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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM
OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S
TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE MILITARY

A Research Project Presented to the Faculty
of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies
at Old Dominion University

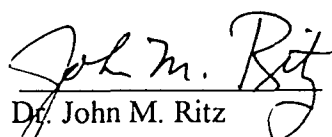
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Science
in Education Degree

by
James E. Threlfall
August, 1995

APPROVAL PAGE

This research paper was prepared by James E. Threlfall under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education.

APPROVAL BY:


Dr. John M. Ritz
Advisor and Graduate
Program Director

7-10-95
Date

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, collapse of the Soviet Union, and the rise of democratic countries in Eastern Europe, the world has seen drastic changes in the approach nations take toward their military power. The need for maintaining massive armed forces to repel an attack has been eliminated. As one of the last surviving superpowers, the United States can no longer justify maintaining a defense force to defeat an enemy that no longer exists. To restructure the Armed Services to meet today's budgets and requirements, the government is utilizing a concept known as military downsizing. Military downsizing will reduce the U.S. military forces by almost half the strength it was in the 1980's. Military personnel affected by downsizing will encompass retirees, personnel involuntarily separated, and personnel voluntarily separating from the four Armed Service branches.

At the end of the Vietnam War, the Department of Defense was faced with the same dilemma of reducing its military structure. Personnel were simply released from military service without any preparation. To draftees, this new found freedom was the best news they had received since entering military service. For many soldiers this was a trying time because they were not provided with any assistance in relocating, finding employment, or information on benefits they had earned while in the military. The result of this action found countless numbers of veterans jobless and homeless.

Unlike the approach that was taken after the Vietnam War, transition from a military to civilian career would play an important part in today's downsizing concept. The government realized that assisting service members make a smooth transition from the

military to civilian community would ease the traumatic effects on society and cut down on service member unemployment, homelessness, and drug abuse that occurred after the Vietnam War. Borrowing a concept that has been implemented by business corporations for personnel retiring, displaced, or reorganized, the government developed a Transition Assistance Program to help personnel affected by downsizing. The Transition Assistance Program provided active duty personnel, who were departing military service, with employment assistance as well as training and services information counseling. Military personnel who were retiring, involuntarily separated, or voluntarily separating attended a three and a half day course within 180 days of departing from military service. During this course all personnel were presented with information that should assist them in their transition from military life to a civilian career.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine whether the Program of Instruction for the Hampton Roads Virginia Employment Commissions' Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was biased toward personnel retiring from the military or military personnel separating due to Armed Services downsizing. The study also attempted to determine if the program was biased between Noncommissioned and Commissioned officers.

RESEARCH GOALS

The research questions that will be analyzed during the Transition Assistance Program and its six primary areas (personal appraisal, career decisions, applying for the job, the interview, job offers, and support and assistance) were as follows:

1. Do retiring military personnel or downsized personnel obtain more information on conducting a smooth transition from military to civilian careers?
2. Is the program structure more for the understanding of the Noncommissioned or Commissioned Officer?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

As the Armed Services began to restructure and downsize after the Cold War, the need to assist service members to make the smooth transition from a military to civilian career was critical. For some, the transition from military to civilian life may be a manageable one, but others will likely experience a number of difficulties including the stress of job hunting, uprooting the family, and military skills deemed unmarketable in the civilian workplace (Department of Labor [DOL], 1992, p. 1). Looking back on the last major downsizing of the military after the Vietnam War, government officials did not want to create the same large scale service member unemployment rate, homelessness, and drug abuse problems.

In the late 1980's, the Department of Defense began designing a program that would assist soldiers departing military service to ease the transition from a military to civilian career. The program was further developed between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs' and was presented before a Congressional hearing in 1989. Congressional approval was granted in December 1989 for the Department of Labor to establish a two year pilot program at seven sites to provide employment and training information to military personnel immediately prior to discharge. Another Congressional hearing was convened in July 1991 to hear testimony on the progress and outcome of the pilot programs. During the two year program, approximately 330,000 military personnel attended the transition assistance programs and it was deemed a great

success. The Transition Assistance Program was approved for full implementation by the Department of Labor, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs', and State agencies in 1991.

The program was developed around a three and half day course that would provide service members departing the military within a 180 day timeframe with information and counseling on transitioning from the military to the civilian community. At the beginning of the pilot program, the majority of military personnel attending the programs were retirees. This was primarily due to the fact that the large scale military downsizing had not taken affect yet. As the Department of Defense began accelerating the scale down of the Armed Forces during the early 1990's, the ratio of attendees was starting to change to involve more separating personnel. Since implementation of the TAP program at Ft. Jackson, SC, 151 courses have been conducted with 15,421 participants, including 9,509 retirees and 5,912 separating personnel (Trip Report to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs', 1994, p. 6). The program was centered around six primary areas of information: (1) personal appraisal, (2) career decisions, (3) applying for the job, (4) the interview, (5) job offers, and (6) support and assistance. Instruction of the program material was conducted by members of the local state employment commission, Veterans administration, and military organizations.

A review of the TAP program was conducted by members of a Congressional Delegation in 1994 in preparation for a Congressional hearing on the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program held on May 25, 1994. The Congressional delegation visited four sites where the TAP program was being conducted. In order to evaluate all branches of the Armed Services, the following sites were selected: Ft. Jackson, Shaw AFB, Parris Island Marine Air Station, and the Charleston Naval Base, all in South Carolina. The delegation received briefings on the local TAP programs and attended class sessions to get a feel for the course content. On limited occasions the

review delegation talked to service members attending the program. The review delegation only looked at the numbers of attendees in the program to justify the continuance of the program. To date there have not been any studies conducted on the effectiveness of the program of instruction for the Transition Assistance Program by the Department of Labor or any other organizations directly involved with the program. A review or study of the material presented during any course was critical in ensuring that the material was updated and met the objectives set for the course. The material presented during the TAP program should address all attendees and not be structured toward one group since this would hinder the smooth transition to civilian careers for the other military attendees.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. The study would review the program of instruction taught at sites in the Hampton Roads Area.
2. Personnel surveyed during the study were from the following categories: military retirees, involuntarily separated personnel, and voluntarily separating personnel.
3. Two Transition Assistance Program sites (Ft. Eustis and Norfolk Naval Base) and the Hampton, VEC were reviewed, which included all branches of the Armed Services.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were used during the study:

1. Retirees have more military work experience, which can be easily transferred to a civilian career.
2. Military personnel attending the TAP program require different levels of information for the transition from military to civilian careers.
3. Involuntarily and voluntarily separated personnel require more information and assistance in preparing for the transition.
4. All military personnel were placed in the same TAP program regardless of the reason for departing military service.

PROCEDURES

During the Transition Assistance Program, all attendees were provided a copy of the manual/program of instruction that provided them with information and examples to be covered during the three and half day course. A review of the manual/program of instruction was conducted for this study. A visit and review of three separate sites that conducted the Transition Assistance Program enabled a first hand review of all instructional material presented to military personnel. After reviewing a three and half day course, surveys were used to collect data annotating whether biased information was presented to retirees, involuntarily separated personnel or voluntarily separating personnel. Data was also used from existing summative surveys conducted by Transition Assistance Program instructors at the conclusion of site visits.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following terms and definitions were utilized during the research study:

Military Downsizing - The Department of Defense reduction of military personnel in the Armed Forces to include the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps.

Retiree - Military personnel who fall into one of the following categories: selected for early retirement by the Department of Defense, completed between 20 and 29 years of service, or mandatory retirement at 30 years of service.

Involuntarily Separated - Military personnel who have been passed over twice for promotion or selected by a reduction in force (RIF) or quality management program (QMP) board for separation.

Voluntarily Separated - Military personnel who resigned from military service or personnel who elected one of the voluntary separation incentive programs for departing the military.

Hampton Roads Area - Consisted of the Tidewater and Peninsula areas and the following Transition Assistance Program sites: Ft. Eustis, Ft. Monroe, Langley AFB, Little Creek Amphibious Base, Oceana NAS, and Norfolk Naval Base.

Time-in Service - The amount of time a servicemember has spent in active duty military service.

Paygrade - The pay level that is equal to a servicemembers rank (major = 04 paygrade).

Commissary and Exchange - Commissary is the military location for a retail grocery store, while exchange is equal to a department store or convenience store.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter I provides an introduction and statement of the problem directed toward the program of instruction for the Transition Assistance Program. Research goals were established along with background and significance for the study. Other areas covered in the chapter included limitations, assumptions, procedures, and definition of terms used during the study.

Chapter II will provide a review of literature used during the study. Chapter III outlines an explanation of the methods and procedures used to obtain the research data, and Chapter IV will state the finding of this data. Chapter V will provide a summary with conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the data in this study

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To better understand the program of instruction for the Transition Assistance Program, a review of literature was conducted on related topics and issues. Chapter II is broken down into the following sections: Military Personnel, Downsizing Categories, and the Transition Assistance Program. The military personnel section will outline the career paths and general differences between noncommissioned and commissioned officers involved in the TAP program. The downsizing categories will discuss the three groups (retirees, voluntarily separated, and involuntarily separated) utilizing the transition assistance program. The final section will outline the contents of the Transition Assistance Program.

MILITARY PERSONNEL

The military structure is made up of three levels of personnel: enlisted personnel, non-commissioned officers, and commissioned officers. The Department of Defense has reduced the armed services yearly by 330,000 soldiers and estimates that it will continue this pace until 1996 (Congressional Hearing, 1991, p. 7). Under the military downsizing concept, the bulk of personnel targeted for release from military service derive from the non-commissioned officer and commissioned officer ranks. Since these two categories are the bulk of personnel affected by downsizing, they represent the vast majority of people that attend the transition assistance programs. These men and women have committed

themselves to a career in the service, "says Martin Binkin, a military sociologist and the Washington-based Brookings Institute. "It's a lot tougher for them to make the adjustment" (Binkin, as cited by Van Voort, 1992, p. 30). An analysis of these two levels of military personnel is outlined below and will provide information on their typical military career path, work experience, and education.

Non-Commissioned Officer

The non-commissioned officer's military career usually begins at age 18, since that is the minimum age for joining the Armed Services. The majority of personnel entering military service have completed high school and sixteen percent have earned a bachelor's degree (Drach, cited in Congressional Hearing, 1991, p. 1218). The new recruits attend a military basic course to orient them to military life and to provide them with technical information and knowledge needed to perform their assigned duties. After completing this course, the new recruits are assigned to a unit as enlisted personnel.

At the four year mark in their career, enlisted personnel are assessed and considered for promotion to the non-commissioned officer ranks. The non-commissioned officer ranks are broken down into five progressive levels of seniority. The progression to the next level of seniority depends on successful job performance, performance ratings, and time-in grade. With the advancement into the non-commissioned officer ranks comes the responsibility for managing personnel and equipment. These levels of responsibility increase with the promotion to higher ranks (or paygrade) within the non-commissioned officer rank structure.

To prepare personnel for the changing responsibilities and duties of managerial positions, non-commissioned officers are sent to schools and specific follow-on courses to instill leadership traits, increase technical knowledge, and provide basic organizational effectiveness skills. Besides the requirement for military education, advancement within

the non-commissioned officer ranks also is determined by civilian educational levels. In order to advance through the promotion system, a non-commissioned officer must attain an associate's degree and then a bachelor's degree to reach the highest levels for a non-commissioned officer.

Commissioned Officer

The majority of commissioned officers are graduates from the three military academies (U.S. Army Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, and U.S. Air Force Academy) or college and university Reserve Officer Training Courses (ROTC). Ninety-seven percent of the commissioned officers entering military service have an earned bachelor's degree (Drach, cited in Congressional Hearing, 1991, p. 1218). After entering military service, newly commissioned officers attend a basic officers' course to orient them to military life and provide them with technical knowledge for future job requirements. Upon successful completion of the basic course, officers are sent to units for assignment. During their initial assignments, officers will be required to perform the functions of unit management and leadership, personnel counseling, training and technical expertise. Throughout a commissioned officers career, they will perform these functions, but at an increasing level of responsibility. Since 97% of the officers entering military service have earned a bachelor's degree, the requirement for advanced degrees is not required until reaching the senior levels within the commissioned officer ranks. Successfully completing the required military education courses (e.g., Officer Advance Course, Command and General Staff College, and War College) is an integral factor in the advancement to the next higher commissioned officer rank.

Comparison of Non-Commissioned Officers and Commissioned Officers

The non-commissioned officer begins a military career earlier because they usually join out of high school (18 years old), while the commissioned officer joins after college (22 years old). The commissioned officer usually has attended a higher civilian education level but both groups attend military schooling requirements. Commissioned officers develop their management, leadership, and technical skills during military schooling, while the non-commissioned officer concentrates more on leadership and technical skills both in school and in daily duties.

DOWNSIZING CATEGORIES

As the Department of Defense and Armed Services reduce military size through the downsizing concept, three downsizing categories have been identified. The non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers discussed previously fall under the three categories of personnel retiring, voluntarily separating, or involuntarily separating from military service. The Armed Service branches utilized these three approaches to downsizing to meet their military force reduction measures. The following chart identifies a three year proposal for Department of Defense annual military strength reductions (Congressional Hearing, 1991, p. 7):

Figure 1
Past and Project Military Downsizing

<u>Separation Category</u>	<u>FY 89/90</u>	<u>FY 91/92</u>	<u>FY 94/95</u>
*Voluntary	220,000	210,000	185,000
Involuntary	110,000	120,000	115,000
Total	330,000	330,000	300,000

*Note: Voluntary numbers represent both retirement and voluntarily separated personnel.

Retirement

After successfully completing a military career, non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers can apply for retirement from military service. To satisfy the requirements for retirement, soldiers must meet one of the following criteria: (1) apply and be accepted for early retirement with between 15-20 years of military service, (2) have at least 20 years of military service, or (3) be at the mandatory retirement age of 55 years of age unless approved for retention by Congress (Eisenman, Grissmer, & Taylor, 1992, p. 34, 67, 111). Since the criteria for retirement involves a longevity of military service, most retirees are senior ranking personnel. Along with senior level ranking, retirees have gathered enormous work experience and knowledge. This experience and working knowledge is an invaluable asset for a retiree in applying for a civilian career. During their military career, retirees collect a vast resource of contacts, both military and civilian, which allows them an alternative avenue to networking transition into the civilian career market place. Another area that retirees treasure is their retirement benefits, which remain in effect for the remainder of their life. These benefits consist of yearly financial payments based on years of service, healthcare coverage, educational incentives, commissary and exchange privileges, and federal employment preference. With the monetary and other benefits retirees receive at separation, they can afford to take a leisurely approach to making the transition from a military to civilian career.

Voluntarily Separated

To voluntarily separate from military service, personnel must submit notification of their intentions to resign from active duty. Under the policy of downsizing, personnel with over six years of military service can submit the required paperwork, applying for the program of voluntary incentive separation to leave military service. The targeted group

affected by this program consists of personnel with between six and fifteen years of military service. Some of the reasons for personnel to voluntarily separate from military service includes: avoiding involuntary separation due to non-selection for promotion to the next higher rank, dissatisfaction with the military, and desire to make a career change to the civilian sector. Some of the benefits for personnel voluntarily separating from military service include a financial settlement of either a lump sum payment or payment increments over a period of time, both of which are based on rank and time-in service. The benefit package also includes from separation date: four months medical coverage, two years commissary and exchange use, transition assistance counseling, movement to a final destination, and placement in the reserve forces (Callander, 1994, p. 37). Most voluntarily separating personnel do take advantage of the transition assistance program to prepare them for their career change. Because the benefits are limited and have time constraints, these individuals have a great desire to make a quick and smooth transition to the civilian career market place.

Involuntarily Separated

Involuntarily separated personnel can come from two categories: separated due to severe disciplinary action or passed over for promotion twice. The target group for this downsizing category can range from anyone with 1-19 years of military services. The benefits for these personnel include: lump sum payment (if passed over twice for promotion), transition assistance counseling, four months medical coverage, movement to final destination, and commissary and exchange privileges for two years (Callander, 1994, p. 37). Similar to the voluntarily separated personnel, involuntarily separated personnel have limited time benefits and require a quick transition to the civilian market to regain lost income and benefits.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

As the Department of Defense began to downsize the military structure, a proposal to develop the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was undertaken to assist servicemembers in their transition from a military to civilian career. In 1990, a pilot test program was conducted at military installations in seven states to analyze the need and perceived effectiveness of the TAP program (Collins, 1991, p. 30). The Hampton Roads Virginia Employment Commission was selected as one of the seven agencies to conduct a pilot program. The pilot program presented a three-day employment seminar to active duty servicemembers who were scheduled to separate within 180 days. With the success of the pilot programs, the Department of Defense expanded the availability of the program to the current level of 197 military installations. Some of the program goals consisted of providing transition counseling, job-search training and information, placement assistance, addressing skills, goals, resume preparation, and interview skills (Lesko, 1995, p. 3). An example of a typical military installation providing transition assistance is Fort Jackson. Since the implementation of the TAP program, 151 workshops have been conducted at Fort Jackson with 15,424 participants. This figure includes 9,509 retirees, 5,186 separatees, 294 spouses, and 432 individuals from other categories (Congressional Hearing, 1993, p. 6).

The Hampton Roads TAP seminars are conducted by the local veteran's personnel at the employment commissions, with assistance from the local Veterans' Administration and additional support agencies. The seminar is broken down into six sections and a manual is provided to each participant to follow and utilize. The six sections consist of information and techniques on: (1) Personal Appraisal, (2) Career Decisions, (3) Applying for the Job, (4) The Interview, (5) Now that you have the Job Offer, and (6) Support and Assistance (Transition Assistance Manual, 1991, p. iii).

Personal Appraisal

Within the Personal Appraisal section of the manual, personnel look at their military career and develop an information sheet that outlines their personal information, career goals, education and training background, special skills, military services, work experience, and interest. This is an essential starting point for those transitioning. This section organizes personal data that will ultimately be used in generating resumes and job applications. Much of the work in this section of the manual is self-directed and is considered an ongoing process of transitioning and assessing personal skills.

Career Decisions

After outlining a personal appraisal, servicemembers use this information to set their career needs and goals. During this segment of the seminar they are presented with information on not only setting career goals, but also family and financial goals. Completing a worksheet that outlines all of these areas allows an individual to map out their career goals, how to manage the financial matters during their transition, plan for family matters (e.g., home, schools, and community), and establish projections on their expectations for future job salary and benefits. This section gives a realistic look at the future for separating personnel, allowing for discovery of many of the obstacles they may encounter.

Applying for the Job

Combining the previous two section together, the individuals are now given information and practice applying for job opportunities. Understanding where to look for and how to analyze job listings is the first step in this process. Networking plays an important part in finding job opportunities and is subject to an individual's military career points of contact. Individuals with long military careers usually have developed an

extensive networking mechanism in both the military and civilian communities. Senior non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers are provided civilian job titles that usually translate their military rank. As an example, a captain in the Army can translate his military rank level into apply for a position as a manager or operations officer (Lee, 1991, p. 67). This section of the seminar also concentrates on allocating the time for job searching and researching information on potential targeted companies. The major portion of this section is dedicated to preparing a cover letter and resume. This is the most critical portion of the TAP program and the section servicemembers are generally most interested in. Although the manual provides samples of typical cover letters and resumes, participants are told to prepare their own resume for review. Servicemembers are taught about preparing military, chronological, and functional resumes. In today's job market, it is suggested that separating military members transcribe their military career into a functional resume, unless applying for a Defense contractor position (Jacobsen, 1990, p. 168).

The Interview Process.

The Interview Process section outlines the interview process and how to conduct yourself during the interview. Some of the areas covered deal with: first impressions made with an interviewer, different stages in the typical interview, dress codes, and typical questions that will be asked. This section is presented first in the informational setting and then a practical exercise setting to allow feedback from seminar members and instructors. The dress code section is new to most military personnel because they are use to uniforms and may not have invested in a large number of suites, which may be required for job interviews.

Support and Assistance

This section is presented jointly by the Employment Commission, Veterans' Administration, and local military personnel section. The key information provided outlines separating personnel benefits and available assistance. The employment commission provides information on their job search capabilities and services, while the military and Veterans' Administration cover their benefits. Benefits represent educational, medical, job training, and life insurance opportunities. Depending on the downsizing category, information presented during this section may not apply to everyone. The only category that can utilize all the information presented in this section are the retirees. The categories of separating from military service under voluntary or involuntary conditions does not include long term medical or life insurance benefits.

SUMMARY

Chapter II, Review of Literature, provided information on the military personnel attending the transition assistance program, the downsizing categories they come from, and the Transition Assistance Program content. Although there have been several Congressional hearings on the implementation and need for the Transition Assistance Program to ease military personnel into a civilian career, there has been limited research or studies on the effectiveness of the course content. "It appears generally the retirees are receiving the benefits of TAP to much greater degree than those who are separating prior to retirement" (Jones, cited in Congressional Hearing, 1993, p. 29). Chapter III will outline the methods and procedures utilized to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the program content and to determine any bias towards any category of personnel.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter III, Methods and Procedures, explains how the study examined the Transition Assistance Program to determine if instructional bias existed for the categorical levels of the variables including downsizing categories and military personnel. Topics covered in Chapter III include: Population, Instrument Design, Methods of Data Collection, Statistical Analysis, and Summary.

POPULATION

Members of all branches of the Armed Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps) were used as the population for this study. All four branches of the Armed Services are found in the Hampton Roads area and participated in the local Transition Assistance Program. The Transition Assistance Programs are conducted on local military installations within the Hampton Roads area and two locations were selected for personal observation and questionnaire data collection. The two locations consisted of Fort Eustis (Army) and Norfolk Naval Base (Navy and Marine Corps). Personnel attending the transition seminars at these two locations are not exclusively restricted to only members of the branch where the seminar is taking place. Members from the other services can attend any transition seminar location. The personnel attending the seminar are derived from all ranks of the military and downsizing categorizes and provided a random sampling of the population. Military spouses and Department of Defense personnel may also participate in

the seminar but are not used in questionnaire data collection. The seminar attendance ranged from 50-200 people, depending on seminar location site. Another location used to gather survey data was the Hampton, Virginia Employment Commission. Veterans from all branches of the Armed Services, who had attended a Transition Assistance Program within six months, also participated in the survey.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to be administered to participants of the two Transition Assistance Programs conducted at Fort Eustis, Norfolk Naval Base, and veterans at the Hampton, Virginia Employment Commission. The questionnaire asked attendees to answer questions based on their experience and overall competence gained during the three and one-half day program. The first five questions were used as demographics to place respondents into the variable categories. Questions six through fourteen addressed the research questions to be answered in the study. These questions were rated on a Likert scale from one to five (strongly disagree to strongly agree, respectfully). The final question on the survey was an open-ended response, which would allowed for additional comments. A pilot study was conducted with the transition assistance coordinators at Fort Eustis, Little Creek Amphibious Base, Norfolk Naval Base, and the Virginia Employment Commission in Hampton, to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Using the seminar locations at Fort Eustis and Norfolk Naval Base, the questionnaire was disseminated to attendees on the final day of the seminar. Letters requesting permission to conduct the transition assistance program survey were sent to installation transition coordinators for approval. An example of the letter is provided at Appendix B. Approval was granted at Fort Eustis and the Norfolk Naval Base, as noted on response to the letters provided at Appendix C. The questionnaire was given to all military attendees after they had completed the program survey. The questionnaires were collected prior to the military attendees leaving the seminar room. The survey was also given to veterans at the Hampton, Virginia Employment Commission, who had attended a Transition Assistance Program within the last six months.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated for each attitudinal item to gain an overall analysis of participant perceptions of the program. Additional means, medians, and standard deviations were calculated specifically for the categories of downsizing (retiree, voluntarily separating, and involuntarily separating) and military personnel (Officer and Noncommissioned Officer). Comparative analysis was used to compare the difference of the mean scores, using a t-test for independence between the two military personnel and downsizing categories to determine the statistical level of significant difference within the categories of the variables (Appendix D).

SUMMARY

Chapter III, provided a description of the population, instrument design, methods of data collection, and statistical analysis of the data collected. Chapter IV will provide the findings of the data collected and Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study was conducted to determine whether the Program of Instruction for the Hampton Roads Virginia Employment Commissions' Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was biased toward personnel retiring from the military or military personnel separating due to Armed Services downsizing. The study also attempted to determine if the program was biased between Noncommissioned and Commissioned Officers. Topics covered in Chapter IV include: (1) Presentation of Data, (2) Comparison of Groups, and (3) Summary.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Survey data was collected from the Transition Assistance Programs conducted at Fort Eustis (Army) and Norfolk Naval Base (Navy, Army, and Marine Corps). The survey results also reflect data gathered from veterans visiting the Hampton, Virginia Employment Commission (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps).

One hundred and twelve (112) soldiers and sailors participated in the survey with the breakdown of personnel including sixty two (62) retiring, forty (40) voluntarily separating, and nine (9) involuntarily separating from the Armed Services. The following section will concentrate on the questions answered on the Transition Assistance Program Survey.

When asked if the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) helped prepare them for a smooth transition to a civilian career, 43 respondents strongly agreed, 58 agreed, seven

were undecided, and three strongly disagreed. Reviewing the transition assistance manual, 45 respondents strongly agreed that the manual was easy to follow and understand, 61 agreed, two were undecided, one disagreed, and two strongly disagreed.

Since the Transition Assistance Program's objective is to prepare individuals for life after the military, 52 respondents strongly agreed that the examples provided in the manual and seminar served as a good foundation for their career correspondence preparation. Fifty three (53) respondents agreed, five were undecided, and one disagreed with this statement.

Drawing on an individual's ability to understand material based on their education, 20 respondents strongly agreed that their civilian education assisted them in understanding the material, while 62 agreed, 19 were undecided, nine disagreed, and one strongly disagreed.

Since civilian education and military education can deviate greatly depending on a person's military occupation and need for extensive training, the ability to understand the TAP material can vary as well. Depending on the level of military education attained during service, 20 respondents strongly agreed that their military education helped them understand the TAP material, while 62 agreed, 15 were undecided, 13 disagreed, and one strongly disagreed.

The positions held during a military career enable an individual to increase their knowledge in that subject matter area. Depending on the positions held during a career, this may determine the ability to understand certain materials with greater depth. Twenty two (22) respondents strongly agreed that their military career assisted them in understanding the TAP material, while 25 agreed, 16 were undecided, 14 disagreed, and two strongly disagreed.

When developing any curriculum or program of instruction for a course, the training developer must understand the projected target learner or audience. Twenty

respondents strongly agreed that the Transition Assistance Program was developed for their grade/rank, while 54 agreed, 16 were undecided, 15 agreed, and 6 strongly disagreed.

To successfully transition from a military to civilian career, an individual must develop an accurate and impressive resume. Resumes are the introduction of your skills and abilities to corporate America. Understanding how to properly and correctly prepare a resume is a vital portion of the Transition Assistance Program. Based on the samples provided in the TAP manual, 38 respondents strongly agreed that they can easily construct a resume based on military experience, while 51 agreed, 19 were undecided, two disagreed, and one strongly disagreed.

A measure of any program presented in today's society is whether it benefits the attendees. Eighty four (84) respondents strongly agreed that the Transition Assistance Program is a necessary benefit to all transitioning military members, while 24 agreed, one was undecided, one disagreed, and one strongly disagreed.

Reviewing a training or education program is an essential part of continuously improving the quality of the program. Sixty three (63) respondents felt that the Transition Assistance Program could be improved (Appendix E), while 48 did not see the need for any improvements.

COMPARISON OF GROUPS

After looking at the total results of the Transition Assistance Program Survey, a comparison was conducted according to the two research goals. The research goals outlined two sets of comparisons: retirees vs. downsizing personnel, and Noncommissioned vs. Commissioned Officers. The comparison was conducted utilizing

the mean, median, true standard deviation, and an independent t-test for questions six through fourteen.

Retirees vs. Downsizing Personnel

Questions six, eleven, and fourteen analyzed the different perceptions of retirees and voluntarily or involuntarily separating personnel towards the Transition Assistance Program of Instruction. The following t-test results applied:

Question 6: The Transition Assistance Program helped prepare me for a smooth transition to a civilian career. The test showed *a significant difference*, $t = 2.774$, at the .05 and .01 levels.

Question 11: My military career assisted in understanding the material presented. The test showed *a significant difference*, $t = 2.289$, at the .05 level.

Question 14: I feel the Transition Assistance Program is a necessary benefit to all transitioning military members. The test showed no significant difference, $t = 1.849$.

All above items were based on 109 degrees of freedom.

Noncommissioned vs. Commissioned Officers

Questions seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen analyzed the perceptions of Commissioned and Noncommissioned Officers towards the Transition Assistance Program of Instruction. The following t-test results applied:

Question 7: The manual used during the seminar was easy to follow and understand. The test showed no significant difference, $t = -0.699$.

Question 8: The examples provided in the manual and seminar can easily serve as a foundation for my own correspondence preparation. The test showed no significant difference, $t = -1.055$.

Question 9: My civilian education assisted in understanding the material presented. The test showed no significant difference, $t = .411$.

Question 10: My military education assisted in understanding the material presented. The test showed no significant difference, $t = .009$.

Question 11: My military career assisted in understanding the material presented. The test showed no significant difference, $t = .408$.

Question 12: I feel the Transition Assistance Program was developed for my Grade/Rank. The test showed *a significant difference*, $t = -2.138$, at the .05 level.

Question 14: I feel the Transition Assistance Program is a necessary benefit to all transitioning military members. The test showed *a significant difference*, $t = -2.393$, at the .05 level.

All comparisons in this category utilized 80 degrees of freedom.

SUMMARY

Chapter VI has presented the results of the total Transition Assistance Program Survey and also provided the t-test results for the comparison of groups (retiree vs. downsizing, and Noncommissioned vs. Commissioned Officer). Chapter V will provide the study's summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on these results.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will summarize the first four chapters, draw conclusions based on the data collected, and make recommendations based upon the results of the study and suggest future studies.

SUMMARY

This research was conducted to determine whether the program of instruction for the Transition Assistance Program was biased towards personnel retiring from the military or military personnel separating due to Armed Services downsizing. The research goals for this study looked at two questions:

1. Do retiring military personnel or downsizing personnel obtain more information on conducting a smooth transition from the military to civilian careers?
2. Is the program structure more for the understanding of the Noncommissioned or Commissioned Officer?

A Review of Literature provided information on clearly understanding the differences between the variables outlined in the statement of the problem to include: retirees, voluntarily separating and involuntarily separating personnel, noncommissioned officers, commissioned officers, and the transition assistance program. Some areas that are different between retirees and voluntarily or involuntarily separating personnel include: benefits, acquired professional knowledge, and required levels of competency to transition to another career. Differences discussed between noncommissioned and commissioned

officers included: civilian education, military education, military careers, and required civilian job replacement.

A Transition Assistance Program survey was developed and administered to TAP attendees to answer the research goals. The survey consisted of three parts:

Part one: Demographic

Part two: Answer research goals using a Likert scale

Part three: Answer research goal with open-ended question

The survey was conducted at three locations to capture a random sample of the Armed Service population in the Hampton Roads Area.

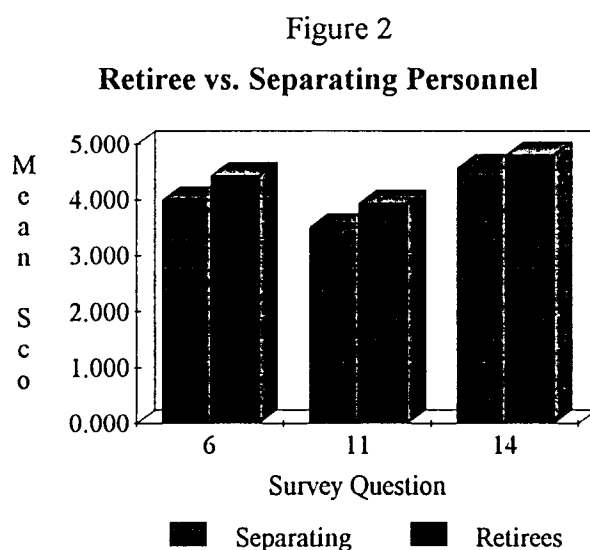
A Comparative analysis was conducted to compare the difference of the mean scores using a t-test for independence between the categories of downsizing (retiree or voluntarily and involuntarily separating) and military personnel (noncommissioned or commissioned officers).

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were made based on the information obtained from the Transition Assistance Program Survey.

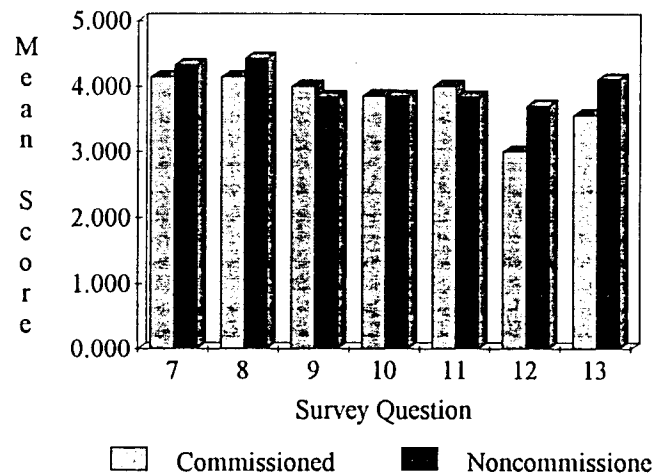
Research question one. Do retiring military personnel or downsized personnel obtain more information on conducting a smooth transition from military to civilian careers?: Retirees felt that the Transitions Assistance Program helped them prepare for a smoother transition to a civilian career than did voluntarily or involuntarily separating personnel. Although survey question number fourteen showed no significant difference between retirees and voluntarily or involuntarily separating personnel, question six and

eleven showed a significant difference at the $p = .05$ level. Figure 2 shows the mean scores between the retirees and voluntarily or involuntarily separating personnel.



Research question two. Is the program structure more for the understanding of the Noncommissioned or Commissioned Officer?: Noncommissioned Officers indicated a better understanding of the Transition Assistance Program based on their education, experience and military rank. Questions twelve and thirteen showed a significant difference at the .05 level between the two military personnel categories. Figure 3 shows the mean scores between the Noncommissioned and Commissioned Officers.

Figure 3
Noncommissioned vs. Commissioned Officer



The survey also demonstrated that over half the attendees felt that the Transition Assistance Program could be improved. (Comments from the attendees are outlined in Appendix E).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Transition Assistance Program should be presented separately to the two downsizing categories (retiree vs. separating), and further broken-down by military personnel (noncommissioned vs. commissioned officer).
2. The Department of Labor should review and modify the Transition Assistance Program instruction to provide sections tailored towards the different attendees, based on their military experience and educational level.

3. Further study should be conducted by the Department of Labor, with assistance from the Department of Defense, to analyze a larger population of the Armed Services to review and improve the program of instruction.
4. Each branch of the Armed Services should conduct routine Transition Assistance Program surveys to better tailor their instruction to attendees.
5. Department of Labor, with assistance from Department of Defense, should have local military transition offices conduct surveys six months after military separation to study the effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program in the individuals career transition.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Transition Assistance Program Survey

Appendix B - Sample Letter Requesting Approval to Conduct Transition Assistance
Program Survey at Military Installations in the Hampton Roads Area

Appendix C - Response to Request to Conduct Survey at Local Installations

Appendix D - Research Questions One and Two t-test Calculations

Appendix E - Individual Responses for Attendees who Answered "yes" on Open-Ended
Question Number 15, Transition Assistance Program Survey

APPENDIX A

Transition Assistance Program Survey

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SURVEY

Purpose: To gain a better understanding of the Transition Assistance Program content structure.

Instructions: Please circle the appropriate number corresponding to your answer or fill in the blank, if required.

1. **Branch of Service:** 1. Army 2. Air Force 3. Marine Corps 4. Navy 5. Other
2. **Military Pay Grade:** 1. E1-E4 2. E5-E9 3. WO 4. O1-O3 5. O4-O6
3. **Years of Service:** 1. 1-4 2. 5-12 3. 13-19 4. 20+
4. **Military Specialty:** _____
5. **Type of Release from Service:**
 1. Retiring, 2. Voluntarily Separating, 3. Involuntarily Separating
6. **The Transition Assistance Program helped prepare me for a smooth transition to a civilian career.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
7. **The manual used during the seminar was easy to follow and understand.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
8. **The examples provided in the manual and seminar can easily serve as a foundation for my own correspondence preparation.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
9. **My civilian education assisted in understanding the material presented.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
10. **My military education assisted in understanding the material presented.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
11. **My military career assisted in understanding the material presented.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
12. **I feel the Transition Assistance Program was developed for my Grade/Rank.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
13. **Using the resume samples provided in the manual, I can easily construct a resume based on my own military experience.**
 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

14. I feel the Transition Assistance Program is a necessary benefit to all transitioning military members.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

15. Do you feel the Transition Assistance Program could be improved and how?

1. Yes 2. No How?

APPENDIX B

Sample Letter Requesting Approval to Conduct Transition Assistance Program Survey at
Military Installations in the Hampton Roads Area

Example sent to Norfolk Naval Base Family Services Center

Ms. Dorothy Hundley
Norfolk Navy Family Services Center
Norfolk, Virginia 23698

14 June '95

Dear Ms Hundley,

Thank you for returning my phone call and discussing the survey required for my thesis paper. The thesis paper is on the Transition Assistance Program and I am in the final stages of the paper, which includes collecting data from a survey. The purpose of the survey is to give me a better understanding of the course content as viewed by the attendees. I have attached a copy of the survey I would like to conduct during the TAP seminar from 19-23 June. The survey takes no more than 5 minutes and I would like to give it at noon on the last day of the seminar. I have provided Mr. Edgars, VEC, with a copy of the survey and he has been aware of my thesis paper. This survey will complete my thesis paper and final requirement for an August graduation from Old Dominion Univ. The survey will only be used for the thesis paper and I will provide you a letter stating this and a copy of the final thesis paper. I would be happy to answer any questions about the survey and I can be reached at 825-1252. I have an answering machine if I am not home and I will get back with you. Thank you for your assistance in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jim Threlfall

APPENDIX C

Response to Request to Conduct Survey at Local Installations

**Response to Request to Conduct Survey at Local Installations
(Army, Navy, and Air Force)**

I. Request to conduct survey at Fort Eustis, Army: Request approved by Fort Eustis transition office for Transition Assistance Program conducted June 13-15, 1995.

II. Request to conduct survey at Langley AFB, Air Force: Request denied by transition office and Family Service Center. Air Force stated they did not have time to conduct the survey.

III. Request to conduct survey at Norfolk Naval Base, Navy, Marine , and other Armed Services: Request approved by Director Navy Family Services Center, Norfolk. Survey conducted at the June 20-22, 1995.

APPENDIX D

Research Questions One and Two t-test Calculations

*Note: The following t-test calculations were derived from the utilization of a computer software program, Basic Statistical Analysis, AB STAT: Version 1.1.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:

A. Survey Question 6:

	Retirees	Separating
Mean	4.435	4
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.557	.969
Standard error	.0713	.1398
t value = 2.774		standard error of difference .1570

B. Survey Question 11:

	Retirees	Separating
Mean	3.935	3.510
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.8957	.9017
Standard error	.1147	.1301
t value = 2.289		standard error of difference .1735

C. Survey Question 14:

	Retirees	Separating
Mean	4.806	4.571
Median	5	5
True Standard Deviation	.3951	.8081
Standard error	.0506	.1166
t value = 1.849		standard error of difference .1271

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:

A. Survey Question 7:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	4.143	4.333
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.6389	.6799
Standard error	.2608	.0790

t value = -0.699

standard error of difference .2725

B. Survey Question 8:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	4.143	4.427
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.6389	.5698
Standard error	.2608	.0662

t value = -1.055

standard error of difference .2691

C. Survey Question 9:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	4	3.840
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.9258	.8171
Standard error	.3780	.0950

t value = .411

standard error of difference .3897

D. Survey Question 10:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	3.857	3.853
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.9897	.8277
Standard error	.4041	.0962

t value = .009

standard error of difference .4154

E. Survey Question 11:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	4	3.840
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.9258	.8950
Standard error	.3780	.1040

t value = .408

standard error of difference .3920

F. Survey Question 12:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	3	3.707
Median	3	4
True Standard Deviation	.7559	1.0168
Standard error	.3086	.1182

t value = -2.138

standard error of difference .3305

G. Survey Question 13:

	Commissioned	Noncommissioned
Mean	3.571	4.107
Median	4	4
True Standard Deviation	.4949	.8258
Standard error	.2020	.0960

t value = -2.393

standard error of difference .2237

APPENDIX E
Individual Responses for Attendees who Answered "yes" on Open-Ended Question
Number 15, Transition Assistance Program Survey

*** Note: All responses are included as written by attendees, to include misspellings and grammatical errors**

I. The following responses came from the Fort Eustis TAP seminar conducted 13-15 June 1995. Twenty two out of 35 attendees answered yes to question 15 and provided comments.

1. Add a 4th day and bring in more employers looking for employees.
2. More information on Resume writing
3. Let people know in advance to have a resume prepared and then bring it, review it, fix it, and finally more work interviewing.
4. Require each student to prepare draft resume.
5. Somehow, the soldiers need more free-time to concentrate more on finding a job.
6. Expand lecture to include how to prepare for an interview for a manual labor type of job.
7. Have civilians in conjunction with retired military to assist instructing.
8. Change the format from 3 full days to 5 mornings only classes, and stop repeating information so much.
9. Need more days of instruction.
10. Everything can be improved.
11. Have more companies to visit class.
12. More employers to come in.
13. Understanding in the company level.
14. Avoid redundancies.
15. Bring in more companies.
16. More employer participation, i.e. recruiters and head hunters.
17. The time the information is delivered is severely limited. The TAP needs more time.
18. Everything can always be improved.
19. Have more potential employers come in and talk.
20. More job rep's.
21. More interaction with students. It's boring just sitting here, Let's role play.
22. Having interviewed for jobs before, somehow it just feels like a lot of score tactics.

II. The following responses came from the Norfolk Naval Base TAP seminar conducted 20-22 June 1995. Forty one out of 77 people answered yes to question #15 with 40 providing comments.

1. Make it longer, it is force information in 5 days, that is hard to retain in that time frame.
2. Nothing can not be improved, better listings of available positions (overseas, Govt., etc.).
3. More one on one contact.

4. It was assumed that we were all looking for new careers - not all of us plan to work full-time. I think time is needed to help people who want to change their careers, such as resources, etc.
5. Needs to be a longer class, such as 2 weeks.
6. Allow more time for the amount of information.
7. More interviewers - good, fact, and indifferent.
8. Update manual to match instructor's curriculum.
9. Women are an integral part of today's Navy. Instructor should have been prepared with proper female attire samples, possible via mannequins.
10. Increase course length.
11. TQL. Syllabus was not generally followed. VA Benefits lecture was good but didn't apply to my interest or needs. Make it optional. The oral presentation and the instructor review of my resume was invaluable. It was a worthwhile endeavor.
12. More in-depth coverage of resume.
13. More mock interviews.
14. Some information on the going into business for yourself, every subject is currently aimed at working for a company.
15. Make it mandatory that all persons at 17 to 18 go thru TAP.
16. Allowing more time on benefits.
17. Day 1 needs to be less negative and more basic, i.e. discuss pro + cons, but not details. Help people, don't scare them.
18. I already gave my info on this matter back on day one.
19. More interviews. Better structured interviews, let the class see a great interview, bad interview, etc.. Extend the class to include a job fair, where we could be sent out on interviews. More nationwide correspondence with outside companies. More role playing.
20. I felt somewhat alienated because I am not retiring. I feel I have some special needs, as a LIMD, that aren't being met. I would be willing to expand on that in your office, if a follow-up could be arranged.
21. Work on explaining more about different jobs for different rates.
22. Smaller groups, so that there can be personal attention given to the serious people.
23. By being a little rigid on dress code/mustering.
24. Could be spread out over probably a couple of days. Possibly be able to go more in depth to resume portion, let people have examples.
25. Condensed version given to personnel (active) during course of military service, so as to reduce end of services head-aches.
26. Make the manual the exact same as lesson plan.
27. There is always room for improvement.
28. Smaller classes.
29. Everything can be improved.
30. The only reason that the program will be of little assistance to me is due to research into resume writing, interview procedures, and job market which I started 6 months ago.

31. Need to gear it to the 2 to 4 year person, not ones who have a rate and a NEC. How about the un-designated seaman , what can we do. Without a rate, it is very difficult to write a resume or get a higher paying job.
32. All of the information dealing with getting a job, resume, interviewing procedures, etc. Should be in a different course than all the VA benefits do to the fact that not everybody will be needing this info. It should be optional.
33. Concentrate on interview techniques, resume writing, and how to obtain a job. The benefits + SBP should be first. A positive learning the rest of the week.
34. Add in housing and relocation info.
35. Turn the air-conditioning down.
36. Longer, 2 weeks.
37. More lower ranked (E5/E6) are retiring and need to address more blue collar issue (i.e.. dress, types of interviews, application process).
38. More interviews with different interviewers.
39. Make it more fair. I want to go to college and can't afford it. Make money available to lower income people.
40. Audio/visuals.