these companies for hiring disabled veterans that are connected to the military service (Rausch, 2014). Moreover, there has been the inception of the transition assistance program (TAP), which was instituted in the year 1990 to help in creating a proper environment for transition of these members of the military. The program has been evolving in a continual way in order to meet the needs of the veterans which are evolving every day (Plumer, 2013).

TAP as a program included the process of pre-separation counselling, VA benefits briefings, employment workshops, disability assistance and lastly the transition coaching. The program was strictly given priority as a measure that would help these veterans attain a high level of equality in terms of getting employment opportunities. The provisions given in this program was to help them understand the civilian employment world and get used to the autonomus way of leadership and drift from the notion of authority centered leadership. The process of behavior change was inculcated in this context with keen attention of ensuring that they transform their conduct as military men and women and assume their predetermined roles in the civilian environment. Accepting their placement in the society is also one of the training they are taken through in order to allow them perceive the non-veteran workforce as they think and perceive various issues in the

employment world. While these initiative have tried to provide undoubted support and assistance to the veterans in gaining employment opportunities in the civilian world, these strategies are still not enough to produce the desired results in the transition. It is due to these discrepancies that studies have been conducted from the privately funded studies, and government with the main aim of finding more strategies which could be instituted in order to come up with a targeted strategy which would not only help in transition to the civilian workforce but also give the veterans the opportunity to secure the employment of their liking by ensuring suitability to the job position.

Efforts by Nonprofit Groups and Private Organizations in Veteran Transition

Joining this fight for the alleviation of the veteran job gap are the non-profit groups and the private organizations. For example, in the year 2010, the Carlson School of Management of Minnesota started the initiative for the military veterans to help in the reduction of the job gap by giving the scholarship to those ex-military men and women who are enrolling for the MBA program. An article from this university that relates to this program accentuates that;

The university has also created partnership with other institutions in order to give much attention to the employment of the veterans into the management positions. These other organizations are such as the veteran programs, the private organizations and the funding institutions. It is through this program that most of the veterans have gained successful entry into these organizations which indeed has the effect of substantially reducing this gaps of transition unemployment.

It is a substantial fact that there are various initiatives that have been instituted by both the private and the public organizations such as the TAP, Charlson Initiative for Military Veterans and the VOW to Hire Heroes Act. These initiatives have immensely been used to ensure that these potential employees have the full support and strong incentive to employ these military veterans, support them in their transition and ensure that they link with the values of these of the employer in various circumstances of skills and expertise. However, it is important to note that even as these veterans are prepared, there is need to understand the perception of the employer. In this prospect, it is crucial to know what the employer wants in them and how best these talents, expertise and skills can be nurtured. The molding of these behavioral conducts are based on the needs and wants of the employer with keen attention to helping in the growth of the organization as a whole.

Employer Perceptions on Veterans

In unveiling the perception of the employers, there exists some qualities that these employers require in order to understand the recruitment of these veterans. According to Neill-Harris et al. (2015), the employee usually look into the teamwork and leadership skills of these veterans, the trust, the discipline and structure in carrying out job duties. In addition, they look into the expertise, the level of adaptability, effective working (multitasking), meeting the firm's objectives and lastly, the display of high level of resilience. The research done by Morrison-Beedy, Passmore, and D'Aoust (2015) investigated 496 firms which were listed in the New York Stock exchange. The main aim for the research was to understand some of the very vital aspects of the veterans that

makes them be attracted to the civilian employers (Ahern et al., 2015). In this context, the corporate world was investigated in the light of their receptibility of the veterans to work in those organizations. Public relations is also very vital in the management context as it helps in the creation of a good reputation between the company management and other stakeholders. According to this study the following Figure 2.2 shows in order of rank the main reasons why employers hire military veterans.

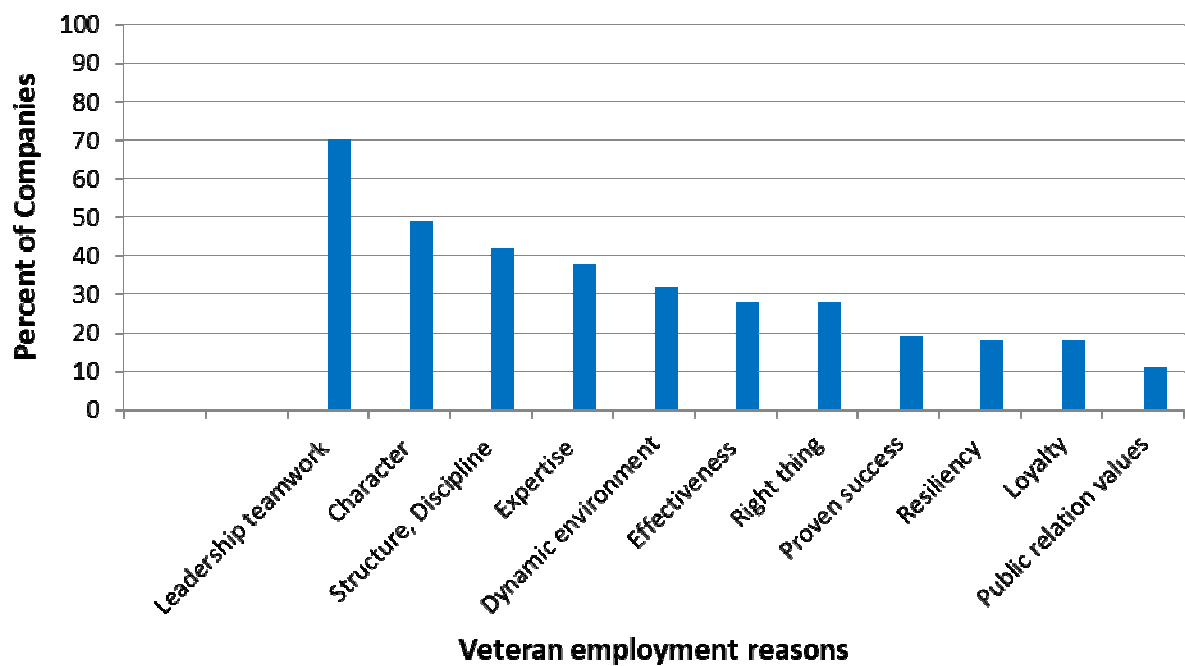


Figure 2.2. Reasons for hiring veterans. Adapted from “Center for a New American Security’ by Center for a New American Security. Copyright [nd.] by Center for a New American Security. Adapted with permission from Center for a New American Security.

From the above illustration, it is evident that the veterans have high leadership and teamwork skills which is suitable for various organizations. The veterans are seen to

be quite disciplined and able to maintain a certain code of conduct with ease. In terms of expertise, the figures showed that there is need to still improve on their skills before they get into the civilian employment world. The military veterans are usually not employed because of their incompetence and ineffectiveness in doing their roles (Allen et al., 2014). The research found that the main reason for this discrepancy is because of the mismatch in the professional career, the skills and expertise. Any management organization would want to meet their objectives with high level of precision. Therefore, these employers would want to get effective employees who are ready to do the right thing and do it with a high level of effectiveness (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). In this context, the veterans are seen to fail in this course and hence the transition into the civilian workforce is impeded. On the account of public relations, most organizations value their reputation. The reputation of these companies helps in allowing for long-term benefits to the employees. The fact that military have less skills in public relations creates an impediment to this transition into the civilian workforce.

Lastly, there are various reasons why the employers may not want to hire these veterans. One of these reasons skill transition. The employers usually perceive it that it takes quite a long time for these veteran to learn the skills required in the civilian work environment. Additionally, most employers base their judgement on the negative stereotypes that are bestowed upon these veterans (Allen et al., 2014). To them, they are seen as an impediment to building a good reputation of the company. The fact that their relationship with other workmates is usually questionable makes it quite bone of contention when it comes to employing them. Furthermore, there is a real problem of

skill mismatch which makes the employer fear on their productivity in the company and tries most often to suit them with the correct skills. Other reasons for not employing the veterans are such as the deployment problems, finding veterans and acclimation. The Figure 2.3 outlines the degree with which the employers do not want to hire military veterans in the various aspects shown below.

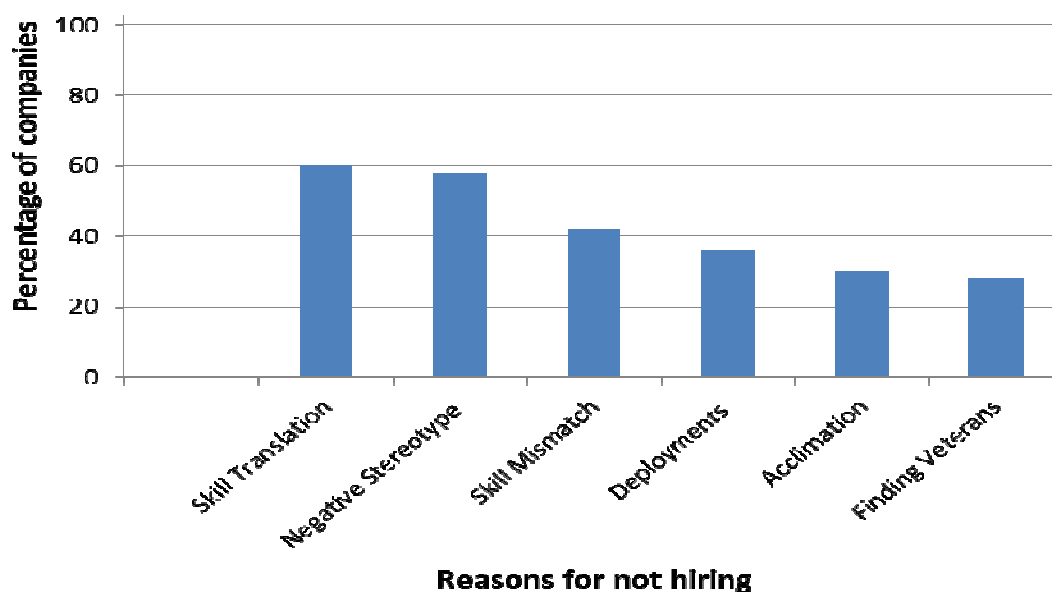


Figure 2.3. Why companies might not hire veterans. Adapted from “Center for a New American Security’ by Center for a New American Security (nd). Copyright [nd.] by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Adapted with permission from Center for a New American Security.

Luckily, numerous businesses are resolving to effectively enroll Veterans and are putting forth programs and executing approaches that bolster their fruitful section into, and maintenance in the work environment (Castro & Kintzle, 2014). In a 2010 survey of just about 400 bosses, SHRM found that 53% of associations reported employing

Veterans within the previous three years, and of those, half had endeavored to do as such. On the other hand, of the 47% that did not enlist Veterans, just 11% had attempted to do as such showing the significance of trying focused on endeavors (Allen et al., 2014). They likewise got some information about what their associations were doing or wanting to do "past the law" as far as helping representatives who were coming back to work in the wake of being activated as Reservists or individuals from the National Guard. They found that:

- 67% of associations were giving "representative help projects" to help with the move (Allen et al., 2014)
- 55% were giving "get up to speed abilities programs (Allen et al., 2014)
- 46% were giving "adaptable work game plans amid the move time frame (Allen et al., 2014)
- 42% were giving "acknowledgment of their administration by administration (Allen et al., 2014).

The Center for a New American Security directed research that required top to bottom meetings with 87 people from 69 organizations (Castro & Kintzle, 2014). Forty-three of those organizations (62%) effectively looked to contract Veterans and another 9 (13%) showed that while they did not effectively work to contract Veterans, they would likely organize them over different possibility for positions. Of those 43 organizations that had formal projects, half had particular projects for their Veteran representatives, for example, tutoring or proclivity bunches.

Naturally, the group that focused on contracting has plainly expanded the capacity of organizations to enroll veterans, focused on bolster projects can help the organizations hold them. In a review surveying about 2,500 veterans or impending Veterans Prudential Financial Inc. (2012) demonstrated that just about 66% of the example focused on projects for supporting Veterans that were given by the business were basic or vital to the achievement they had in the working environment. A critical extent of respondents, 80%, demonstrated that adaptable leave for managing medical problems was vital (Ahern et al., 2015). It is additionally imperative for businesses to prepare and provide assets to representatives for supporting incorporation of veterans in the work environment. The Department of the Navy has assembled a reference direction for administrators and chiefs that points of interest the Navy's dedication to supporting veterans and people with handicaps and rundown projects, approaches, and assets to guarantee that they can (Castro & Kintzle, 2014).

The Unemployment Rates of Military Veterans

Military veterans are the most affected lot in terms of the unemployment according to the department of labor statistics. Military veterans have had lots of predicaments in line with the notion of transition into the civilian workforce. There are various issues that surrounds their change of work from the military to the civilian context (Coll & Weiss, 2016). The Figure 2.4 shows some of the vital statistics that surround the notion of unemployment of these military veterans by gender and other variables.

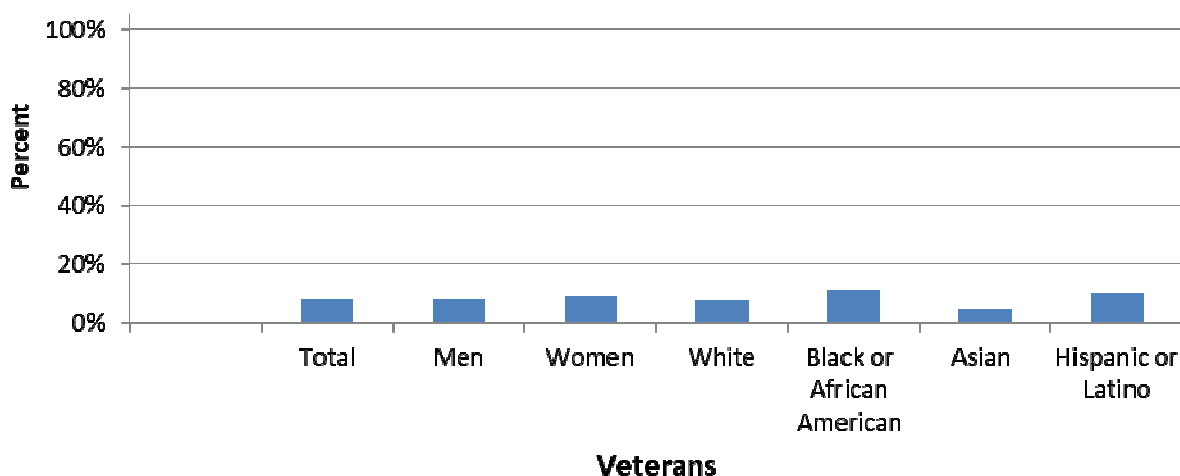


Figure 2.4. Unemployment rates of military veterans. Adapted from “Bureau of Labor Statistics by Bureau of Labor Statistics (nd). Copyright [n.d.] by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Adapted with permission from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

From the above figure, the unemployment rates for the total number of veterans is 8.3% which is considered to be the highest as compared to other sectors of population.

According to D'Aoust, Rossiter, and Clochesy (2016), one of the fundamental reasons why the unemployment rate is all time high is due to the predicaments these veterans have during the transition into the civilian workforce. These veterans retire early while still energetic as required by the law. However, they still need to feed their families hence they need to earn a living. In this context, it should be noted with concern they have to search for work in the civilian industry to help them in sustainability (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014).

In their pursuit to make it into the civilian workforce, these individuals face a lot of oppositions from various quarters. Evans, Pellegrino, and Hoggan (2015) emphasized that one of the problems of transition is the mismatch in terms of skills that these veterans

own and the requirements of the civilian workforce. Still on the graph above, the unemployment rates by gender shows that the women have unemployment rate of 9.1% which is higher than that of men (8.3%). In this case, the women are the most affected in this transition than men. Graham, Joshi, Nithithanatchinnapat, and Trauth (2015) asserted that some of the reasons why most military veteran women are more unemployed compared to men are such as, limited available employment positions, geographical barriers and the notion of inadequacy of resources. Women form a special case as they have various duties as pertains the family. The emotional touch they have with their family would not allow them to work far from them hence limiting their employability. It should be noted as well that there are organizations which would not hire women as there would be a distraction in the workflow during their times of pregnancy. Men, on the other hand, are quite flexible and also have the ability to do various works without much disruptions. Therefore, their unemployment rates are low than that of women.

The above figure also gives an analysis into the unemployment rates of the veterans on the account of ethnicity. The Whites and the Asians are seen to have a low unemployment rates. Asians as noted by Hardison et al. (2015) are business oriented. Their lifestyle allows them to be entrepreneurs of which most of them get self-employed immediately they get out of the military service. Herman and Yarwood, (2014) also asserted that the culture of the Asians also propels them to carry out various activities which are deemed to generate income and hence do not render them jobless. Black Americans are seen to be more affected in terms of unemployment as shown by the high unemployment rates recorded.

As noted by Hayden and Scholl (2016), there has been in the past a high level of moral decadence among the Blacks that usually makes them unfit for the civilian jobs after getting out the military setting. Their attitudes, beliefs and way of thinking changes in some cases would create havoc for the organization in which they are employed. The high unemployment rate is also attributed to the high levels of racism that is experienced in the United States. In relation to the historical account given by Jones (2013), the Whites put the Black Americans into high-end slavery until that time when Civil War broke up in the United States and a revolution occurred that saw the slave trade abandoned. In this light, there is still unprecedented stunts of racism still practiced in the United States that makes Black Americans not get good jobs as veterans. The role of the government in ensuring ethnic equality in this case has been undermined since there should be a balance between these unemployment rates. Another statistic given by Johnson, Moore, Wang, Sanders and Sasin (2016) in their research confirm that indeed there is a gap in terms of unemployment rates of 12% between White and the Black Americans, which was instigated by racial discrimination and inequality in employment opportunities of the Whites and Black in the U.S. society.

The Hispanics on the other hand are also on the higher end in terms of unemployment. Main, Brawner, Lord, Mobley, and Camacho (2015) confirmed that the main reason for their unemployment rates is because of their position in the U.S. society in which they are discriminated as they do not belong to the U.S. soil. One would argue that the distribution of unemployment rates within these parameters shows discrepancies in the provisions of employment opportunities to various groups of people. Morrison-

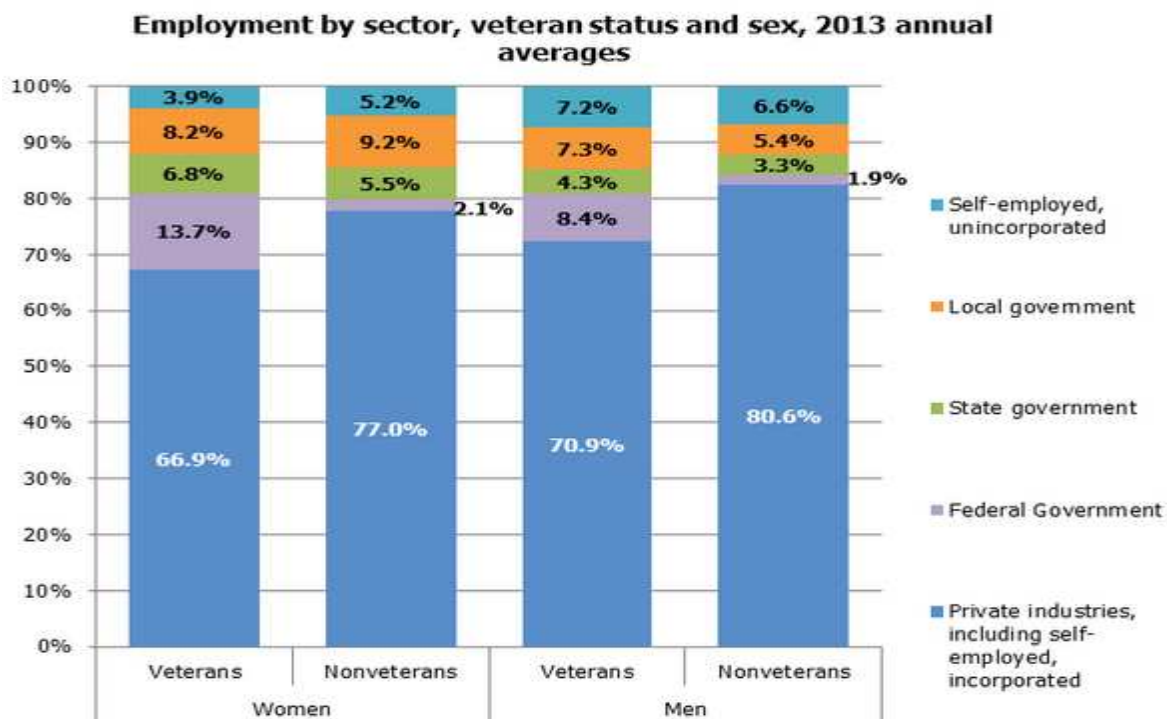
Beedy et al. (2015) provided a substantial argument that the discrepancy is mainly caused by the high level of misunderstanding between the military veterans and the civilian employers. The management styles and differences depicted in the skills of management makes it quite difficult for these persons to get employed.

The unemployment rate for veterans who served on dynamic obligation in the U.S. Armed forces from September 2001, a troop known as veterans of the Second Gulf War, reduced by 1.4% throughout the year to 5.8% in 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2015. The jobless rate for all veterans, at 4.6%, likewise declined from a year before (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014). Around 33% of Gulf War II veterans reported having a disability associated with the military service in August 2015, compared to 20% of all veterans (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). These data were acquired from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a 4-week test study of around 60,000 family units that gives information on work and unemployment in the United States (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014). Information about veterans are gathered on monthly basis in the CPS; that monthly information is the source of the 2015 yearly means displayed in this newspaper. In August 2015, a supplement to the CPS gathered extra data about veterans on various aspects, for example, benefit associated inability and veterans' present or past Reserve or National Guard participation. Data from the supplement is likewise displayed in this news. The supplement was co-supported by the U.S. Branch of Veterans Affairs and by the U.S. Branch of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (Hayden & Scholl, 2016).

Highlights from the 2015 information indicated that the unemployment rate for male veterans in general was lower than the rate for female veterans in 2015. The unemployment rate for male veterans declined to 4.5%. The rate for female veterans changed little at 5.4%. Among the 495,000 unemployed veterans in 2015, 57% were age 45 and over. Around 37% were aged 25–44, and 5% were age 18 to 24 (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). Veterans with an administration associated inability had an unemployment rate of 5.4% in August 2015, not factually not the same as veterans with no inability (D'Aoust et al., 2016). More than one in three utilized veterans with an service associated inability worked in the general population division in August 2015, likened to around 1 in 5 veterans with no incapacity. In 2015, the unemployment rate of veterans fluctuated countrywide, running from 1.9% in Iowa to 7.7% in the District of Columbia.

Absorption Rates of the Military Veterans into the Civilian Workforce

Various sectors have come up with various ways to help the veterans in the transition in the civilian workforce. One of the ways to depict their performance in helping these veterans is through understanding the rate of absorption of these veterans into the labor force by these sectors of employers (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). Some of the sectors that are able to absorb these people are such as the government which is the local government, the state government and the federal government; the private sector and the self-employed. Figure 2.5 exemplifies this scenario



Note: Data based on persons 18 years and over.

Figure 2.5. Employment of veterans by sectors. Adapted from “Bureau of Labor

Statistics by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Copyright [n.d.] by Bureau of Labor

Statistics Adapted with permission from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

From the above figure, most veterans are employed by the private sector while the government has a less opportunity to employ these people. It only means therefore that the government should create a conducive environment for the private sector to employ these veterans in the best way possible. A closer look at the graph shows that the percentage of the veterans who have been absorbed in the private sector is generally lower than those who are nonveterans (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). For example, the women veterans who are absorbed in the private sectors is 66.9% while for the nonveterans is

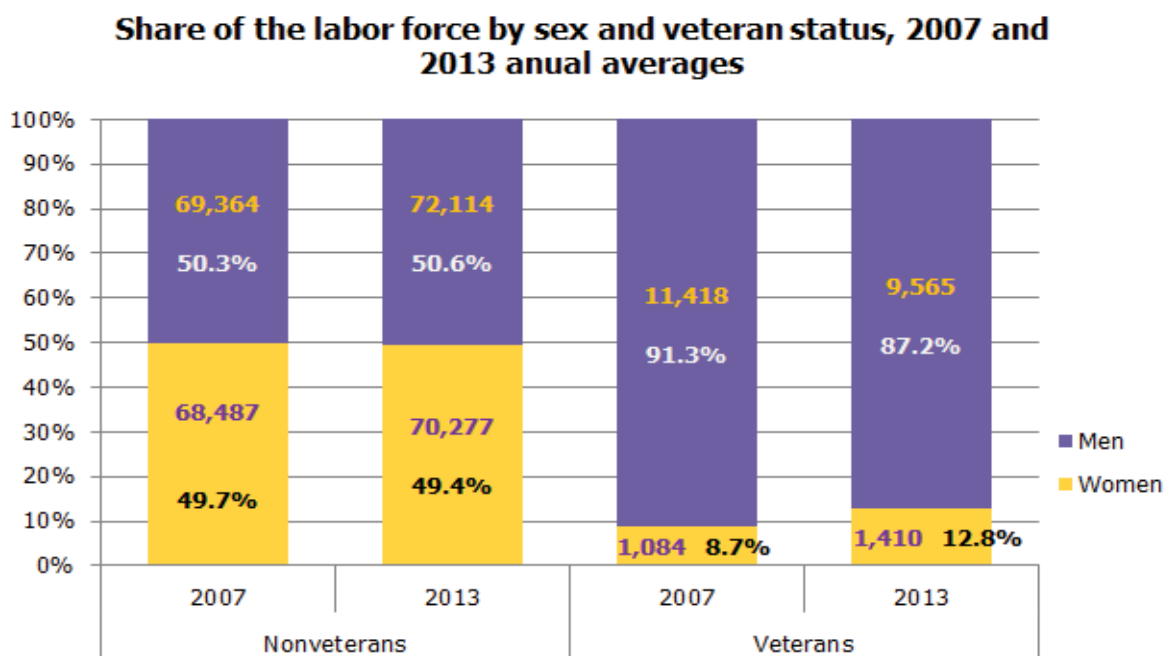
77%. In a review surveying about 2,500 veterans or impending veterans (Hayden & Scholl, 2016), revealed that just about 66% of the group selected demonstrated that they focused on projects that supports veterans absorption. On a critical analysis of respondents, 80%, demonstrated that flexible leave for managing medical problems for these veterans was vital. It is additionally imperative for businesses to give assistance and incentives to respective public and private employers for supporting incorporation of veterans in the work environment (D'Aoust et al., 2016).

The Veteran Population

In 2015, 21.2 million men and ladies were veterans, representing around 9% of the regular citizen non-institutional populace over the age of 18. In the study, veterans are characterized as men and ladies who have already served on dynamic obligation in the U.S. Military and who were regular people at the time this information were gathered. Veterans are probably be men and more established than nonveterans (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014). To a limited extent, this reflects the qualities of veterans who served amid World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam period. Veterans who served amid these wartime periods represented 42% (8.9 million) of the aggregate veteran populace in 2015. Thirty-three percent of veterans (7 million) served amid Gulf War time I (August 1990 to August 2001) or Gulf War period II (September 2001 forward). Another quarter (5.3 million) served outside the assigned wartime time frames. Around 9% of all veterans are ladies (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014).

Labor force by gender and veteran status. In order to understand the share of the labor force for both veterans and non-veterans in terms of gender, the following

figure unveils some of the insightful statistics about this study and provides basis of argument for women and men in the labor force. Figure 2.6 depicts share of labor force by sex and veteran status.



Notes: Data based on persons 18 years and over. Numbers are in thousands.

Figure 2.6. Share of labor force by sex and veteran status. Adapted from “Bureau of Labor Statistics”, by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Copyright [n.d.] by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Adapted with permission from Bureau of Labor Statistics

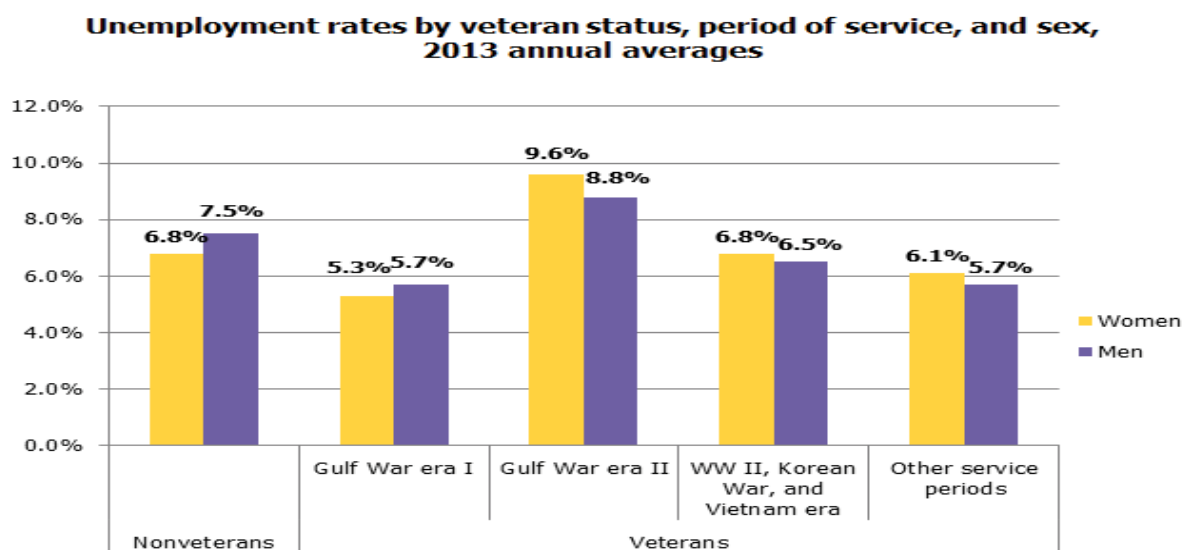
The above figure gives an impression that the women are indeed discriminated in the military field over men since their proportion in the workforce is quite less. It is to this effect that they should be given a chance in the civilian workforce which is indeed not forthcoming. From these statistics, most of those who retire from the military workforce are the men for which is essentially important in this course. McAllister, Mackey, Hackney, and Perrew (2014) provided an important discussion on why women

are few in the military than men. One of the reasons is because of their gender placement in the society. Women are known for light duty jobs while men are known for heavy duty jobs. During transition, due to their placement in the society, it is important to give them the first priority in the civilian workforce which is not the case. Most men do not have problems when it comes to the transition.

Conversely, the women have more obstacle to face when it comes to the notion of transition into the civilian workforce. As suggested by Neill-Harris et al. (2015), one of the ways in which the government should encourage the efficiency of the transition process is through the inception of a state of art assistance program that would be mandated to be compulsory to every public and private sector by law. These programs are very critical as they nurtured and transformed the talents, skills and abilities of these women in order to suit the civilian working environment. To the women, the programs are essential in reducing the advents of management ceilings and breaking of the glass on the account of management obstacles (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014).

Transition Rates of Veterans by Period of Service and Gender Status

In understanding the unemployment rates of the veterans, it is important give a critical look into the development of employment over the years with regards to both veterans and non-veterans and also the period of service for these veterans. In order to understand the share of the labor force for both veterans and non-veterans in terms of gender, the following Figure 2.7 unveils some of the insightful statistics about this study and provides basis of argument for women and men in the labor force. The below chart is used in the following discussion on the population of the veterans in the united states.



Note: Data based on persons 18 years and over.

Figure 2.7. Employment rates of veterans. Adapted from “Bureau of Labor Statistics” by Bureau of Labor Statistics. Copyright [n.d.] by Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Adapted with permission from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Veterans of the Second Gulf War. In 2015, there were 3.6 million veterans who had served amid the Second Gulf War. Eighteen percent of these veterans were ladies compared to around 4% of veterans from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam period. Almost 50% of all Gulf War-period II veterans were between the ages of 25 and 34. Among Gulf War-time II veterans, the unemployment rate for men was not measurably unique in relation to the rate for ladies in 2015. The unemployment rate for men was 5.7% in 2015, down from 6.9% in 2014. The unemployment rate for ladies, at 6.4% in 2015, was not measurably unique in relation to the earlier year (8.5%) (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2014).

The unemployment rate for male Gulf War-time II veterans (5.7%) was close to nothing not quite the same as the rate for male nonveterans (5.3%) in 2015. For various age groups, unemployment rates of male veterans and nonveterans were not measurably distinctive. Among men aged between 25 and 34, Gulf War-period II veterans had a higher unemployment rate (6.8%) than nonveterans (5.4%; Cooper et al., 2016). Among men aged 45 to 54, veterans of the Second Gulf War had a lower unemployment rate (2.6%) than did nonveterans (3.7%). Among women, the unemployment rate for Gulf War-period II veterans (6.4%) was not accurately the same as the rate for nonveterans (5.0%) in 2015. By age, unemployment rates for female veterans and nonveterans were comparative (Van Til et al., 2013).

A higher percentage of employed Gulf War-time II veterans worked in the general population division in 2015 than nonveterans who were employed; 26% and 14%, respectively. Among those who are employed, 14% of Gulf War-time II veterans worked for the national government, while 2% of nonveterans did the same (Cooper et al., 2016). In August 2015, 46% of Gulf War-time II veterans reported serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, or both areas. These veterans had an unemployment rate of 4.4%, not measurably unique in relation to Gulf War-period II veterans who served somewhere else (5.5%) (Van Til et al., 2013). Starting with information for August 2015, these appraisals from the veterans' supplement reflect an adjustment in the weighting procedure.

Gulf War-period I veterans. Of the 3.4 million veterans who served amid Gulf War period I (August 1990 to August 2001), 15 of them were women. Ninety-seven percent) Gulf War-time I veterans were over the age of 35 in 2015, compared to 46% of

Gulf War-time II veterans. In 2015, the unemployment rate for male Gulf War-period I veterans was 3.5%, lower than the rate for their Gulf War-period II veteran counterparts (5.7%; Cooper et al., 2016). The distinction in the unemployment rates reflects, at any rate to some extent, the more established age profile of veterans who served amid Gulf War Period I. More youthful individuals whether veterans or nonveterans have a tendency to have higher unemployment rates than more seasoned individuals. Among ladies, the rates for Gulf War-period I veterans (5.5%) and Gulf War-period II veterans (6.4 %) were not factually unique (Graham et al., 2015).

Veterans of other service periods. In 2015, 5.3 million veterans had served on dynamic obligation amid "other administration periods," fundamentally between the Korean War and the Vietnam time and between the Vietnam time and Gulf War Time I. All veterans for this time of administration were 40 years or more established at the season of the overview. Thirty% (30%) of these veterans were age 45 to 54 in 2015, another 29% were age 55 to 64, and another 40% were age 65 and over. In 2015, 9 in 10 veterans of other administration periods were men. Among veterans of other benefit periods, the unemployment rate for men was 4.5 percent, higher than the rate of 3.3% for ladies (Van Til et al., 2013).

Veterans with a service-associated disability. In August 2015, around 4.3 million veterans, or 20% of the aggregate, had a benefit associated handicap. (Starting with information for August 2015, these appraisals from the veterans' supplement connotes an adjustment in the weighting system. This change brought about a higher gauge of veterans with an administration associated inability than in past years. Veterans

with an administration associated inability are appointed an inability rating by the U.S. Appraisals go from 0 to 100 percent, in additions of 10 rate focuses, contingent upon the seriousness of the condition (Graham et al., 2015).

The unemployment rate for veterans with a disability associated to their army service was 5.4% in August 2015, not factually not the same as those with no incapacity (4.3 percent). The labor force support rate for veterans with an administration associated incapacity (45.8 percent) was lower than the rate for those with no inability (Graham et al., 2015). Among veterans with an administration associated inability, around 29% reported a inability rating of under 30 percent, while another 37% had a rating of 60% or higher. In August 2015, veterans with an administration associated inability rating of under 30% were a great deal more prone to be in the labor force than those with a rating of 60% or higher (53.6% and 30.7%, individually).

The unemployment rate for veterans with an incapacity rating of under 30% was 4 percent, much lower than for those with a handicap rating of 60% or higher (9.6 percent). Among veterans who served amid Gulf War time II, around 1 in 3 (1.2 million) reported having an administration associated handicap. Of these, 73.2% were in the labor force in August 2015, lower than the 87.3% for veterans from this period with no administration associated incapacity (Van Til et al, 2013). Among Gulf War-period II veterans, the unemployment rate of those with an administration associated incapacity was 5.5%, not factually unique in relation to those with no inability (4.8 percent) (Graham et al., 2015).

In August 2015, about a quarter (853,000) of veterans who served amid Gulf War period I reported disability due to service. Their labor drive investment rate (68.8

percent) was lower than the rate for veterans from the period who did not have a disability (87.2 percent). The unemployment rate for Gulf War-period I veterans with an administration associated handicap was not factually the same as that for Inlet War-period I veterans without a service associated inability (Van Til et al., 2013). Among the 1.7 million veterans with a service associated handicap from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam time, 13.2% were in the labor constraint in August 2015, lower than the 26.8% of veterans from these periods who did not have an administration associated incapacity. The unemployment rate of veterans with an incapacity from these wartime periods was 6.1 percent, not measurably unique from their counterparts with no handicap (4.2 percent) (Van Til et al., 2013).

Around 11% of veterans who served amid other administration periods reported a benefit associated handicap in August 2015. Neither the labor drive interest rate nor the unemployment rate for these veterans were not the same as their partners without an administration associated handicap. Notwithstanding time of service, numerous veterans with an administration associated incapacity worked in general society area (Van Til et al, 2013). In August 2015, 36 % of employed veterans with a inability worked in state, local and national government, compared to 20% of veterans with no inability and 13% of nonveterans. Among those employed, 25% of veterans who were handicapped worked for the government, compared to 7% of veterans with no incapacitation and 2% of nonveterans (Van Til et al., 2013).

Reserve and National Guard membership. In August 2015, 35% of Gulf War-time veterans (August 1990 to present) were answered to be present or past individuals

from the Reserve or National Guard. (Starting with information for August 2015, these assessments from the veterans' supplement shows a change in the weighting philosophy. This brought about more veterans considered as a part of Hold or National Guard individuals than in past years (Guo, Pollak, & Bauman, 2016). Among Gulf War-period II veterans, the individuals who were present or past individuals from the Reserve or National Guard had a lower unemployment rate than the individuals who had never been National Guard members (3.5% and 6.2 percent, separately). For veterans of Gulf War period I, unemployment rates were comparable for individuals and nonmembers (Guo, et al., 2016).

In summary, the unemployment rates of the military veterans have been high in the past. This trend is slowly reducing due to the various structures put in place. The women are the most affected and for that matter they require more attention for the transition to be more effective. The problems of encountered during transition of the military veterans into the civilian workforce

The Challenges of Transition of Military Veterans into the Civilian Workforce

In various contexts of employment into the civilian workforce, the veterans have faced various challenges during the transition which has led to high unemployment rates as affirmed in the previous section. For veterans coming back from the obliteration they had seen amid World War II to the jubilation and commonality that anticipated them at home, the world probably felt like their clam (Guo et al., 2016). Troopers returned to saints' invites and ticker-tape parades. Much the same as they had vanquished the world. What those veterans were not aware of was the employment predicament that awaited

them. Much like today's military staff who abandon the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, World War II vets returned home to financial instability (Guo et al., 2016). That monetary difficulty was the consequence of recent effects of the past of the Great Depression while today's economy is shadowed by the apparition of the great recession. In both the 40s and today, the issue of military workforce coming back from army has made it difficult for managers, policymakers and the officers themselves (Hall et al., 2014). Below are some of the challenges these veterans face during transition into the civilian workforce.

Change in working environment. It is a conformity. The military and the work environment are altogether different, says Jordan Moore, an individual from the Oklahoma Air National Guard. Subsequent to moving on from secondary school in 2008 and going to a year of school, she enrolled and burned through two months in Iraq in late 2011.

A short time later, she got linked to an association, the Transportation Connections Work Advance in Tulsa, which is controlled by Madison Strategies Group, and she entered a particular assistance program that, in addition to other things, helped her with her resume, meeting and interpersonal abilities. That made her get a paid temporary position as a diesel repairman for Melton Trucking (Hall et al., 2014). She plans to utilize her state GI Bill advantages to resume her studies at Oklahoma State University this late spring while proceeding with her occupation.

Moore, who originates from a military family, was fortunate that she found an occupation almost immediately. Not all veterans have found a similar favorable luck

(Hall et al., 2014). A few organizations are reluctant to contract previous military faculty realizing that it requires investment for some of them to re-adapt to regular citizen life. Moore says she knows different veterans who have taken up to two years to look for some kind of employment. The authors further stated veterans realized that they could not adjust, or the managers were not willing to talk to them due to their military foundation.

Acclimatization into the civilian society. Acclimatizing veterans once more into society has dependably been a daunting task. Individuals from the military have come back from an assortment of wars and clashes including World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War I and Gulf War II, and Afghanistan. En route, they have confronted distinctive political, social and financial circumstances, including how society sees veterans, the opportunities available to them, the sort of work accessible and the general condition of the economy (Hayden & Scholl, 2016).

The 15.7 million veterans who returned undeniably affected the American economy and additionally mentalities about how to absorb veterans coming back from war is devastating (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). Even though World War II revved up the U.S. economy bringing a remarkable number of ladies into the workforce and brought down unemployment from an expected 9.9% for 1941 to an expected low of 1.2% in 1944, it additionally raised worries about what might happen to the 15.7 million veterans after the war finished. The sheer extent of returning servicemen incited worries about the effect on the economy and the likelihood of another Depression (Ahern et al., 2015).

Less job opportunities. Gallup survey published in July 1944 reported that just about 50% of Americans foreseen that the quantity of unemployed individuals would go

between 7 million and 20 million after the war. At the time, the numbers meant somewhere around 14-34% of the regular citizen workforce. In the meantime, the U.S. Labor Department anticipated an unemployment rate of around 25% (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). Without a doubt, in the April 1945 issue of *Personnel Journal*, Workforce Management's hold back, Charles Farmer of the U.S. Work Service noted that 55 to 60 million occupations must be given in the event that we are to have full work after the war." Consequently, a few associations and spectators the American Legion was one contradicted the "inside and out deactivation" of those in the administration without a legitimate employment anticipating them upon their release (Hayden & Scholl, 2016).

The Government Efforts to Stimulate Transition

Plainly some kind of government program was required. An energetic level-headed discussion took after amongst Democrats and Republicans about how to best address America's evolving needs. On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, better referred to today as the GI Bill. The Veterans Administration, as it was known then, was accused of completing the law's key arrangements.

In addition to other things, the GI Bill appropriated \$500 million for the development of offices for veterans, approved unemployment pay of \$20 every week for a greatest of 52 weeks, offered work position help for vets and gave up to four years of instruction and preparing at a yearly educational cost rate of \$500 alongside a stipend running from \$50 to \$74 every month (Hayden & Scholl, 2016).

The GI Bill was a marvelous accomplishment by any measure. The greater part of all fighters tapped the opportunity of this regulation in some shape. Indeed, three years after it was passed, vets comprised of 49% of all school affirmations, and these understudies immediately picked up a notoriety for their resolute responsibility to learning (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014). J. Michael Haynie, an official executive of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University posited that;

Private sector involvement. In the meantime, people in general were encouraged to absorb these veterans, and businesses were excited to contract them. In the event that there was a decision to make, the veteran would be the person who was procured. The GI Bill alongside a positive notion toward veterans kept on giving profits through the Korean War and past. By 1965, as indicated by Hayden and Buzzetta (2014) veterans appreciated a normal yearly pay of \$5,100 contrasted and \$3,200 for regular folks. In addition, veterans' unemployment rate was about a large portion of that of regular citizens, and obviously veterans' kids would probably go to school too.

Indeed, the GI Bill has prompted to 14 Nobel laureates, two-dozen Pulitzer Prize champs, three Supreme Court judges, three U.S. presidents and scores of different pioneers. The rundown incorporates investor Eugene Kleiner, who made Amazon.com, and specialist and space traveler Story Musgrave. It likewise incorporates any semblance of Johnny Carson, Harry Belafonte and resigned Kansas Sen. Bounce Dole (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014).

Higher educational costs. Nonetheless, states of mind about veterans amid the Vietnam War prompted to changes. In spite of the fact that warriors kept on putting their

lives hanging in the balance and numerous who survived lost appendages and encountered an indistinguishable injury from their antecedents they came back to a cold domain that affected states of mind about business and work. There was a stigma connected to veterans, Hayden and Buzzetta, (2014) stated that it is important to note that The GI Bill had experienced basic transformations after the first form terminated in July 1956. For instance, the first GI Bill paid a student educational cost directly to the instructive organization. At the point when the GI Bill was reestablished, veterans started accepting a settled month to month total of \$110 (Jones, 2016). From that, they needed to pay educational cost, books and other everyday costs. The change was started in light of the fact that a few establishments had been discovered cheating that these veterans students were trying to swindle the government.

The unintended result of this change was that when Vietnam vets endeavored to tap their instructive advantage, educational costs had risen and net installments to cover school costs had diminished. The GI Bill was redesigned in 1974 and afterward again 10 years after the fact, when it was named "The Montgomery Bill" for Mississippi Rep. Gillespie V. Montgomery. Shockingly, by 2000, a few veterans ended up accepting just a tenth of their aggregate educational costs. At long last, in 2008, Congress passed the latest GI Bill, which has extended advantages to incorporate up to 100% educational cost alongside charges to cover books and supplies (Jones, 2016).

As the 2.8 million men and ladies who have served since 2001 leave military administration and come back to regular citizen life, the United States is again confronting imperative choices about how to get veterans back to function. Today,

regardless of an abnormal state of support for troops and corporate procuring activities concentrated on veterans, the unemployment rate for returning military staff floats around 9 percent. The national unemployment rate was at 8.3% in January and majority of the returning veterans face troublesome circumstance (Jones, 2016).

Federal government initiative to support transition through education. To facilitate the move, President Barack Obama proposed various changes for veterans coming back from administration. He underpins motivators for enlisting veterans as cops and firefighters and giving veterans something to do reestablishing area and assets through a Veterans Job Corps program. His arrangement likewise incorporates motivating forces for veteran enterprise and small enterprise development. Under this program, the Small Business Administration, or SBA, would offer veterans inside and out preparing through an eight-week online program and would hope to extend open private organizations. One zone where occupations would not be as abundant as in the military, themselves. With troops coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, the military is scaling down. For instance, the U.S. Naval force soften more than 3,000 contracts up 2012, and it has held a main outplacement firm to help mariners with the removals, says Wayne Wagner, who works in corporate effort for the U.S. Naval force. Critical analyzing the Afghanistan and Iraq veterans that were serving years after 2011, Weaver (2013) accentuated that the unemployment rates experiences within among veterans might even be higher than statistics given by the U.S. government. Further investigation by this body found that the percentage if the military veterans that are unemployed was all time high at 17% which is contrary to the statistics of the government which indicates 12% rate. This

percentage is worrying as the unemployment gap for these military veterans increases (Van Til et al., 2013). In the year 2007 /2008 when the U.S. economy was struggling because of the global financial crisis. This economic slow down also created an advent of the widening of the employment gap among military veterans. The fact that most companies were reducing on cost of training and insuring that they get only the most competitive fellows for the job reduced the acceptability of these veterans and recruitment into the civilian workforce (Troutman & Gagnon, 2014).

According to Snyder et al. (2016), the most important reason for the difficulty in the transition into the civilian workforce by the military veteran is the mismatch in the skills the won with the skills and experienced needed in the corporate world. Even as these veterans are deployed from the active military service, they need to own the appropriate skills and expertise to understand how the corporate world works and use these skills to be productive in this field (Selber et al., 2015). As a national and strong economy, it is important for the government to understand how best to treat the menace that these long service military men and women are facing. In response to this menace, the non-profit organizations, the government, and the corporate sector has started instituting assistance programs that tries to unveil both the problems and the benefits that are linked to the recruitment of the military veterans (Schlossberg et al., 2012). This move is with a vision to help these member of the society fit best in these jobs in the civilian service.

According to the line of thought of the government, the most fundamental way of ensuring viability of these veterans into the civilian workforce is the transition assistance.

The health of these ex-military depends partially on the perception of the public from the veterans benefits from their service while in active duty and should be appreciated (Schaffer, 2015). Additionally, it is based on the fact that the civilian employers in the corporate world would appreciate and respect their expertise and sacrifice. From the perspective of the companies, they feel they honor the country and respect the duty of these veterans of quality service (Robertson et al., 2014). However, looking at this issue in the business sense, the act of hiring the ex-military is deemed not to be a charity work per se, neither is it a course for being patriotic as a company. The employers therefore look into various issues at hand before employing these potential employees. According to Robertson and Brott (2014), being an American War veteran does not guarantee that you are a good employee and this does not guarantee that they are fit for the managerial role in the civilian world. It is important to understand, therefore, that title of being a veteran in the civilian context does not hold much water in terms of addressing the notion of being suitable for a job (Reppert et al., 2014). Other qualifications such as the need to have a good managerial and public relation skills is essential for one to qualify in this area.

The federal government has tried to address these problem with keen attention to improving the lives of these veterans. It has done this through inculcation of various legislation that would ensure that the employability of these veterans are increased a great deal. Veteran Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act, was instituted in the November 2011 to ensure creating of funding incentive directed to the companies that are deemed to hire veterans (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015). There was also the inception of

the Returning Hero Tax Credit which gave up to \$5600 to the companies which hired the veterans. Yet another program called Wounded Warrior Tax Credit gave credit of up to \$9,600 to these companies for hiring the veterans disabilities that are connected to the military service (Rausch, 2014). Moreover, there has been the inception of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which was instituted in the year 1990 to help in creating a proper environment for transition of these members of the military. The program has been evolving in a continual way in order to meet the needs of the veterans which is evolving the each and every day (Plumer, 2013).

TAP as a program included the procedure of pre-separation counselling, VA benefits briefings, employment workshops, disability assistance and lastly the transition coaching. The program was strictly given priority as a measure that would help these veterans attain a high level of equality in terms of getting employment opportunities (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015). The provisions given in this program was to help them understand the civilian employment world and get used to the autonomus way of leadership and drift from the notion of authority centered leadership. The process of behavior change was inculcated in this context with a keen attention of ensuring that they transform their conduct as military men and women and assume their predetermined roles in the civilian environment. Accepting their placement in the society is also one of the training they are taken through in order to allow them perceive the non-veteran workforce as they think and perceive various issues in the employment world (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015). While these initiative have tried to provide undoubted support and assistance to the veterans in gaining employment opportunities in the civilian world,

these strategies are still not enough to produce the desired results of the transition. It is due to these discrepancies that studies have been conducted from the privately funded studies, and government with the main aim of finding more strategies which could be instituted in order to come up with a targeted strategy which would not only help in transition to the civilian workforce but also give the veterans the opportunity to secure the employment of their liking by ensuring suitability to the job position (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015).

The Acclimatization Problem

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic calls attention to that for the most youthful male vets, ages 18 to 24, the unemployment rate is drifting around 33% versus around 15% for their non-military personnel counterparts. For youthful females, the rate is almost 17% contrasted and around 7.8% for the all-inclusive community (Kester & Phillips, 2016). Part of the issue is obviously a slacking economy that is ease back to bounce back. Despite that, there are likewise crucial changes occurring in the way of the economy, incorporating a decrease in manual employment.

Humorously, numerous veterans leaving the military are conversant in PCs and specialized abilities that, at first look, would appear to match bosses' needs. They are additionally credited with having an innovative and uplifting state of mind about work (Kester & Phillips, 2016).

Organizational Support to Veteran Transition

Helping veterans is on the watch of a number of organizations and political pioneers. Aon Corp., Bank of America Corp., BNSF Railway Co., Google Inc. also, Wal-

Mart Stores Inc. among other effectively enlist veterans, give assistance and inculcate unique necessities. Last November, Obama assented the VOW to Hire Heroes Act (Kester & Phillips, 2016). In addition to other things, it furnishes unemployed vets with up to one year of extra Montgomery GI Bill advantages and orders Transition Assistance Program advocating for friendly military staff. Businesses get an assessment motivating incentive of up to \$5,600 for hiring a veteran and \$9,600 for employing an incapacitated veteran if the individual has been searching for work no less than 6 months (Kester & Phillips, 2016).

In any case, a large portion of today's vets are going on their own way to get self-employed. Around 30% of veterans are independently employed, says William Elmore, relate director for the SBA. As per 2007 U.S. Statistics Bureau information, these veterans' organizations make up more than 3.6 million organizations creating upward of \$1.65 trillion in financial action (Lacity, Khan, & Carmel, 2016). It is a pattern that is keeping on quickening. The act of returning to the civilian workforce and assuming an active duty has posed a lot of challenges for these veterans (Lacity et al., 2016). The survey carried out by (Parham & Gordon, 2016) showed that approximately 72% of the veterans affirmed that they do not face any difficulty in changing their career into being in the civilian workforce. Approximately 28% of this population continuously faces prolonged difficulty in gaining an entry into the civilian workforce after their active service in the military (Plumer, 2013).

No doubt about it, veterans have assumed a key part in forming the working environment and serving as a spine for the U.S. economy. In the interim, the GI Bill in

the greater part of its emphases has given military staff back something to do as well as profoundly influenced the national leadership. Noted business administration master Peter Drucker once depicted the GI Bill as the most vital occasion of the twentieth century (Lacity et al., 2016).

The way to the future would probably be cleared with a comprehension of the past and the part veterans have played in the public eye. Cornell's Altschuler portrays Drucker's remarks as a "refined evaluation" of how a solitary open activity could unleash bigger strengths that would thus change the whole society. Lacity et al. (2016) indicated that, veterans plays great role towards propelling the society. Besides, they have and would keep on influencing the bearing of the nation. A research review demonstrates that numerous veterans discover that one of the greatest difficulties in transition is clarifying how their military abilities supports and is perceived in a regular citizen workplace. Some extraordinary news from a similar study is that almost all veterans trust they have what it takes to find their optimal occupation. So it is simply a question of conveying those abilities (Lacity et al., 2016).

Summary and Conclusion

From the above review, it is evident that veterans face various challenges when transitioning into the civilian workforce. The veterans tend to face numerous challenges when trying to transition back to society. The findings indicates that veterans find challenging when going back into the civilian workforce since it is more demanding. Some of the veterans experience trauma and distress while transitioning from the military life to civilian life. There has been efforts by the government, private sector and nonprofit

organizations to assist the veterans transition smoothly. Some of the private institutions that tried to assist the veterans include Google Inc. also, Wal-Mart Stores Inc (Kester & Phillips, 2016). Nevertheless, the veterans have continued to experience challenges such as increased unemployment. Potential employers perceive the veterans as unqualified hence not fit for the available opportunities. To some extent the veterans lack the required skills and expertise making them unsuitable for the job opportunities. In addition, the veterans that have suffered serious injuries tend face more challenges especially when seeking employment. In the reviewed literature, it is evident that there is no study that has focused on transition challenges experienced in California and Michigan. This research study thus focuses on filling this gap by limiting the scope with the two mentioned locations. Chapter 3 presents the methods that used to collect and analyze the study data.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore challenges, including emotional trauma and physical distress, that veterans in California and Michigan encounter when transitioning back into the civilian workforce. In this chapter, the focus is on the method used to collect, record, and analyze the data used. Notably, the chapter entails the discussion on the research design. The chapter provides a wider perspective on the research methodology that was used in gathering the data. Also covered in the section are research design and rationale of using the study design, research questions, and detailed discussions on the participants, the data collection methods, data sources, and the data analysis techniques used.

Research Design and Rationale

The main research question of the study was: What challenges are encountered by veterans when transitioning back to the civilian workforce? The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What challenges do veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

RQ2: How do veterans cope with the challenges that they face while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

This study used the phenomenological design in order to describe lived experiences (Frogner, Skillman, & Snyder, 2016). Qualitative analysis tries to explicate the narrative of the experiences of the respondents (Graham et al. 2015). Qualitative

approach provides a way to understand and analyze the perspectives and ways of thinking of various parties and to yield a verdict on phenomenon under investigation. A phenomenological design emphasized on using experiences of the respondents to understand the way in which they understand certain aspects of the research issue.

In most cases, the design requires the interviewer to proficiently understand the setting of the respondents and give appropriate prompting questions that would allow them to provide the required answers to the study issue (Hachey et al., 2016). The design provides basis to understand the respondents perceptions and ensure that the right people critically narrate their experiences on the research issue. For the success of this research design, I ensure that the respondents have had lived experiences on the topic of the study without which the whole research lack adequate authenticity. The authenticity is based on the actual experiences that these respondents had about the research issue (Hall et al., 2014). It should be noted that the my role in the current study was to ensure that these respondents fit for the study and proven to be honest with their answers about the experiences. On the account of the provisions made regarding the phenomenological design, it is important that every participants' comment is taken with high consideration (Hardison et al., 2015). This reduces the advents of biasness that might be evident during the study.

In this study, a phenomenological research design was used. The main aim for using the design was because the study relates to the experiences of the military veterans. The main aim of this research study was to unveil the lived experiences of the participants that would give factual points about the topic of the study (Hayden &

Buzzetta, 2014). In this light, the experiences of the military veterans were retrieved by employing this research design then thoroughly analyzed to give a substantial conclusion on the same. The main aim of the study was to explore the transition of the military veterans into the civilian workforce. There are various stakeholders that are involved in sharing their experiences about the topic of the study in order to get a fairly comparative analysis which not only unveiled certain insights about the transition predicament but made the whole study authentic in all standards (Jones, 2016).

A decent research undertaking begins with the determination of the theme, issue or range of enthusiasm, as well as the worldview (Kester & Phillips, 2016). Kukla, Salyers, and Rattray (2015) followed "worldview" back to its Greek (paradigm) and Latin starting points (paradigma) which means example, model or illustration. A paradigm is the designing of the reasoning of a man, it is a key case among illustrations, a model or models to take after as indicated by which configuration moves are made (Lazier, Gawne, & Williamson, 2016). Distinctively expressed, a worldview is an activity of submitting to a view (Main et al., 2015). This view was supported by McAllister et al. (2014) who characterized an exploration worldview as "an essential arrangement of convictions that guide activity", managing first standards, "ultimates" or the specialist's perspectives.

A specialist's epistemology as indicated by Morrison-Beedy et al. (2015) is truly the hypothesis of information which serves to choose how the social marvels would be studied. The research epistemological position with regards to the review embraced can be planned as follows: a) information are contained inside the points of view of individuals that are included with co-agent training programs, either in a coordinating

limit or as program member; also, b) on account of this, I worked in collaboration with the members in gathering the information. In the view of Neill-Harris et al. (2015), the researcher recognized a phenomenological philosophy as the best means for this sort of study. Phenomenologists, as opposed to positivists, trust that the analyst cannot be segregated from his/her own particular presuppositions and that the scientist ought not to imagine something else (Osborne, 2014). In such manner, Parha and Gordon, (2016) expressed that individual analysts hold clear beliefs.

One of the main reasons why I chose phenomenological research design was that the design enabled in-depth perception, beliefs and lines of thought of the respondents to be analyzed. Phenomenology research design concentrates on encounters, occasions, and events with negligence or least respect for the outside and physical reality (Reppert et al., 2014). Phenomenology is a variety of interpretivism, alongside different varieties, for example, hermeneutics, typical interactionism, and others (Robertson & Brott, 2014).

In the same vein, phenomenology in business ensures that reviews of the thoughts are produced from rich measure of information by the method for enlistment and human premiums. In addition, the partner point of view may have their appearance on the review (Selber et al., 2015). A review that endeavors to survey the effect of authority style on worker inspiration in an organization by means of directing inside and out meetings with representatives is a pertinent case for research with a phenomenology reasoning (Snyder et al., 2016). Favorable circumstances connected with phenomenology incorporate better comprehension of implications joined by individuals and its commitment to the improvement of new hypotheses (Tran, Canfield, & Chan, 2016). Its disservices

incorporate troubles with investigation and understanding as a rule bring down levels of legitimacy and unwavering quality contrasted with positivism and additional time and different assets required for information gathering (Van Til et al., 2013).

Role of the Researcher

The role of a researcher in qualitative research is critical. The credibility of the research findings can be questioned if the researcher does not understand his or her roles in the study (Collins & Cooper, 2014). The scholars pointed out that contrary to the quantitative research whereby the credibility of the research findings is based on the integrity of the methods, instruments, and designs used, the reliability of the research in qualitative research is based on the performance of the researcher. The credibility of a qualitative research equals the integrity of the individual carrying the research (researcher). There are some protections against errors available for quantitative researches that are not available in qualitative research. In qualitative research, the integrity of the research relies on the researcher's honesty, competence, and openness (Collins & Cooper, 2014).

In this research, I played a key role of human instrument. I conducted informal interviews and direct observations. I did not have personal or professional relationship with the participants. The data collected was for academic purposes, thus, there was no conflict of interest. The research had no predetermined results; as such, I neither supervised nor instructed the participants. This helped to enhance the credibility of the data collected. I was aware of the possibility of biases in the data collection process and its effects on the results. Therefore, I minimized the chances of biases through remaining

professional in the entire process and recorded the interviews in a digital device to enhance accuracy. In addition, data bracketing was also applied. Moreover, I had an understanding that the perception of researcher's power may influence the data collected. To ensure the participants did not feel intimidated during the interviews, I allowed them to choose the time and the location for the interviews. Furthermore, I considered the effects of ethical issues and how they may affect the research findings, as such, I put in place a plan to address the issues which included maintaining civilian experience throughout the process, communicating to the participants about the voluntary participation, and assuring the participant's anonymity and confidentiality.

The research study involved data collection by use of telephone interviews. In this study, I used interviews to collect data and use the information collected to find meaning in the telephone interviews. Before interviewing, I talked to all participants to assure them of confidentiality and anonymity. This helped in improving the participants' confidence which provided an opportunity to gather resourceful information. The information collected during the interviews can only be useful if the data is correctly analyzed and interpreted. In this case, I analyzed and interpreted the data collected to make a hypothesis. I demonstrated utmost civilian experience during the interviews, analyzing, and interpreting the data. This helped in reducing biases which are the major challenge in qualitative research (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). It also included recording the telephone interviews conducted; the recordings were made available to the users if necessary.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The participants of the study were a combination of veterans who have retired and those that were expecting to retire from the military within the next six (6) months at the time of the study. To complete this study, I drafted interview guides which were semistructured that were utilized in the in-depth interviews. It is important to note that the guide for the interview included questions which were open-ended. The main reason for this was to allow for the interviewer to ask other prompting questions in order to fully understand veteran's transition into the civilian workforce (Johnson, 2014). Additionally, it helped the respondents to digress on the questions to allow for an in-depth analysis..

Jones (2016) indicated that an occurrence tends to direct the approach and the type of study. I used purposive sampling, considered by Canfield and Weiss (2015) as the most critical method of non-likelihood sampling, to recognize the primary respondents. The study by Cooper et al. (2016) proposed searching for the individuals who have encountered with the phenomenon under investigation. I used telephone calls and an Internet search to locate the participants of this study. These interviewees are an essential unit of investigation (Cooper et al., 2016) with their 'informed assent' (D'Aoust et al., 2016)

With a view to get more respondents, the study utilized snowball sampling. Snowballing is a technique for growing the sample by asking one source or member to suggest others that may be included in the study (Frogner et al., 2016). Hall et al. (2014) referred to those through whom are picked as guardians and those people who volunteer

help as key personnel or key insiders. Naturally, the normal term was respondents, a term which is losing prevalence inferable from negative implications. Hardison and Shanley (2016) qualified a guardian as "somebody with the formal or casual power to control access to a site" (p. 123), a person from whom consent is required.

Hayden and Scholl (2016) noted that such appropriation may detach the specialist from some potential sources or subjects. Keeping in mind the end goal of guaranteeing moral research, I used the informed assent (Herman & Yarwood, 2015). Ahern et al. (2015) asserted that misdirection might be counter-profitable. In the view of Borah and Manser'd (2016) prescribed things, I developed a particular informed consent 'contract document' keeping in mind the end goal was to pick up various issues from it such as:

- That they are taking an interest in research
- The objective of the research (without expressing the main research objective)
- The methods of the exploration
- The hazard and advantages of the investigation
- The intentional nature of research investment
- The subject's (informant's) having the right to stop the examination whenever
- The methodology used to ensure secrecy

Bosco et al. (2015) additionally observed that duplicity may avert bits of knowledge while genuineness combined with privacy diminishes biasness and advances true reactions. The informed consent agreement document was disclosed to subjects toward the start of every meeting. Individuals who did not give consent were not coerced

to take an interest in the research (Brock et al., 2013). Those who provided consent to the study were permitted to participate in the study and signed the informed consent.

The study sample consisted of 30 participants. A combination of veterans who had retired and those who were expecting to retire from the military within the next 6 months at the time of the study were included. Half of the participants (15) were active (those who had not yet retired from the military) and the remaining 15 participants were veterans who have worked with the military but had retired and experienced challenges transitioning back into the civilian workforce. The reason for selecting veterans who had experienced trauma was to identify how transitioning leads to psychological trauma. The selection of veterans with physical stress helped in investigating how transitioning leads to the development of stress.

Though the veterans in the sample were not illustrative of those in the all-inclusive community, the sample included veterans who had years of skills in the improvement of veterans' drives and involved in tending to the military and veteran emotional wellness issues. The sample also included veterans who had encountered their own emotional wellness issues and can portray how they tended to address these issues in their own lives including the adoption of specific coping strategies.

Instrumentation

I used both structured and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Interviewing is among the commonly used methods of collecting information today. According to Peters and Halcomb (2015), interviews are useful when the researcher intends to collect detailed information about individual's opinions, perspectives,

perceptions or feelings about an issue. Interviews allowed me to ask detailed questions concerning the issue thereby making the information gathered via this method appropriate and reliable. Since this study was aimed at exploring opinions and perceptions of veterans concerning the difficulties that they face during the transition into the civilian workforce, using interviews to understand the veteran's opinions is an appropriate method. Moreover, the exploratory nature of the research study demands using data collection method that would provide room for diverse opinions and perspectives.

During the interviews, I expected a variety of perceptions from the participants. I used open-ended interview questions. Using open-ended interview questions enhanced better access to veteran's true feelings on the issue. According to Turner III (2010), open-ended interview questions provide the researcher with a comprehensive explanation about the issue thereby allowing the researcher see perspectives that may not have been considered before. In the current study, I aimed to collect resourceful information from the identified participants. As a result, elaboration and clarification were sought in all open-ended questions in cases where I did not understand what the interviewee perspectives. The research questions were based on hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The approach was appropriate in the research study since it helped to collect rich data by unearthing all significant information from the participants.

Data Collection

To facilitate this study, interviews were conducted through the phone where participants were called and asked questions pertaining to the study topic. The phone

numbers were obtained from relevant authority, the department of veteran affairs. Each interview was conducted for roughly one hour. The interviews were audio recorded to help in further investigations and data analysis. The open-ended queries majorly focused on the notion of experiences, areas of expertise, and the knowledge of the respondents. The participants were debriefed and given a chance to re-consent to the utilization of the data. The participants were allowed to withdraw their data if they wish to do so.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted after the tape recording and transcription were completed. The NVivo QDA small data analysis software was used for qualitative data in carrying out the coding of the interview transcriptions. Similarly, McKinney (2017) used the QDA software to come up with themes with regard to the transition experience of veterans into the civilian life. The coding process entailed analyzing interview transcripts and labeling the themes. In addition, the themes were based on their similarities as well as unique relationships. Finally, the themes were used to address the research questions. The next step after completing the coding process was to produce a report on the coding for every category. A constant comparative analysis was then carried out on each coding to discern the information in it. The analysis took a contextual approach which was in line with goal of getting the answers to the original questions.

Trustworthiness

According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), the trustworthiness of a research study is based on four pillars. The pillars include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility determines whether results are accurate from the researcher's and reader's standpoint (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This means that the research findings manifest the true and accurate picture of the issues at hand. To ensure the credibility of the research findings, I used an audit trail to facilitate data validation and research findings. Also, I ensured all the questions were clear and sought clarification from the participants in case of vague answers.

Transferability

Transferability entails the determination of how well readers can use similar processes to conduct their studies (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). Second is transferability of the research. This means that the study should apply to other contexts. To ensure transferability of the research, in-depth descriptions of the findings were provided.

Dependability

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), dependability deals with results, interpretations as well as recommendations as presented in the obtained data. The research should be dependable such that if another researcher conducts the same study, the results should be consistent. According to Collins and Cooper (2014), the researcher's hopes for the study and ideas about the study may influence him/her to interpret the information differently. In such a case, the result does not manifest the true picture of the issue at hand but the predetermined findings which might be very different from the true situation. To ensure dependability of the research findings, a proper analysis and interpretation of the data gathered was performed.

Confirmability

Confirmability deals with inquiry conforming to the past research by other researchers (Cohen et al., 2011). To establish confirmability, audit trails were conducted. Also, openness, integrity, and honesty during the research process were observed. Biasness is one of the leading factors that inhibit the realization of a reliable qualitative research study. Observing neutrality during the research ensures confirmability of the study. The research findings were based on the participant's responses and no other person's perspectives were used.

Summary

The chapter focused on the methods used to collect, record, and analyze data. Phenomenological research design was used in this study due to the exploratory nature of the study. Phenomenological research design focuses mainly on people's experience regarding a particular situation or other how these individuals interpret such experiences (Stierand & Dörfler, 2012). This is in line with the main purpose of this research study which was to identify the issues that limit the veterans from successfully transitioning into the civilian workforce just like ordinary people. Interviews were used to collect the data required. Interviews are useful when detailed information about individual's opinions, perspectives, perceptions or feelings about a phenomenon is required. In the current study, both structured and semi-structured interview questions were used to enhance the coverage of the research. A researcher in a qualitative study plays a vital role in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the gathered information (Collins & Cooper, 2014). All the factors required to enhance the credibility and reliability of the

information gathered were the priority in the study. This included assuring the participant's anonymity and confidentiality. Both the veterans and those who were expecting to retire from the military within the next six months from the time the study was conducted were interviewed. Precisely, 15 retired veterans, who have found it challenging transitioning into the civilian workforce, were interviewed. The other 15 participants comprised of the hospitalized veterans who have suffered illness because of the challenges they went through while working in the military. In the next chapter of the current study, the findings obtained after analysis are presented. Chapter 4 provides discussions of the findings in alignment to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the challenges, including emotional trauma and physical distress, that veterans in California and Michigan encounter when transitioning back into the civilian workforce. The purpose was achieved by exploring the perceptions of 30 veterans regarding their transition into the civilian workforce. The interview data were appropriate for addressing the following overarching research question: What challenges are encountered by veterans when transitioning back to civilian workforce? The primary research questions of the study were:

RQ1: What challenges do veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

RQ2: How do veterans cope with the challenges that they face while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

The research questions were formulated to explore veterans' experiences during transitioning process into the civilian workforce. In this chapter, I explain the research setting of this study, the demographic factors of the participants, and the procedures for data collection. I discuss the technique used in the study to analyze the data and evidence of trustworthiness. I also include detailed discussions of the results of the data analysis, and a summary of the answers addressing the research questions.

Research Setting

California and Michigan were selected as the two research settings for recruiting and interviewing the participants. I conducted phone and face-to-face interviews with 30 participants from May 7, 2018, to June 27, 2018. I interviewed participants who had retired and those who were waiting to retire from the military within the next six months. There were no changes in personnel, budgetary cuts, and organizational structure that influenced the experience of participants during the time of the study that might have affected my interpretations of the findings. The participants were given an electronic copy of the informed consent and the interview protocol. The participants signed the informed consent agreement form electronically and returned it. Via telephone calls, we determined a mutually agreed time for the interviews, which were recorded.

Demographic Factors

The demographic information for the participants mainly involved the work status (retired/retiring) of the participants. The targeted study sample size was 30 participants who are presented as P01 to P30 and included a combination of veterans and those who were within six months of retirement from the military workforce. There were 15 participants who have not retired from the military but expecting to retire within six months from May 2018. Another 15 participants were retired veterans who have worked in the military and had encountered challenges during their transition into the civilian workforce. The demographic information of the study participants recruited to take part in his study is in Table 1.

Table 1*Demographic information of study participants*

| Participants | State | Status (retired/retiring) | Military branch | Years served in the military |
|--------------|------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| P01 | California | Retired | U.S. Marine | 23 |
| P02 | California | Retired | U.S. Marine | 18 |
| P03 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 24 |
| P04 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 19 |
| P05 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Army | 20 |
| P06 | California | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 23 |
| P07 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Army | 20 |
| P08 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Army | 20 |
| P09 | California | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 20 |
| P10 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 18 ½ |
| P11 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Army | 21 |
| P12 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Army | 22 |
| P13 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Army | 19 |
| P14 | California | Retired | U.S. Army | 21 |
| P15 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Army | 12 |
| P16 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 26 |
| P17 | California | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 19 |

| | | | | |
|-----|------------|----------|----------------|----|
| P18 | California | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 22 |
| P19 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 21 |
| P20 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 26 |
| P21 | California | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 20 |
| P22 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 22 |
| P23 | California | Retiring | U.S Marines | 21 |
| P24 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 19 |
| P25 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 27 |
| P26 | Michigan | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 21 |
| P27 | California | Retiring | U.S. Air Force | 17 |
| P28 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 20 |
| P29 | Michigan | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 22 |
| P30 | California | Retired | U.S. Air Force | 20 |

Note. $N = 30$

Data Collection

A total of 30 retired or retiring veterans who have transitioned into the civilian workforce participated in this study. Structured and semi-structured interviews as indicated in Appendix 1 were used as the primary data collection methods to gather information-rich data from the study participants. Thirty interviews were conducted via telephone calls and through face to face interviews from May 7, 2018 to June 27, 2018 and I conducted from my residential place at the participant's determined date and time.

An interview protocol with open-ended interview questions was used as the research method to collect primary data. The interview guide contained the date of the interview, the time the interview was conducted, interviewee, and interview questions used to collect data. All participants took part in the interview and were interviewed separately. Each participant responded to all the interview questions (see Appendix 1) and the interview session lasted for 60 minutes.

All the participants presented complete answers to each of the interview questions in the protocol. During the interview session, the participants were requested to expound on their answers and share additional information that deemed important to the interview questions. The responses given by the participants were succinct but contained detailed information that were useful in addressing or answering the research questions of the study. Participants' responses were recorded using a tape recorder on my mobile telephone for record keeping.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Walden University IRB before starting the data collection procedure (Approval # 2018.05.015:45:55-05-00). The phone numbers of the participants were obtained from relevant authorities like the department of veteran affairs. I recruited the participants using purposive sampling which helped to include only veterans who have had an encounter with or have experienced the phenomenon in the question. Also, additional participants were recruited using snowballing technique where I asked the identified participants to suggest other potential individuals to include in the research study. All the research participants were contacted

through telephone calls and were provided with an informed consent and confidentiality agreement forms through their email addresses.

I requested the participants to engage in the in-depth interview on military transitioning into the civilian workforce and their experience of emotional trauma and physical distress. All the participants signed the informed consent agreement forms electronically before the interview. Also, specific dates and time for conducting the interview sessions were discussed with the participants. Each participant was assigned a code number such as P01 to prevent the disclosure of participant's identity information.

A transcription of the recorded interview responses was done after the interviews were completed. The NVivo QDA software was used to help in the transcription process. Also, I conducted data interpretation before sending the transcribed data to the participants for member checking. In relation to the proposed data collection plan, there were no any variations in data collection. Only minor challenges took place during the process of data collection. First, transcribing the recorded interviews was a challenge that was encountered. The interview transcripts were many and it was demanding for me to work on all the interviews. The other instance was using QDA software for transcribing the data to generate significant themes. I had to learn the program as I had a basic knowledge on using the software.

Data Analysis

An interview protocol was developed and used to organize the data gathered for this study. The basis for data analysis was thematic analysis method that involved theme development using the data collected. According to Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules

(2017), thematic analysis is widely employed in qualitative studies across different epistemologies to identify, analyze, describe, and report the theme identified for a set of data. This thematic analysis provides detailed and information-rich data that is used to for themes which are applicable when addressing the phenomenon under investigation (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, thematic analysis method provided an effective way of describing and categorizing the primary interview data that were employed in the study. The interview data were identified as narrative from the study participants. Coding was the initial phase of data analysis. The coding process followed the seven steps.

The first step was to read the interview transcripts or narratives from the participants several times to get familiar with the interview data. I read the transcripts several times to understand the responses presented by each participant. In the second step, emerging themes were developed using coding stages of open coding and axial coding. Open coding involves generating initial codes from the transcripts and axial coding involves grouping the initial codes into categories based on their similarities (Cassol et al., 2018). I performed line-by-line coding of the interview data and developed descriptive themes. Specific phrases were identified from the content and had used them in developing category titles. Axial coding mainly focuses on exploring common patterns and the emergent themes from the data to assist in identifying relationship between categories (Patton, 2014). In this axial coding phase, I merged and clustered the categories to develop the main titles as shown in Table 2. The coding process entails having a theme was developed based on the number of participants sharing similar

responses. Those with same responses were coded and responses were used to generate the main theme.

Table 2

Coding process

| Codes | Categories |
|--------------------------|---|
| Transitioning challenges | 1. Experiences of emotional trauma |
| | 2. Transition experience of physical distress |
| | 3. Feelings of frustration |
| | 4. Effects of military memories |
| Coping strategies | 1. Transitioning support |
| | 2. Ideal coping strategies to use |
| | 3. Networking connection |
| | 4. Need for education and training |
| | 5. Effectiveness of the coping strategies |

Note. $N = 30$

After clustering the categories of themes, interpretation and synthesizing the data to find the actual meaning was conducted. This was achieved by identifying the similarities and differences of the coded content to create new themes. After coding phases, the transcribed 30 interview data were loaded into NVivo QDA software and the files were renamed to assist in sorting the data. The software assisted in sorting the data content into coding reports based on the category of titles used. Using NVivo QDA software assisted in developing codes based on the similarities of the responses from the

interview questions. Multiple codes were obtained from the 30 interviews that were conducted. After assigning codes to the data, I read, made comparisons, and interpreted the coded content which was a primary process for the study.

Three categories identified in the NVivo software showed the demographic information including military status (retired or retiring), the military branch the participants were transitioning from, and the length served in the military workforce. The next 14 categories were created, and they involved a combination of challenges encountered during transitioning and coping strategies. The categories were related to the interview questions set in the interview protocol. The categories were further refined by merging and eliminating categories. Some questions were similar, and this helped in using similar codes to develop a single category of titles. After refinement, I combined related categories and seven associated categories emerged. The interview questions and the associated categories related to each of the research question are given in Table 3.

Table 3.

Interview questions, categories, and related research questions

| Interview questions | Associated categories | Related research questions |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | Transitioning challenges | RQ1 |
| 2 | Experiences of emotional trauma | RQ1 |
| 3 | Transition experience of physical distress | RQ1 |
| 5 | Feeling of frustration | RQ1 |
| 6 | Effects of military memories | RQ1 |

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 7 | Flexibility of military transitioning | RQ1 |
| 8 | Job application | RQ1 |
| 9 | Coping strategies | RQ2 |
| 10 | Mutual support | RQ2 |
| 11 | Ideal coping strategies | RQ2 |
| 12 | Effectiveness of coping strategies | RQ2 |
| 13 | Additional education and training | RQ2 |
| 14 | Networking support | RQ2 |

The categories in Table 3 emerged from the research and interview questions of the study. These categories were used as the basis to conduct data analysis and helped in categorizing and identifying similar phrases or themes based on the interview responses from the study participants. Thematic analysis and QDA were employed to determine common phrases from the interview responses. Participants' responses to the interview questions and the common themes identified are presented in the result section.

There were no reported discrepant cases in this study. All the participants were engaged in the interview session and provided succinct but detailed responses to the questions used during interviews. No participant mentioned the removal of some interview questions and none declined to respond to the interview questions.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is the extent in which the results obtained in a study are accurate (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Several strategies were used in the study to ensure credibility. An audit trail was used to ensure the credibility of research findings. Detailed steps undertaken from the beginning of this study to the reporting of study findings were provided. Detailed discussions on methodology used, study participants, data collection procedure, and procedure for data analysis were provided. Also, the interview questions were read several times to ensure they are clear and clarify vague answers from the participants. Preliminary analysis was also done before sending the transcripts to the participants. Member checking was done where the participants reviewed and verified the accuracy of the information in the interview transcripts. In this member checking, the data collected, and interpretations were shared with the participants. This allowed the participants to correct any errors and provide additional information that deemed necessary for the study.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of a study are transferred to another context using different participants. Transferability is the degree in which similar research processes are followed to conduct a similar study (Anney, 2014). To ensure transferability in this study, I provided extensive and rich details of the methodology used and the data collection methods of the study. Transferability was also achieved through purposive sampling. According to Anney (2014), providing detailed description of

selection method used in recruiting participants with a focus on purposive sampling ensures transferability in qualitative research. In this study, detailed description of the inquiry was provided, and participants were chosen purposively.

Dependability

Dependability involves establishing the consistency and whether the findings of a research study are repeatable (Anney, 2014). Dependability emphasizes on evaluating the study's findings and interpretation to ensure they are supported by the data presented by the study participants (Anney, 2014). In this study, peer examination was used to ensure the dependability of the study. I discussed the research process and study's findings with my peers for a proper analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Also, dependability was achieved through audit trail. I provided detailed description of research process including how the data were collected, recovered, and analyzed. I presented the raw data and interview documents to give in-depth explanations of the research process.

Confirmability

Confirmability is mainly focused on establishing that the results obtained in a qualitative research and interpretations of the findings are not based on researcher's imaginations but derived from the collected data (Anney, 2014). To ensure confirmability in this study, openness, integrity, and honesty in presenting the results were maintained. I presented and interpreted the findings of this study based on the responses from the participants and not my own perspectives.

Results

The study participants provided information-rich data that responded to the interview questions related to military transition into the civilian workforce. The questions used during the interviews were important in addressing the research questions that guided the study. The organization of result section is based on the two research questions. The presentation of results is done in relation to the interview questions that respond to each research question. Associated categories and themes are used and the data presented in every research question are described with supporting quotes from the interview transcripts.

Research Question 1

The first research question that guided this study was: What are the challenges do veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning into the civilian workforce? Interview questions addressed this research question 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 as in indicated in Appendix 1. These interview questions served as the basis of developing categories and themes that addressed the participants' experiences while transitioning into the civilian workforce.

Interview Question 1 and related category and themes. The first question used in the interview was: Tell me about your transition from the military into the civilian workforce. What challenges have you faced? The category title to Interview Question 1 was transitioning challenges and the emergent themes are presented as follows.

Category: Transitioning challenge. From the participants' responses, 20 participants (67%) mentioned the challenges and 10 participants (33%) mentioned no

challenges. Based on the participants' responses to Interview Question 1, three main themes were identified which include skill development, adaptation, and struggles for good pay and benefits. The responses from participants in relation to the category title transitioning challenges are presented in Table 4. The emergent themes and the number of participants with similar thoughts regarding the themes are also presented.

Table 4

Responses to category title transitioning challenges

| Emergent theme | <i>n</i> | % |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----|
| Skill development | 7 | 23 |
| Adaptation | 4 | 13 |
| | 6 | 20 |
| Struggles for good pay and benefits | 5 | 17 |

Note. $N = 30$. n = number of participants who mentioned the theme. % = percentage of participants.

Theme: Skill development. Seven out of 30 study participants (23%) had common thoughts and beliefs concerning challenges in developing military skills during their transition. Participants 01, 04, 09, 16, 17, 19, and 22 shared their beliefs that developing new skills in civilian workforce is challenging. The participants felt that developing military skills to match the skill levels required in the civilian workforce was the main challenge. For example, participant 01 mentioned that “The main challenges that I encounter when transition into the civilian workforce was age discrimination, the

loss of power & control over others in a work environment and building my military skill resume matching the civilian workforce skill level.”

Participant 09 provided similar thoughts. Participant 09 stated,

But I did not even know where to start. It did not help me create a resume, so I can find out what skills I even possessed. Some things we do in the military, people in the civilian world didn't even understand.

The participants shared that they experience incompatibility between their skills and those needed to perform civilian tasks. For example, Participant 10 stated,

Transition to the civilian workforce is tough. Being in the military and being trained on how to do a specific job, typically doesn't relate to what a civilian employer is looking for; especially if you do not have a degree to go along with your experience.

Despite the significant number of participants supporting the challenge of skill development, there were contrasting responses from other participants who did not experience any challenge during the transition. For instance, Participant 11 stated,

I did not have any issues with transition into the civilian workforce, reason is that I was employed by an organization that the military team up with to get engineers. As long I commit to six years working on military vehicle.

Theme: Adaptation. Among 30 participants who were interviewed, 4 participants (13%) stated that adapting to the new civilian workforce was a challenge. Participants 07, 09, 12, and 24 disclosed that adapting to the new working conditions and civilians with different working ethics was among the challenge. For instance, Participant 07 indicated

that “Learning to adapt working with civilians who have a much different working ethic, lack of honesty, and trust. Finding a rewarding position that allows veterans to succeed and not just be another number.” Similarly, Participant 12 mentioned that, “One of the biggest problems I had was translating my military skills into the civilian work environment and adjusting to a new culture, a new way of doing things.”

Participant 24 also stated that, “My challenges that I face when transition into the civilian workforce, was getting used to the way civilian go about perform their jobs.”

Theme: Struggles for good pay and benefits. The theme for struggles for good pay and benefits was shared by five out of 30 participants (17%). Participants 09, 19, 27, 28, and 29 shared similar experiences of reduced pay and benefits in civilian workforce compared to the pay they received in the military. The participants shared that due to lower pay, they felt that they were not fit to join the civilian tasks. For instance, Participant 09 stated,

Then many lower level jobs, like fast food restaurants, secretary positions, I was told that I was overqualified. They could not pay me the wages I was used to making in the military. Again, these circumstances lead me to see wages I could earn a degree. I also considered rejoining the military because I did not feel like I no longer fit into the civilian world.

Also, Participant 27 disclosed that “My challenge was trying to find a good pay paying job that match my military skill set.” Similarly, Participant 28 mentioned, “My challenges were the pay and benefits, I had better benefits and better pay in the Navy.

Similar responses were provided by Participant 29, who stated, “My challenges were trying to deal with the civilian workforce benefits, pay and education.”

Interview Question 2 and related categories and themes. The Interview Question 2 was: Have you suffered any emotional trauma when transitioning into the civilian workforce? The category title to this question was experience of emotional trauma. The category title and associated themes are presented in the next paragraphs.

Category title: Emotional trauma. Based on Interview Question 2, 18 out of 30 participants (60%) shared their experiences of emotional trauma during transitioning. Two themes were identified in relation to the question and they were: disorientation and doubts and anxiety and depression. The themes are discussed in relation to the descriptions or responses from the participants. 10 participants and the theme of anxiety and depression discussed the theme of disorientation and doubts was discussed by 5 participants

Theme: Disorientation and doubts. Ten participants (33%) shared their feeling of disorientation and doubts during military transition into the civilian workforce. Participants 01, 05, 10, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 28, and 29 shared emotional trauma, which is characterized by feelings of disorientation and doubts. These participants shared that they were not aware of the challenges in the civilian task and that they were in doubts whether they would be successful in carrying out the assigned tasks. This indicated the state of mental confusion that causes disorientation among the veterans. For instance, Participant 01 stated, “I was afraid of the unknown challenges in the civilian workforce, doubt of will I be successful in civilian workforce.” Participant 10 continued:

Yes, as I mentioned, I was unemployed for a period of time. At this time, I had a house, wife and baby. It was tough to find a job that would keep my family afloat with all the bills and necessities. I was receiving unemployment which is never ideal to support a family.

The participants also shared mental confusion in determining the right jobs that meet their military skills. Similar responses were identified from Participants 14 and 15. For instance, Participant 14 stated, “Yes, my emotional trauma has been with finding the right job for me in the civilian workforce.” Participant 15 stated, “Yes, the stress of finding a job that meets my military training.”

Theme: Anxiety and depression. Five participants (17%) shared their experiences of emotional trauma during transition. Participants 07, 09, 18, 21, and 26 experienced anxiety and depression during military transition to civilian workforce. The statement of anxiety and depression is evident in the descriptions from Participant 07 who stated,

Yes, by not being promoted or receive awards, pay raises, lied to by supervisors, managers. While working with the V.A. being passed over for promotions over civilian coworkers who didn't work as hard as me. They were taken care of by my supervisors who were related or friends.

Participant 09 also stated,

I was depressed for a while because I could not find work. I started to think that I sacrificed for the country and now it no longer viewed me as valuable and I could not gain employment. I know I wanted to do something different but started to feel forced into rejoining. I was in New York during 9/11 so there was so much

emotions with me even deciding to end my enlistment. At this time, I was also separated from my husband, so the stress level was very intense. I felt alone and could not talk to my family about any of this. They were so very proud that I had the courage to leave home and attempt to explore the world. So I had the additional pressure to find something and live up to those expectations.

Though there were significant responses that support the experience of emotional trauma during military transition into the civilian workforce, 12 participants (40%) did not experience emotional trauma. For instance, Participant 11 shared,

No, I suffer no emotional trauma, all my military service was done at one location. I knew that when my six-year obligation with the military was over, that I had a full-time engineering job waiting for me within the civilian workforce.

Interview Question 3 related category title and associated themes. Interview Question 3 was: Have you experienced any physical distress when transitioning back into the civilian workforce? The category title for this interview question was transition experience of physical distress. The category title and associated themes are described below.

Category: *Transition experience of physical distress.* Based on the participants' responses to the third interview question, 12 participants (40%) experienced physical distress during transitioning. Two themes were identified in relation to Interview Question 3 and included panic attacks and nightmares as well as increased alcohol use and physical impairment.

Theme: Panic attacks and nightmares. Only one out of 30 participants (3.3%) shared experiences of physical distress characterized by panic attack and nightmares. Other participants gave only “yes” answers which cannot be used to determine the themes explaining the interview question. Participant 01 shared the theme and stated,

I experience panic attack and nightmares of transition into the civilian workforce.

Theme: Increased alcohol and physical impairment. Six out of 30 participants (20%) experienced physical distress which was associated with the increased use of alcohol and physical impairment such as leg and back problems. Participants 09, 15, 18, 22, 28, and 29 felt physical distress from the military transition. For instance, Participant 09 stated,

During this time I was experiencing so many emotions, I started partying and going out to clubs. Drinking became a part of my normal routine, and I started hanging out with the wrong people. This led me to being caught up in a shooting, that left me shot in my left leg and requiring surgery to have the bullet removed. This physical impairment for several months, made me unable to seek employment. This condition made me very depressed and not sure if I was even able to rejoin the military. Many of my options were starting to be reduced and I started to feel the world closing in on me. I could not believe that this was my new world, when I felt initially getting out of the Marines, the world and many opportunities were at my fingertips.

Participant 15 mentioned that, “Yes, my physical injuries have caused me to move, a little slow at times within the civilian workforce.” Besides, Participant 18 stated that,

“Yes, having back, foot and hearing issues influence me entering into the civilian workforce.”

However, 18 participants (60%) out of 30 did not experience physical distress. Among the 18 participants, 17 provided no answers which cannot be used to describe the theme. Only participant 10 were able to describe the theme. For instance, Participant 10 stated that, “I haven’t endured any physical distress. I feel that the military kept/keeps me in great physical shape.”

Interview Question 5 category title and associated themes. Interview Question 5 for this study was: Have you experienced frustrations when transitioning from the military workforce into the civilian workforce? The category title of the interview question was transition experience of frustrations.

Category. Transition experience of frustrations. Based on Interview Question 5, 20 out of 30 participants (67%) experienced frustrations while transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. Three themes emerged, and they include anxiety, lack of civilian experience, and disability and the lack of support.

Theme: Anxiety. Seven participants (23%) shared experience of anxiety that cause frustrations. Participants 05, 12, 13, 14, 29, and 30 mentioned the theme. The participants perceived that they felt anxious in adjusting to the workforce command in civilian tasks. For instance, Participant 05 mentioned that, “Yes, with adjusting to the civilian workforce chain of command.” Also, Participant 14 stated that, “Yes, my frustrations are basic on not being able to the right job for me in the civilian workforce.”

Similarly, participant 29 stated that “Yes, trying to deal with non-military ways of doing things in the civilian workforce.”

Also, the participants perceived that they felt uneasy working within civilians due to their diversity on how they do their work and how they interact. For instance, Participant 12 stated that, “Yes I did. Just trying to fit in. Veterans, we don’t think or talk the same as a person that has never served.”

Theme: Lack of civilian experience. Six participants (20%) among 30 who took part in the interviews mentioned civilian experience issues as the cause of frustrations in transitioning to the civilian workforce. Participants 09, 10, 15, 16, 20, and 27 shared the theme. Participants shared that they lacked civilian skills needed to conduct the assigned tasks. Participants indicated that they lacked the civilian experiences and the military skills that they had do not match the required skills in the civilian workforce. Therefore, they experienced much frustration. For instance, Participant 09 said,

Yes, the fact that I could not find work that would pay me a similar wage or that would hire me period. My lack of job skills or the knowledge of the skills that I possess was lacking that created much frustration. I also did not have any previous civilian experience before joining the military, so I felt like everything would be the exact same way.

Also, Participant 10 said,

The structure, depending on where you go can be a little frustrating. You learn and internalize use of your chain of command, customs and courtesies and really develop a professional mindset. In a civilian workforce, it isn’t always the same.

In my opinion, more people lack civilian experience, common courtesies, and situational awareness.

Participant 16 stated,

Yes, I have experience frustration within the civilian workforce, basis on not being able to show cast my skills, talents, and knowledge within my organization.

Theme: Disability and lack of support. Two participants (7%) shared their experiences of disability and the lack of support within the workforce that made them feel frustrated. Participants 18 and 21 mentioned the theme. For instance, Participant 18 said that. “Yes, I experience a lot of frustrations in my transition into the civilian workforce due to my disabilities.” Similarly, participant 21 stated that, “Yes, I experience frustrations, because I believe that people in the civilian workforce care and respect veterans. No one really care during the time, it was hard for me to find a job.”

Ten out of 30 participants (33%) did not experience frustration during their transition. For instance, Participant 01 mentioned that, “No, because I was very well prepared for the transition into the civilian workforce.” Also, Participants 02, 11, and 24 gave similar response and stated that, “No, frustrations when a transition into the civilian workforce.”

Interview Question 7 associated category titles and themes. Interview Question 7 stated: Was your transition from the military service to civilian workforce easy or hard? The participants responded differently and most of them perceived that transitioning into the civilian workforce was easy. Nineteen out of 30 participants (63%)

found the transition easy while 11 out of 30 participants (37%) perceived that transition was hard.

Two themes were identified to explain the participants' experience of transition and they included flexible transitioning experience and demanding transitioning experience.

Theme: Flexible transitioning experience. Among the participants who perceived the transition as an easy task, they indicated that planning well made their transition flexible. For instance, participant 01 stated that, "My transition into the civilian workforce was easy because I prepare myself before leaving the military." Also, participant 02 said that, "Easy, because I was ready to get out of the military." Similar responses were found in participant 05 who stated that, "Easy, I re-program myself to adjust to the civilian workforce."

Also, the participants who found transition to be flexible perceived that transitioning was easy because they had mindset on the tasks they were going to do. For instance, participant 22 stated that, "Easy because I had the mindset that a marine can excel at any task."

Also, Participant 23 said,

I believe my transition was easier than most primarily because they were simultaneous. I learned to switch from "military mode" to "civilian mode" over the course of many years. Therefore, when the final switch was made, it was just a matter of saying goodbye to the military.

Theme: Demanding transitioning experience. Participants mentioned that transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce is hard because of the new

environment and requirements such as skills to adjust to the civilian workforce. For instance, Participant 09 stated,

I consider my transition hard. It took me several years to overcome some of the letdown I felt after separating from the military. I eventually joined the Air National Guard as a way to stay connected, then I was able to find my way to be gainfully employed.

Similarly, Participant 10 mentioned,

Hard. First you have to find a job which can be challenging in itself if you don't have a lot of qualifications. When you wear the uniform and are accustomed to a certain type of structure. It can be difficult getting use to an organization where things are just different.

The findings in relation to the first research question one indicated that transitioning to from the military life to the civilian workforce is a challenging experience that affect the feelings and cause physical challenges to the veterans. Thus, the strategies which assist veterans to cope with challenges while transitioning into the civilian workforce are necessary. The second research question addressees these strategies in detail.

Research Question 2

The second question that guided this study was: How do veterans cope with the challenges that they face while transitioning into the civilian workforce? Interview Questions 1 to Question 6 (see Appendix 1) aided in addressing the second research

question. The category title and associated themes related to the second research question are presented below.

Interview Question 1 category title and related themes. The first interview question related to research question 2 was: What coping strategies are you aware of with dealing with challenges? The category title for this interview question was coping strategies to civilian workforce. The themes identified in relation to the category titles are given in this section.

Category: Coping strategies to civilian workforce. Based on Interview Question 1, the identified themes related to coping strategies were physical exercise and lifestyle behaviors, social interaction/open communication, and self-confidence and determination. The participants' responses with regards to the category title and associated themes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Responses to coping strategies in civilian workforce

| Emergent themes | <i>n</i> | % |
|---|----------|----|
| Physical exercise and lifestyle behaviors | 8 | 27 |
| Social interaction/open communication | 7 | 23 |
| Self-confidence and determination | 3 | 10 |

Note. N = 30

Theme: Physical exercise/lifestyle behaviors. Eight participants (27%) out of 30 that were interviewed shared the theme of physical exercise and use of lifestyle strategies like smoking and eating fast foods to cope with the challenges experienced in the civilian

workforce. Physical exercises include engaging in sports, going to gym, and running. The participants mentioned that physical exercise such as going to gym, playing and taking hobbies assist in coping with the challenges. Participants 01, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24, 28, and 29 shared similar responses regarding physical exercise and lifestyle behaviors. For instance, Participant 01 stated that, “My coping strategies are going to the gym to work out, deep breathing and talking with family members.” Participant 15 mentioned that, “My coping strategies believe in God, playing sports, and taking up different hobbies.” Similarly, Participant 21 stated that, “Running, maintaining a military style of training, physical fitness, and communicating with family & friends.”

Participants 22 and gave similar responses on lifestyle behaviors. For example, Participant 22 said that, “My coping strategies were to work out, music and fast food.” Participant 24 stated that, “When I join the military smoking was an outlet for coping with challenges, I still use this approach in the civilian workforce.”

Theme: Social interaction/open communication. Seven participants (23%) perceived that talking with family and friends is a coping strategy that can assist in coping with challenges in the civilian workforce. The participants thought that open communication with families and friends assist in sharing their experiences in the civilian workforce; hence helping them to adjust to the environment. Participants 02, 05, 06, 10, 16, 27, and 30 gave similar thoughts related to open communication. For instance, Participant 02 stated that “Having family and friends to talk with about my challenges.” Participant 05 mentioned,

Military has a lot of resources for veterans. Outside of those, open communication is important. It's important to understand that other people have been in your situation and that communication may allow you to learn how they overcame those same challenges.

Similarly, Participant 16 stated that, "My coping strategies are having the awareness to understand and address the challenges that I'm having within the civilian workforce. Making my key values known and having an opening dialogue with management and co-workers within my department." Similar responses were presented by participant 30 who said that, "My coping strategies is reaching out to family and friends, by sharing what was on my mind about being in the civilian workforce."

Theme: Self-confidence and determination. Three participants (10%) out of 30 participants shared their beliefs of having self-confidence and being determined in the civilian workforce to cope with challenges. Participants 07, 09, and 13 provided similar thoughts related to self-confidence and determination. For instance, participant 07 mentioned that, "Patience, planning, and persistence." Participant 09 stated that, "Stay on it, don't give up, stay determine. Don't let the no's get to you and take it personally. I had to learn that you have to sell yourself and believe in yourself for others to do the same." Similarly, Participant 0013 said that, "The best coping strategies for me is to address all challenges with understanding and awareness."

Interview Question 2 associated category title and themes. The second interview question was: Have you received any support with transitioning into the civilian workforce? If yes, what was the support? Was the support helpful? The majority

of the participants (n = 18, 60%) mentioned that they received support and the support was helpful while 12 participants (40%) provided miscellaneous responses.

Category: Transitioning support. Using the responses from the participants that received support, two themes were identified, and they included mutual support and training and awareness.

Theme: mutual support. Fifteen of the participants (50%) shared their mutual support from families, friends, military, or veteran's organizations. The participants shared their thoughts that mutual support assisted them to adjust to the civilian workforce. Participants 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 27, and 29 shared the thoughts regarding support from families, friends, veterans, and military support. For instance, Participant 01 stated that, "Yes, the military made me aware of upcoming job fairs, local company help support us with civilian resume writing workshops. This support was helpful in the way that it gave us a starting point." Also, Participant 03 mentioned that, "No, support from the military, my support came from family and friends. They provided commutation on the transition into the civilian workforce." Another example was from Participant 11, who stated that, "Yes, the support came for the organization that I later provided a job after transition into the civilian workforce."

Also, the participants received support from mentors and counselors while in military workforce. Therefore, applying the skills they acquired while working in the civilian work may assist them to cope with the civilian working challenges. For instance,

Participant 15 reported that, “Yes, my support came the way of having good mentors while in the military, counselors at the Michigan Veterans Centers.”

Theme: Training and awareness. Two out of 30 participants (7%) shared the support they received through training. Participants 09 and 30 shared similar thoughts. The participants believed that training assisted them to acquire job skills that were needed to meet the requirements in civilian workforce. For instance, Participant 09 stated,

When I went back to my hometown, they were offering many job skill trainings. And had several work programs because the unemployment rate was increasing. So they assisted me with drafting a resume. Helping me identify those skills that I learned from the military and incorporating them in things that Employers were looking for.

Participant 30 stated that, “Yes, learning how to be more forthcoming to others and sharing different coping strategies.”

Interview Question 3 and related category title and themes. Interview Question 3 stated: What are the ideal coping strategies that transitioning veterans into workforce can use to reduce some of the challenges? The category title was ideal coping strategies and three themes were identified; being positive, making good on your coping strategies goals, and taking advantage of key information.

Category: Ideal coping strategies. Based on the responses gathered in Interview Question 3, the corresponding themes to the responses on ideal coping strategies and number of participants sharing the theme are in Table 6.

Table 6

Responses on ideal coping strategies

| Emergent themes | <i>n</i> | % |
|--|----------|----|
| Being positive | 2 | 7 |
| Network support (collaboration) and counseling | 5 | 17 |
| Training, physical fitness and communication | 5 | 17 |
| Early planning | 5 | 17 |

Note. *N* = 30

Theme: Being positive. Two participants (7%) shared that being positive in civilian tasks is the ideal strategy to cope with challenges. Participants 27 and 29 shared similar thoughts related to being positive. For instance, Participant 27 stated that, “Making a commitment to overcome all challenges, and never give up on life.” Also, participant 29 mentioned that, “To reduce some of the challenges one must stay positive during any issues in the civilian workforce.”

Theme: Network support (collaboration) and counseling. Five participants (17%) provided that seeking networking within the veteran’s organization and counseling support is the ideal method of coping with the challenges. Participants 10, 18, 19, 20, and 21 provide similar responses related to networking and counseling support. For instance, participant 10 stated that, “I know a few veterans that deal with post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD); seeking counseling helps. I feel that counseling of any type is always beneficial.” Besides, participant 19 said that, “Working with other veterans and my civilian co-workers.”

Theme: Training, physical fitness, and communication. Five participants (17%) shared the theme. The participants perceived that attending training and performing physical exercises and sharing experiences with family or friends is an ideal strategy to cope with civilian challenges. Participants 13, 14, 16, 25, and 30 shared their responses relating to the theme. For instance, participant 13 stated that, “A good coping strategy is to take advantage of any training information on how to make the transition into the civilian workforce.” Participant presented same responses 14 who said that, “During booth camp every military personnel needs to be train in coping with upcoming challenges in the civilian workforce.” Also, participant 25 supported the need for physical exercise as an ideal strategy and stated that, “Physical fitness, talking with trusted family members and friends, and having hobbies.”

Theme: Early planning. Five out of 30 participants (17%) shared their thoughts on early planning as an ideal strategy to cope with civilian workforce. Participants 09, 11, 15, 22, 26, and 28 gave similar responses associated with the theme. For instance, participant 09 stated,

Not sure what the ideal coping strategies but a schedule would be one that I think would be helpful. Dedicating a few hours per day towards something to get you closer to your goals and maybe taking the transition class a year prior to transitioning out can better prepare the members on what to expect. Start thinking

of things to get done or have a plan in place so you can be expecting to operate properly or start going on job interviews to better understand what the market is looking for when you transition.

Participant 15 stated that, “Start planning for the transition into to civilian workforce one year before your discharge.” Also, participant 26 responded that, “Is to be well organized and have a plan to cope with challenges.”

Interview Question 4 and related category title and themes. The question was: Are the coping strategies effective for you? The associated theme was effectiveness of coping strategies.

Category: *Efficient use of coping strategies.* In relation to interview Question 4, one theme was identified, that is, the effectiveness of coping strategies. The participants provided yes and no responses that helped in analyzing the question. Nineteen participants (63%) agreed that the coping strategies were effective in their transition. However, 11 participants (37) perceived that coping strategies were ineffective.

Theme: *Effectiveness of coping strategies.* Several participants supported the effectiveness of coping strategies. The participants mentioned that coping strategies helped them to plan well for the transition. For example, participant 02 stated that, “Yes, the bond with family and friends.” Also, participant 15 stated that, “Yes, my coping strategies have helped me in the civilian workforce, because I plan for the transition into the civilian workforce one year before my discharge.” Similarly, Participant 16 responded that, “I have some issues and concerns on how the civilian workforce, views my coping strategies. With more dialogue and open-door policy’s, me and other veterans

will have an effective coping strategy.” Participant 18 also stated that, “Yes, by me having a good support group, and seeing my doctor helps me to cope with the transition into the civilian workforce. Participant 28 supported the theme by responding that, “Yes, it gave me a better outlook towards the civilian workforce.”

Among the participants that perceived the coping strategies to be ineffective, they believed that the methods did not assist in coping with the challenges. For instance, participant 09 mentioned that, “They were towards the end when I started to understand what I needed to do. But it was the discovery that the coping strategies were the hardest part of the process.

Interview Question 5 and related category title and themes. Interview Question 5 was: Have you tried to acquire additional education and/or training needed in the civilian workforce? The associated category title was need for additional education or training. Based on this category title, one theme was identified; Education and training. The theme was described based on yes and no responses from the participants.

Category: *Need for additional education or training.* Twenty-four participants (80%) agreed that they acquired additional education or training needed in the civilian workforce. Only six out of 30 participants (20%) reported that they did not acquire education or training required in the civilian workforce.

Theme: *Education and training.* Among those who acquired education and training, the participants shared that they attended education or training to acquire the required skills and this has helped in coping with civilian tasks. For instance, participant 01 stated that, “Yes, I enroll in college and attend regular upgrade training at my current

civilian job in real-estate.” Similarly, participant 12 stated that “Yes, I when back to college and on the job upgrade training.”

Participants perceived that acquiring education and upgrade job training assisted in acquiring the needed skills in civilian workforce. This helped the participants to adjust to the civilian working environment. For instance, Participant 09 stated,

Yes, I did go back to college after getting out and earning my Bachelor’s Degree.

I was taking classes off and on while serving active duty. However, after PCS and attending several colleges and not having all my credits being accepted I became discouraged and thought it would be better after I transition. However, by attending college while in the tuition assistance was a huge factor and benefit.

When I transition out of the military and was trying to go to school, I learned that I could not afford to work. So, I tried to go to school and find employment. But the jobs that I was able to get did not offer any education assistance. Nor could I afford to work and pay for school out of pocket. I had to join the Air Guard to get some education benefits and having that part-time employment helped financially.

Participant 13 provided similar responses and stated that, “Yes, I attend college to help improve and impact my transition into the civilian workforce.” Participants who did not acquire education or training provided miscellaneous answers; therefore, relevant interpretation of participant’s responses was not conducted.

Interview Question 6 and related category title and themes. The Interview Question 6 was: Have you joined any networking groups to assist in your job search? The associated category title was networking groups. Yes and no answers from the

participants were used to describe the associated theme. One theme was identified, and this was; Emphasis on network connection and job search.

Category: *Networking groups.* The participants were asked whether networking assisted in coping with the challenges they encountered during job search. Nine out of 20 participants (30%) joined networking groups that assisted in searching for their jobs in the civilian workforce. However, the 21 participants (70%) did not join the network group

Theme: *Emphasis on network connection and job search.* From the participants who joined networking, they shared that network groups assist in finding a suitable job in the civilian work environment. For instance, Participant 01 stated that, “Yes, I joined a website call link-in to help in my job search.” Similarly, Participant 15 stated that, “Yes, I’m a member of the local VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and join different networks at the Veterans Centers, to support me in the civilian workforce.”

Participants that did not join network groups perceived that networking was not helpful in coping with the challenges associated with the job search process. For instance, Participant 03 said that, “No, need to join any network group or any job search assist. Also, participant 04 stated that, “No network groups for helping in my job search.”

Summary

The qualitative phenomenological study was conducted with the purpose of answering the research questions formulated. The participants presented detailed information to the interview questions that helped in responding to the two research questions. The participants shared their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions to

transition challenge, transitioning experience of emotional trauma, experience of physical distress, transitioning experience of frustrations, and the flexibility of transitioning to the civilian workforce.

The first research question was: What challenges do veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning into the civilian workforce? Several themes were identified from each of the interview questions. The study participants shared their feelings and thoughts with challenges they experience during military transition to civilian workforce. The findings from Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 were used to answer the first research question. Themes that emerged included skill development, adaptation, and struggles for better pay and benefits as the challenges they experienced. In terms of emotional trauma, the identified themes were disorientation and doubts, anxiety and depression, panic attacks and nightmares, alcohol use, physical impairment, the lack of civilian experience, and disability and the lack of support. The participants shared that they experienced challenges in finding the right job within the civilian workforce. Also, the participants shared their feelings of anxiety and depression because of being separated from their families and were forced to join the civilian workforce. The participants expressed their feelings of being uncertain in the workforce due to the lack of required civilian skills.

The second research question was: How do veterans cope with the challenges that they face while transitioning into the civilian workforce? Interview Questions 1 to 6 (Appendix 1) answered Research Question 2. The identified themes in response to the second question were physical exercise and lifestyle behaviors, social interaction or open

communication, self-confidence and determination, mutual support, training, additional education, and working. The participants shared that going to gym, sporting, listening to music, eating fast foods, and seeking support from friends, families, military support or obtaining support from the military assisted them to cope with challenges in the civilian workforce. The participants also shared that early planning before transitioning helps them to organize and plan psychologically for the civilian workforce. In Chapter 5, I present a detailed explanation of the study results and discuss them in comparison to the findings from the literature review (Chapter 2). Also, I provide concluding statements and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore challenges, including emotional trauma and physical distress, that veterans in California and Michigan encounter when transitioning back into the civilian workforce. The problem was addressed by analyzing the interview data from 30 veterans, some of whom were retiring within the next 6 months and some of whom had already retired. This study was conducted to understand the perceptions of military officers about their challenges and their coping strategies.

The key findings of this study were based on the prevalent themes developed from participants' interviews. These themes supported the two research questions that guided the study. Thirteen themes were identified in relation to Research Question 1 as presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The themes were identified based on five associated categories: transitioning challenge, emotional trauma, transition experience of physical distress, transition experience of frustrations, and transitioning experience based on easy or hard criteria. In relation to the category of transitioning challenge, three themes were identified;

- Skill development
- Adaptation
- Struggles for good pay and benefits

Two themes emerged from the category of emotional trauma;

- Disorientation and doubts

- Anxiety and depression

In relation to category transition experience of physical distress, two themes emerged:

- Increased alcohol and physical impairment
- Panic attacks and nightmares

Three themes associated with category transition experience of frustrations were identified:

- Anxiety
- Lack of civilian experience
- Disability and lack of support

Two themes emerged in relation to the category transitioning experience based on easy or hard criteria:

- Flexible transitioning experience
- Demanding transitioning experience

The second research question of this phenomenological study emphasized on coping strategies that veteran use to cope with the challenges they experience while transitioning into the civilian workforce. Eleven themes were identified based on six category titles; coping strategies to civilian workforce, transitioning support, ideal coping strategies, efficient use of coping strategies, need for additional education or training, and networking.

Based on associated category title coping strategies to civilian workforce, three themes were identified:

- Physical exercise and lifestyle behaviors
- Social interaction/open communication
- Self-confidence and determination

Two themes were identified from category title transitioning support:

- Mutual support
- Training and awareness

In relation to category title ideal coping strategies, four themes were identified:

- Being positive
- Network support (collaboration) and counseling
- Training, physical fitness and communication
- Early planning

From the category title efficient use of coping strategies, one theme emerged:

- Effectiveness of coping strategies

Based on category title need for additional education or training, one theme was found:

- Education and training

One theme was found in relation to the category networking groups:

- Emphasis on network connection and job search

The themes were useful in interpreting the results of this study based on research questions that guided the study.

Interpretation of Research Findings

The findings obtained from this study generally confirmed the findings of the related studies presented in the literature review section. Chapter 2 provided descriptions

of challenges faced by veterans while transitioning into the civilian workforce. The chapter presented challenges related to the mismatch of career, the lack of civilian experience, and the lack of transferable skills as presented in the literature (Daywalt, 2014; Weaver, 2013; Williams, 2013). The study findings showed that veterans experience challenges related to skill development, adaptation, and struggles for good pay and benefits. For instance, Participant 09 stated,

But I did not even know where to start. It did not help me create a resume, so I can find out what skills I even possessed. Some things we do in the military, people in the civilian world didn't even understand.

Conversely, Participant 11 reported contrasting statements and explained that there were no challenges during transitioning process. Participant 11 stated,

I did not have any issues with transition into the civilian workforce, reason is that I was employed by an organization that the military team up with to get engineers. As long I commit to six years working on military vehicle.

The discussion of study findings is presented by different sections based on the two research questions. The findings from Research Question 1 were interpreted based on:

- Transition challenges
- Transitioning experiences of emotional trauma
- Transition experience of physical distress
- Transitioning experience of frustrations
- Transitioning experience based on easy or hard criteria

The interpretation of findings for research question two is based on:

- Coping strategies to civilian workforce
- Transitioning support
- Ideal coping strategies
- Efficient use of coping strategies
- Need for additional education or training
- Networking

Research Question 1: Transition Challenges

The participants revealed their challenges while transitioning into the civilian workforce. The transitional challenges varied among the participants based on the identified themes of skill development, adaptation, and struggles for good pay and benefits.

Skill development. Seven (23%) of the study participants discussed their challenges related to the experiences of skill development during transitioning. The participants perceived that they faced challenges of matching their military skills with those of the civilian workforce. The participants indicated that the military skills they possessed were different from those in the civilian workforce; hence they experienced difficulties in understanding the civilian tasks. These statements were in alignment with the information presented in the review of the literature that veterans lack transferable skills when transitioning into the civilian workforce and that their military skills are distinct from the civilian skills (Daywalt, 2014; Hardison et al., 2015).

Similarly, the study results aligned with the findings by Coll and Weiss (2016) and Gonzalez et al. (2014) that translating military skills by the veterans into the civilian workforce as required by the civilian management is very low due to the differences in the management structure of the military and civilian structure and inadequate experiences from the military officers. In relation to the theme of adaptation, four study participants (13%) experienced challenges in learning to adapt to the working environment with the civilians in settings that have different working ethics. The participants discussed that adjusting to the new culture and ways of doing things in the civilian workforce were their key problems. The results supported the findings by Demers (2011) that veterans transitioning from the military life into the civilian workforce feel distress, are misunderstood, and look different from the civilians.

The findings on skill development were also in alignment with the information presented in the literature by Cooper et al. (2016) that due to the differences in the military and the civilian culture, veterans transitioning into the civilian culture experience challenges in adapting to the civilian management structure. The participants perceived that the incompatibility between the military experience and the civilian skills required to perform civilian tasks was a challenge because their level of education do not match to what employers in the civilian workforce are looking for. In addition, the participants perceived that there were no dedicated civilians in the organization; therefore, they were doing more jobs than the rest of the civilians. The findings were in alignment with information in the literature by Weaver (2013) that veterans face personal challenges associated with the mismatch of career and the lack of professional skills. The author

further stated that in most cases, veterans have expertise and experiences that vary from what is required by the employers in the civilian workforce (Weaver, 2013).

Based on the theme of struggles for good pay and benefits, five participants (17%) revealed that due to reduced pay and benefits in the civilian workforce compared to what they were receiving in the military workforce, they were underrepresented as being less competent in the workforce. Thus, they struggled with the little wages to earn a degree that would assist in fitting the civilian world and getting a better pay. The results were not in alignment with the literature by Hayden and Buzzetta (2014) that veterans appreciated their normal yearly pay of \$5,100 and \$3,200 for regular workforce. Also, the study's findings did not align with the literature review that had indicated that veterans received unemployment rate of \$20 per week for up to 52 weeks and they received educational benefits with approximated cost rate of \$500 and stipend ranging from \$50 to \$74 every month (Hayden & Scholl, 2016). The GI Bill assisted the veterans in paying educational cost to the instructive organization for veteran to meet their required skills (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014). Jones (2016) disclosed that following such benefits and monthly pay of \$110, the veteran accepted the pay and benefits and they endeavored to take the instructive advantage of instructive education. These contradicting statements thus form the basis for further research to evaluate the conclusive statements regarding veteran's pay in the civilian workforce.

Transitioning experiences of emotional trauma. The category of transitioning experiences of emotional trauma was used to describe participants' responses to two themes: Disorientation and doubts, anxiety, and depression.

Disorientation and doubts. Ten study participants (33%) discussed that the experience of disorientation in terms of finding the appropriate jobs within the civilian workforce. The participants discussed the experience of doubts on whether they would be successful in the civilian workforce. The participants explained the fear of the unknown challenges they may encounter in the new workforce and whether they would meet the required expectations. For instance, participant 01 stated that, “I was afraid of the unknown challenges in the civilian workforce, doubt of will I be successful in civilian workforce.”

In addition, Participant 10 mentioned,

Yes, as I mentioned, I was unemployed for a period. At this time, I had a house, wife, and baby. It was tough to find a job that would keep my family afloat with all the bills and necessities. I was receiving unemployment which is never ideal to support a family.

The study’s findings aligned with the literature review that veterans face traumatic injuries due to the lack of transferable skills in the civilian workforce (Daywalt, 2014). The findings also showed alignment with the review of literature, which indicated that veterans that have experienced traumatic injuries tend to face more challenges as opposed to the counterparts during the transitioning back to the civilian work life (Morin, 2011).

Anxiety and depression. Five participants (17%) shared that transitioning back to civilian life is associated with anxiety and depression. The participants discussed that they felt traumatized for not being promoted. Instead, their counterparts or civilian co-

workers were promoted though they did not work hard like the veterans. For instance, participant 07 said,

Yes, by not being promoted or receive awards, pay raises, lied to by supervisors, managers. While working with the V.A. being passed over for promotions over civilian coworkers who didn't work as hard as me. They were taken care of my supervisors who were related or friends.

Also, the participants disguised feeling of depression for not getting suitable job in the civilian environment. The participants discussed that they were depressed because they could not get employment and they were viewed by the rest of civilians as invaluable assets. The findings were in alignment with the reviewed literature that the military and civilian work environments are different which may affect the conformity of the employees (Hall et al., 2014). The findings aligned with the existing body of knowledge in the literature that veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce experience mental problems due to the nature work. The veterans are put into hardships of training in order to strengthen their defense skills (Castro & Kintzle, 2014). This can contribute to feelings of anxiety and depression. Similarly, the feelings of anxiety and depression aligned with literature review, which showed that veterans experience social stereotypic and stigmatization in the civilian workforce. This stigmatization leads to veterans being traumatized by the deeds in the civilian work environment (Cooper et al., 2016).

Transitioning experience of physical distress. The participants relayed what happened during their transition in relation to physical distress. Transitioning experience

of physical distress varied among the study participants based on the two themes that were identified. The themes that supported experience of physical distress were panic attacks and nightmares as well as increased use alcohol and physical impairment.

Panic attacks and nightmares. One participant (participant 01) discussed personal experiences of panic attack and nightmares which are the main symptoms of physical distress. The participant shared feeling of discomfort in the civilian workforce. The statement thus added to the existing knowledge that veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce feel discomfort since they are being misunderstood and feel different from their civilian counterparts (Demers, 2011). Additionally, the study findings showed alignment with reviewed literature by Pew Research Center in 2011 that showed that 27% of veterans experienced difficulties associated with physical trauma characterized by discomfort during transitioning back to the civilian work environment (Morin, 2011). The feelings of nightmares to signify the experience of physical distress was not discussed in the literature and it provides the basis for further investigation to examine the perceptions of other researchers regarding the impact of military transitioning in relation to nightmares.

Increased use of alcohol and physical impairment. Six study participants (20%) discussed individual experience of physical distress in terms of alcohol use and physical injuries. The participants shared hanging out with the wrong people during parties and going to clubs where drinking become part of their routines. The study findings indicated that participants' engagement in drinking behaviors led to physical injuries that affected their movement while conducting some activities in the civilian workforce. The findings

were in alignment with literature review that showed that the veterans in the civilian workforce experience mental illness due to the battlefields that make the military officers to be highly vulnerable to various injuries that affect their physical wellbeing (Castro & Kintzle, 2014).

Similarly, these study findings complied with the findings obtained by Zali et al. (2015) which indicated that veterans suffered physical injuries that contributed to physical distress while transitioning back to the civilian society. In addition, experiences of physical impairment were associated with differences in the military and civilian work which aligned with the literature review by Robertson and Brott (2013) that the differences in military and civilian management structure influence physical injuries among the veterans. These military officers commonly encounter physical injuries while carrying out active duties in the civilian workforce and this succumb the veterans to various physical impairments that influence their work performances (Robertson Brott, 2013). However, the study findings revealed information from 18 participants (60%) that discussed that they did not experience any physical distress during their transitioning rather the transitioning improved personal physical shape. For instance, Participant 0010 stated, "I haven't endured any physical distress. I feel that the transition kept/keeps me in great physical shape."

The findings aligned with literature review by Parham and Gordon (2016) that showed that an estimated 72% of veterans do not face any difficulties in changing their career into being a civilian employee.

Transition experience of frustrations. Feelings of frustrations were also explored as one of the transitioning challenges to civilian workforce. The findings obtained in this study showed varied perceptions of participants based on their personal feelings of frustrations. Three themes discussed feeling of frustrations during military transitioning into the civilian workforce; anxiety, the lack of civilian experience, as well as disability and the lack of support.

Anxiety. Seven participants (23%) discussed their experiences of frustrations due to the feeling of being anxious in the civilian workforce. The findings showed that military transitioning into the civilian workforce is associated with anxiety in adjusting to the command of civilian workforce chain. For instance, Participant 05 stated, “Yes, with adjusting to the civilian workforce chain of command.” The theme aligned with statements in the literature review by Hall et al. (2014) that veterans are disappointed or are not satisfied with how civilians interact with them and the kind of employment in the civilian world. The veterans could not adjust to the civilian workforce because civilian managers are unwilling to interact with veterans because of their military skills. This contributes to veteran’s dissatisfaction while working in the civilian workforce.

Lack of civilian experience. Six participants (20%) discussed the lack of civilian experience as a sign of frustrations while transitioning. The study’s findings disclosed that veterans lacked civilian experiences and that the military skills they possessed do not much the civilian requirements. Also, the study disclosed that veteran experience challenges in finding suitable work with similar wages like military workforce which created much frustrations among the veterans. The structure of civilian workforce also

created many frustrations among veteran due to the lack of common courtesies, situational awareness, and civilian experience like in military. The findings aligned with the assumptions made in the literature by Schlossberg et al. (2012) and add to the existing knowledge that due to the differences in the management structure between military and civilian workforce, transitioning can be challenging to the veterans. Also, the study findings in relation to the lack of civilian experience were in alignment with the assertions in the literature review that varying management structure, where the bureaucratic structure is used in military and authoritative structure in civilian stricture, and mismatch in career leads to difficulties in creating a smooth transitioning of veterans into the civilian workforce (Robertson & Brott, 2013).

Disability and lack of support. In relation to disability and the lack of support, two participants (7%); Participants 18 and 21 discussed that due to their disabilities, veterans feel frustrated. Participant 18 mentioned, “Yes, I experience a lot of frustrations in my transition into the civilian workforce due to my disabilities.” Also, Participant 21 said, “Yes, I experience frustrations, because I believe that people in the civilian workforce care and respect veterans. No one really cared during the time, it was hard for me to find a job.”

The findings revealed that veterans with disabilities are vulnerable to frustrations in the civilian workforce. The study findings revealed that veterans experience a lot of frustrations due to the lack of workplace care and respect from the rest civilians. The findings indicated that during veterans’ transitions, nobody cared for them and no one assisted them during their transition. Veterans therefore experienced challenges in finding

a job. The findings were not in alignment to the statements in the literature review, which indicated that civilian employers in the corporate world respect and appreciate the sacrifice and the expertise of veterans. The civilian employees respect the veterans because of quality services they provide (Robertson et al., 2014).

Similarly, the findings on disability and lack of support did not align with literature review by Kester and Philips (2016), which had indicated that veterans receive organizational support during transition. Kester and Philips (2016) had indicated that veterans receive support from organization and political agencies like Aon Corp., Bank of America Corp., BNSF Railway Co., and Google Inc. as well as Wal-Mart Stores Inc.. Veterans get transitioning assistance program where both veterans and incapacitated veterans are assisted to find a job (Kester & Phillips, 2016). Further, the study findings in relation to the theme of disability and lack of support did not align with the literature review, which indicated that the veterans receive federal government support during transitioning where they received training through online program and from open private organizations that helped in reducing the unemployment gap among veterans (Van Til et al., 2013; Weaver, 2013). The theme was in alignment with the literature review regarding the Schlossberg's Transition Theory. The theme confirmed the contribution of the Schlossberg's Transition Theory to understanding the challenges of frustrations that veteran experience during transitioning process (Schlossberg et al., 2012). The findings supported the literature related to the 4S structure that military officers are frustrated in adjusting to the life of civilian after military service (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015).

Transitioning experience based on easy or hard criteria. The flexibility of military transition into the civilian workforce was explored to determine whether veterans face challenges. From the study findings, transitioning into the civilian workforce is easy. It is evident from the findings that planning wisely, having a mindset for the civilian workforce, and preparing well before leaving the military makes transition easy. Nineteen participants (63%) discussed that transitioning was an easy task since they prepared themselves before leaving the military and the set up their minds for the new duties. However, transitioning can also be hard for the military officers. From the study findings, veterans experience hardship in transitioning since military officers find challenges when overcoming some of the problems in the civilian jobs. The veterans perceived that transitioning to civilian workforce is demanding in that finding the right job and adjusting to the civilian structure is difficult. The findings confirmed the importance on how the Schlossberg's Transition Theory significantly contributes to a better understanding of distinct reactions that veterans experience during transitioning process (Wheeler, 2012). The findings confirmed the relevance of 4S structure in providing understanding on the nature of transition process and flexibility of the process as perceived by the veterans (Schlossberg et al., 2012).

Research Question 2: Coping Strategies

I explored general ways that veterans use to cope with challenges experienced during the transition to the civilian workforce. Physical exercise/lifestyle behaviors, social interaction/open communication, and self-confidence and determination were identified as some of the ways that assist veterans in coping with the challenges.

Physical exercise and/or lifestyle behaviors. Veterans perceived that physical exercise such as sporting, going to the gym, taking hobbies, and playing can assist in coping with the challenges. For instance, Participant 01 stated that, “My coping strategies are going to the gym to work out, deep breathing, and talking with family members.”

Also, listening to music and eating fast foods are coping strategies they adopt to cope with challenges in civilian workforce. For example, Participant 22 stated that, “My coping strategies were to work out, music and fast food.” The study’s findings added to the existing knowledge and literature related to the transition theory in identifying the appropriate actions that veterans use over the counterparts to cope with changes in the new working environment (Wheeler, 2012). Similarly, the findings tend to support the transition theory of 4S in displaying how veterans respond to transitional event by balancing the interaction of strategies, supports, self, and situation to adjust to civilian work life (Goodman et al., 2006).

Social interaction/open communication. The strategy of social interaction or open communication helped veterans to cope with challenges in the civilian workforce. From the study findings, open communication with families, friends, and civilian organizations may assist veterans to cope with civilian challenges. Veterans perceived that social interaction or open dialogue them to share their experience and learn from other people on how they overcome the same challenges. For instance, Participant 05 mentioned,

Military has a lot of resources for veterans. Outside of those, open communication is important. It’s important to understand that other people have been in your

situation and that communication may allow you to learn how they overcame those same challenges.

The findings supported the key principles of support and strategies in the transition theory which aim to provide better insights on the mobilization of effective resources required to overcome stressful events during the transitioning process. The findings added to the existing knowledge on the principle of support that veterans should seek social support that facilitate the handling of stress while transitioning (Goodman et al., 2006). The findings also supported statements by Hall et al. (2014) that communication or holding open dialogue with potential employees allows the military employers to understand employment jobs in the civilian work environment.

Self-confidence and determination. Self-confidence and determination was also among the strategies that veterans use to cope with challenges in the workforce. From the study's findings, patience, persistence, and working towards achieving what is expected assists in overcoming the challenges. For instance, Participant 09 stated that, "Stay on it, don't give up, stay determine. Don't let the no's get to you and take it personally. I had to learn that you have to sell yourself and believe in yourself for others to do the same."

The findings were in alignment with the literature review that showed military veterans should understand their full potential in the civilian workforce and acquire self-confidence that would help them to adjust to the civilian work environment (Timm, 2015). Similarly, the findings aligned with statements in the literature review that military men and women who are transitioning to civilian roles should stay determined and accept

their new placement to provide desired results of the transition (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015).

Transitioning support. Veterans discussed the support they received that assisted in coping with the strategies. In relation to support the veterans received while transitioning, mutual support, and training were perceived to assist the veterans in coping with the challenges.

Mutual support. Receiving mutual support from families, friends, mentors, and counselors were reported to assist veterans in coping with challenges they experienced in the civilian work environment. Receiving such support was demonstrated to assist the veterans in adjusting to the civilian environment. For instance, participant 01 stated that, “Yes, the military made me aware of upcoming job fairs, local company help support us with civilian resume writing workshops. This support was helpful in the way that it gave us a starting point.”

The findings were in alignment with the literature review by Zoli et al. (2015) that support services as one of the strategies promotes a smooth and appropriate transition. In addition, veterans perceived that receiving social support from families and friends facilitates a successful adjustment to the civilian life. Veterans viewed that these aspects social environment enhanced proficiency following military transition which were in alignment with literature review by Hachey et al. (2016) that social support from family or friends assist military veterans to successfully adjust to the civilian environment. Social support provides an effective work environment where military veterans feel job satisfaction (Hachey et al., 2016). In addition, the findings aligned with the literature

review that providing supporting services through dedicated administrators and chiefs help veterans and people with disabilities to adjust to the civilian tasks and related challenges encountered by veterans (Castro & Kintzle, 2014).

Training. Training was also perceived to help veterans in civilian workforce. Receiving training and learning from others for increased awareness was seen to assist the veterans in adjusting to the civilian work environment. For instance, receiving job skill training helps the veterans to understand how to write civilian work resume and identify the skills needed to conduct civilian tasks. For instance, participant 09 stated,

When I went back to my hometown, they were offering many job skill trainings. And had several work programs because the unemployment rate was increasing. So, they assisted me with drafting a resume. Helping me identify those skills that I learned from the military and incorporating them in things that Employers were looking for.

The findings on training and awareness were in alignment with the literature review by Raybourn and DiGiovanni (2015) that training assists veterans to find a comprehensive understanding of the civilian environment and adjust to the autonomous management structure. Training assists veterans to transform their predetermined roles to match those of the civilian workforce and this helps veterans to find appropriate employment in the civilian workforce (Raybourn & DiGiovanni).

Ideal coping strategies. Also investigated in relation to research question two were the ideal strategies that help cope with the challenges in civilian work life as perceived by the military veterans. Being positive, network support (collaboration) and

counselling, training, physical fitness and communication, and early planning were identified as ideal strategies to reduce transition challenges into the civilian workforce.

Being positive. Veterans perceived that being committed and not giving up in life is an ideal approach to reduce challenges while working in the civilian environment. Being positive towards the new work environment and accepting placement roles helps in reducing stressful events. For instance, Participant 27 stated that, “Making a commitment to overcome all challenges, and never give up on life.”

The findings were in alignment with the literature review which demonstrated that accepting work placement and being committed or having positive attitudes and paying keen attention to the civilian work helps military veterans to adjust to the civilian life (Raybourn & DiGiovanni, 2015). A positive attitude to civilian environment makes veterans to quickly adjust to the civilian work environment and work towards producing the desired results in the transition (Raybourn & DiGiovanni).

Networking support. The theme of networking support or collaborating with different people and receiving counseling was also reported to assist in reducing challenges in the civilian environment. The participants perceived that networking through working with civilian co-worker and other veterans and counseling helps in reducing stressful events. The study findings aligned with the literature review related to the use of transition assistance program as counseling and coaching program for veterans (Plumer, 2013). The findings supported that TAP as counseling and coaching program provide support to the veterans to acquire a high level of equality in getting suitable

employment opportunities in the civilian work life and to understand the civilian employment (Plumer, 2013).

Training, physical fitness, and communication. Training, physical fitness, and communication was also addressed as ideal coping strategies used by veterans to reduce challenges. Veterans perceived that getting training after joining the civilian workforce, engaging in physical activities, and interacting with other co-workers assist in reducing stressful events while transitioning. Veterans perceived that every military person needs to be trained on coping with challenges and that undertaking physical exercise and talking with trusted family members and friends may assist in coping with upcoming challenges in civilian workforce. These findings complied with the conceptual framework used in the study since it explores the appropriate strategies that veterans may use in civilian life. The findings were in alignment with the available literature review related to the principle of coping strategies which emphasized on using the available resources to adjust to the upcoming challenges on transition (Goodman, 2006; Schlossberg et al., 2012).

Early planning. The theme of early planning was also seen as ideal strategy for supporting veterans to adjust to the challenges. Veterans perceived that planning well before transition such as developing a schedule, having mindset on civilian environment, and starting to plan before transition helps in overcoming the upcoming challenges. For instance, Participant 15 stated that, “Start planning for the transition into to civilian workforce one year before your discharge.”

The findings were in alignment with the statements presented in the literature by Kester and Philips (2016) that veterans leaving the military workforce should be conversant in the specialized activities in civilian workforce and should prepare well by uplifting their state of mind about civilian work to match what is required by civilian employers.

Efficient use of coping strategies. Effectiveness of coping strategies as perceived by the military veterans was supported by many participants (63%). Implementing the coping strategies like social support was found to assist in planning well for the transition and in adjusting to the challenging work life of civilian officers. The findings aligned with the information in the literature review that providing support to military veterans during their transition helps in unveiling the benefits and problems which are associated with the recruitment of these officers (Schlossberg et al., 2012). Also, study findings showed alignment with the information in the literature review that providing transition assistance is a more effective and fundamental way of ensuring veterans' viability in the civilian workforce and it helps veterans to fit best in the civilian service jobs (Schaffer, 2015).

However, other participants found the coping strategies as ineffective and perceived that using the strategies was the hardest process during the transition. The findings did not support or add the existing literature presented in this study. Therefore, the findings provide the basis for further research to gain a better understanding of the issue.

Need for additional education and/or training. The need for additional education and training was found as an effective approach to cope with challenges in civilian workforce. Most of the military veterans (80%) perceived that additional training like attaining a master's degree or going back to collect to upgrade job skills help in adjusting to the civilian work life. Veterans viewed that upgrading personal job skills based on skills needed in the civilian workforce helps in meeting the required skill standards. These findings aligned with information in the literature review that federal government provides support to military veterans through education or training to assist them to best fit in the civilian work life (Weaver, 2013). Besides, Selber et al. (2015) had indicated that providing support through education is a motivating force that provides veterans with the opportunity to get employment in the civilian workforce and to match their skills and expertise with those needed in the civilian environment.

Networking. Joining network groups in the transition process was found to assist the military veterans in job search. Some veterans (30%) supported that joining networking groups like website call link was effective in finding jobs within the civilian workforce. Those who joined the network groups found that networking assisted reducing stress associated with job search. The findings aligned with the statements in the literature review by Raybourn and DiGiovanni (2015) that interacting with different groups assist military veterans to find an appropriate opportunity to secure employment and find suitable job position in transition process. Similarly, the findings were in alignment with statements made in the literature review that allowing disabled veterans to connect with different people including those in civilian service helps in developing a

proper work environment for the transition of military veterans. Allowing connection is a continual way that allows for the achievement of veteran's needs during military transitioning into the civilian workforce (Plumer, 2013; Rausch, 2014).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations in a research study involve study weaknesses that cannot be controlled by the researcher. They are potential shortcomings in a research that restrict the researcher from performing the study out of the scope (Lynch & Welch, 2014). Limitation of this study in relation to trustworthiness emerged during the process of carrying out the study. About the study trustworthiness, limitations were identified in areas of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The use of an audit trail to ensure credibility was a limitation in this study. However, validation techniques like member checking were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. The use of these techniques ensured accurate information was presented and the intended meaning of responses as provided by participants was not misinterpreted.

Transferability was also a limitation because the study was limited to only military veterans from California and Michigan. Therefore, the findings of the study might be applicable to other veterans across the United States or around the globe. Also, the study provided detailed descriptions of selection technique used to recruit the participants. Providing detailed information regarding purposive sampling method used in selecting the participants influenced the description of findings which can be used in other settings with similar participants.

In relation to dependability, a proper analysis and interpretation of the data gathered was performed using an audit trail. This was used to establish reliability of the study. This aided in ensuring validation and reliability of the qualitative research effort used in the study. For confirmability, openness, integrity, and honesty were maintained throughout the study to ensure the findings were real responses from the participants and not from researcher's imaginations.

One limitation that was not discussed in Chapter 1 was the use of snowball sampling technique. Snowballing involves asking another person or using a different source to suggest on appropriate people to take part in a study (Frogner et al., 2016). Therefore, using snowballing was a limitation since the study was limited to using the interviewees in referring other potential veterans to take part in the study. I assumed that the study participants gave honest and truthful information about the challenges their experiences of military transitioning into the civilian workforce. The strategies employed in this study served as the basis to limit the potential shortcomings and weaknesses of the findings obtained.

Recommendations for Future Research

The first research question was mainly focused the challenges experienced by military veterans while transitioning into the civilian workforce. The study findings were consistent with the descriptions in the literature. Although the challenges differ for every individual, their experiences were almost similar across several themes. For example, some study participants described the transitioning as traumatic and leads to physical distress while other participants experienced no challenges while transitioning. Therefore,

further research is needed to explore the area of transitioning challenges as this would aid other veterans to get better insights about the traumatic and related events as they prepare to leave military service and join the civilian workforce. Based on the statements in the literature, traumatic events and physical distress are associated with challenges in adapting to civilian workforce, finding appropriate job position, developing civilian skills, and adjusting to the civilian management structure. Also, the literature indicated traumatic events due to the mismatch in career and skills (Daywalt, 2014; Demers, 2011). However, the study experiences of the participants varied since other did not experience challenges in adapting to the civilian workforce. This also provides foundation of the recommendation for further research to explore the perceptions of other military veterans regarding the experiences of emotional trauma and physical distress during transitioning. Also, veterans showed their lived experiences regarding frustrations while transitioning into the civilian workforce.

While interpreting the findings of Research Question 1, a new theme of panic attacks and nightmares emerged describing the experiences of physical distress. There were no significant evidences in the literature that matched the statements. Therefore, this formed the foundation of the recommendation for further research to explore the feelings of panic attacks and nightmares while transitioning into the civilian workforce. This may help to better understand how panic attacks and nightmares influence the transition process among veterans.

Based on the study findings of the Research Question 1, the study participants discussed feeling of frustrations characterized by anxiety, the lack of civilian experience

as well as disability and the lack of support during their transition. However, Ahern et al. (2015) contended that military veterans are provided with organizational support and the disabled veterans receive mutual support through rehabilitation programs to assist in adjusting to the civilian work environment. Consequently, further research and exploration is needed to explore the transitioning challenges faced by disabled veterans while transitioning into the civilian workforce.

In relation to the first research question, participants also shared their transitioning challenges associated with struggles for better way in the civilian workforce. The participants perceived that they were given reduced pay as compared to what they received in military service. The reduced pay was associated with the belief that they were incompetent for civilian work and it contributed to veteran being underrepresented in the workforce. However, there were contradicting statements with related literature where some researchers have established that military veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce received better pay and educational benefits. Also, the veterans accepted the pay and were ventured to engage in instructive education to meet the required skills (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014; Hayden & Scholl, 2016; Jones, 2016). Based on these contradicting statements, further research is needed to explore the veteran's pay and benefits they receive while in the civilian workforce. Further research is needed in this area to investigate the perceptions of other military veterans about the net pay they received and whether the payments meet their expected salary. Also, there were inconsistency with the findings of the study and information in the literature related to the respect and appreciation the veterans received from civilian workers. From the study's

findings, military veterans perceived that they did not receive any support, and no one cared for them during transition. These findings did not match the statements in the literature that veterans in the civilian world are respected and appreciated for their efforts and the quality of services they would provide in the civilian environment (Robertson et al., 2014). The literature also indicated veteran's support from different organizations and political bodies that provide transition assistance to ensure they get enough help while finding for the right job in the civilian workforce (Kester & Philips, 2016). The inconsistency with findings and the related literature thus indicated a gap that needs to be further investigated. The gap formed the basis of conducting further research with an emphasis on the mutual support and transition assistance that military veterans receive while transitioning to the civilian work life.

The focus of the second research question was the strategies that veterans use to cope with challenges in the civilian workforce. Based on the findings obtained, the study participants provided different strategies they perceived to assist in coping with the challenges. For instance, 27% of the participants supported physical exercise and lifestyle behaviors, 23% mentioned social interaction/open communication while 10% discussed self-confidence and determination as coping strategies. However, some participants did not support any of the strategies and provided miscellaneous answers. This indicates that some participants did not support the implementation of any of the strategies; hence future research should be conducted to find appropriate reasons behind these strategies and why they cannot be used to cope with transitioning challenges. Further research should be carried out to explore why some military veterans did not support the

strategies. This might give clear insights on the other strategies the veterans perceived to assist in coping with upcoming challenges during the transitioning process. Wheeler (2012) contended that adopting appropriate coping strategies help in reducing traumatic events during transition. The veterans adopt appropriate strategies that assist adjusting to the civilian work life. Nonetheless, the study's findings did not elaborate on how the strategies assist in coping with transitioning challenges; therefore, forming the basis for further research to examine how these strategies assist military officers to adjust to civilian life.

Also, ideal coping strategies were discussed in the study. The perceptions of military veterans regarding ideal coping strategies differed and their differences helped in determining areas for further research. Ideal strategies like being positive, network support (collaboration) and counseling, training, physical fitness and communication, and early planning were found suitable in reducing challenges while transitioning. However, being positive was the least ideal coping strategies since very few (7%) of the participants supported its effectiveness. Thus, further research should be conducted to explore whether being positive would help in reducing transitioning challenges like traumatic events and physical distress. Networking support as one of the ideal strategies was not clearly supported in the literature; therefore, the findings attained in relation to this area cannot be used to recommend its use to cope and reduce transitioning challenges. More research should be conducted on networking support to gather different perceptions and its effectiveness in reducing transitioning challenges. Also, limited research was found regarding physical fitness or physical exercise and early planning as ideal strategies to

cope with challenges while transitioning. Therefore, there is need for further research to be performed in the area to explore and provide detailed information on how the strategies are useful to military veterans in coping with transitioning challenges.

The study was qualitative in nature and the findings attained were subjective to individual interpretation. Therefore, if a different researcher conducts similar study, there is possibility that the transcribed interviews provided somewhat different findings that served to enrich the findings of the current study. Therefore, another research method like quantitative research approach with the use of survey as data collection is needed and a larger population could be used. This may help in collecting more detailed information from various participants that serve as the basis to expound on the findings of this study. Also, involving a larger sample size of veterans who are transitioning to the civilian workforce in the future research may yield richer results and different themes that would be used to explore the topic in further details.

Similarly, the study participants of the study were veterans who were retiring within six months and those that have retired. The recruitment and selection of these veterans was restricted to California and Michigan. Thus, future research should be conducted in other states to explore the perceptions of another military veteran transitioning into the civilian workforce. Also, further research should be conducted on all veterans in military workforce and are planning to join the civilian workforce.

The discussions on the challenges and coping strategies that veterans can use to overcome upcoming challenges during military transition included only how military officers experience transitioning challenges. There were no discussions on the

perceptions of civilian workers regarding their interaction with veterans in their workplace. Therefore, conducting further research with involving of civilians' perceptions is needed to assist in making comparisons between their perceptions with that of military officers.

Future research is also needed to determine the skills that military veterans should possess before transitioning. This might provide detailed results regarding the suitable skills that help veterans to cope well with the civilian life and meet the required work standards. Further research might also assist in determining the skills that the civilian employers look for when hiring military employees. This facilitates a greater access to employment opportunities for veterans as they enter the civilian workforce.

Implications

In this section, I provide the potential implications of the study for positive social change at individual, organizational, and societal levels. The study implications in relation to social change as expressed in the study are consistent with the research study. Other areas covered in this section are theoretical and empirical implications as well as recommendations for practice.

Positive Social Change

The findings attained in the study are important to policymakers and senior management team who are working in military and civilian workforce. The study's findings provided awareness of the perceived challenges associated with military transition into the civilian workforce. Sharing the challenges experienced by military veterans while transitioning into the civilian workforce provide useful information to

policymakers and senior leaders in military and civilian services to assist in ensuring that appropriate policies are set that favor all employees including veterans transitioning into the civilian life. The senior leaders in different civilian jobs use the information of this research study to refine transition process, expand work service, and improve the transition assistance program to assist the retiring and retired veterans who are seeking the civilian employment.

The veteran's experience also provides useful information to assist other military veterans who have not found employment opportunities and are seeking jobs in the civilian workforce. Employers in civilian workforce hire employees with skills that match their expertise (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Therefore, the findings of the current research study are beneficial since they helped employers in the civilian workforce to hire veterans. The information gathered in the study assisted them to understand the issues they have at hand that limit their smooth transition.

Veterans are competent in different areas like logistics, human resource management, and security and they have high leadership and teamwork skills. Veterans can thus bring in their job-related skills to the civilian work environment (Hall et al., 2014). Despite having relevant skills, they still encounter challenges in finding suitable job positions in the civilian sector because of negative stereotypes that veteran is incompetent, lack enough skills, and lack the support in the civilian workplace (Allen et al., 2014). Thus, the findings of this research study assist veterans who are aware of the effective strategies like networking, mutual support, and additional education and training

to take advantage of the available resources to become successful during the transitioning process.

The study findings are also important to government and private sectors in providing a clear understanding on the different issues or challenges that veterans experience during their military transition to the workforce. The results helped the Federal government and private organizations to develop strategies that could respond to the issues and ensure that military veterans achieve a smooth transitioning process.

Theoretical Implications

The current research study was useful based on its contribution to theoretical implications. The study contributes significantly to advancing the theory used in this research. The problem of this study was that military men and women experience challenges going back into the civilian workforce since the process is demanding. Thus, conducting this study contributes to the body of knowledge required to address the issue of emotional trauma and physical distress based on the perceptions of military veterans. The study contributes to empirical literature related to Schlossberg's transition theory and its importance to veterans in career transitions. The relevance of Schlossberg's transition theory to this current research was that it provides a clear context that transitioning from the military service to the civilian life is a complex and demanding process. Therefore, practitioners should acquire greater insights of the challenges the veterans experience and appropriate coping strategies that would assist in successful military transition. This study adds to the body of knowledge on literature related to the 4S structure of situation, self, strategies, and support which serves as the basis for understanding the lived experiences

of military veterans and suitable coping strategies to adapt to the career change (Schlossberg et al., 2012). In addition, this current study contributed to the scholarly literature related to effectiveness of coping strategies in civilian life. The conceptual framework used in the study supported various ways to explore military transition challenges and supported effective ways to use in reducing transition challenges and to adjust to the change from the military to the civilian work environment.

Practical Implications

The study provides useful information to different entities like retired and retiring military officer, senior military and civilian leaders, and government bodies about the perceptions of veterans regarding transition challenges. The main reason for carrying out this study was to explore lived experiences of military veterans on emotional trauma and physical distress as well as coping strategies that would help them to transition to the civilian life. The study holds important implications for veterans to gauge their emotional and physical readiness for career transition. The findings of the current research study bring into light the challenges and difficulties that military veterans experience during the process of transition which makes it hard for them to adjust to civilian life and fit into the new workforce in the civilian service.

Many challenges that military veterans encounter in their civilian life are the primary reasons to reduced rates of transition (Harrod et al., 2017). Therefore, conducting this study helped in providing useful information that is valuable to address the low transition rates. The information assists policymakers, government bodies, and even private sectors to examine policy issues that affect the military transitioning process. The

study's findings inform the government and other important government bodies to establish the transition policies that ensure a smooth transition of military veterans into the civilian workforce.

In addition, the study findings provide critical insights on coping strategies and ideal strategies that veterans can use to improve their working life in the civilian environment. This helps veteran to reintegrate the strategies into their civilian labor force so that they can adjust to the environment and work within the scope of the civilian workforce. The findings are beneficial to senior leaders who are the key employers in civilian workforce as it provided information that would help in strengthening the program to meet the needs of retired and retiring veterans seeking civilian employment.

Conclusion

Military transitioning and challenges experienced by retired and retiring military veterans was the primary phenomenon examined in the current research. Military transitioning is a process that all veterans face in their lives. The qualitative phenomenological inquiry was aimed at getting a better understanding on the lived experiences with a focus on emotional trauma, physical distress, and associated coping strategies respond to such issues. The study findings indicated many challenges associated with transitioning process that hinders a successful military transition to the civilian sector. Challenges such as difficulties in developing skills that match that of civilians, adapting to the civilian work of life, and the struggles for good pay and benefits helped in understanding military experiences.

Most of the participants perceived emotional trauma and physical distress as the main challenges of the transition. The participants expressed that emotional trauma in the form of disorientation and doubts as well as anxiety and depression were the challenges hindering a smooth transition into the civilian workforce. Additionally, panic attacks and nightmares as well as increased alcohol and physical impairment were found as the challenges that lead to physical distress during the transition. Also, factors such as the lack of civilian experience and disability and the lack of support lead to much frustration during the transition. The implementation of coping strategies like engaging in physical activities, mutual support from family members and friends, and listening music help in adapting to the civilian life and in reducing transition challenges. Open communication with veterans and civilian co-workers also helps in reducing transition difficulties. Veterans collaborating with their colleagues and civilians adjust well to the stressful events in the civilian workplace.

The study contributes significantly to the available literature and to the body of knowledge concerning military reintegration into the civilian workforce. Veterans, policymakers, government, and senior personnel in the military and civilian services can utilize the findings of this current study to assist the veterans overcome the transition challenges. The findings assist senior leaders and government to introduce transition assistance to veterans and to refine their transition program to ensure smooth transitioning for veterans into the civilian workforce. Future military officers who are planning to retire and would seek civilian employment can use the findings and literature in this research to acquire rich and comprehensive understanding pertaining to military

transiting in process and strategies that may adopt to help in coping with the complex transition process and achieve a successful transitioning practice.

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Appendix A: Title of Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

RQ 1: What challenges do veterans in California and Michigan encounter while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

1. Tell me about your transition from the military into the civilian workforce. What challenges have you faced?
2. Have you suffered any emotional trauma when transitioning into the civilian workforce?
3. Have you experienced any physical distress when transitioning back into the civilian workforce?
4. Was your transition from the military well-planned?
5. Have you experienced frustrations when transitioning from the military workforce into the civilian workforce?
6. Do the memories from your military work environment impact your transition?
7. Was your transition from the military service to civilian workforce easy or hard?
8. Were you selected immediately after applying for the job?

RQ 2: How do veterans cope with the challenges that they face while transitioning into the civilian workforce?

1. What coping strategies are you aware of with dealing with challenges?
2. Have you received any support with transitioning into the civilian workforce? If yes, what was the support? Was the support helpful?

3. What are the ideal coping strategies that transitioning veterans into workforce can use to reduce some of the challenges?
4. Are the coping strategies effective for you?
5. Have you tried to acquire additional education and/or training needed in the civilian workforce?
6. Have you joined any networking groups to assist in your job search?