



XAVIER
UNIVERSITY of LOUISIANA

Xavier University of Louisiana
XULA Digital Commons

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation

5-2023

**A Sacrifice For Their Country And A Commitment To Their
Community: A Phenomenological Study Of Veterans Transitioning
From Soldier To Student**

Clarence A. Becknell Sr

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.xula.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

A SACRIFICE FOR THEIR COUNTRY AND A COMMITMENT TO THEIR COMMUNITY:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF VETERANS TRANSITIONING FROM SOLDIER
TO STUDENT

By

CLARENCE A. BECKNELL, SR.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA
Division of Education and Counseling

MAY 2023

© Copyright by CLARENCE A. BECKNELL, SR., 2023
All Rights Reserved

Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, Louisiana

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

This is to certify that the Doctoral Dissertation of

CLARENCE A. BECKNELL, SR.

has been approved by the examining committee for the dissertation requirement for the Doctoral Program in Education Leadership in the Division of Education and Counseling, May, 2023.

Timothy J. Glaude, Ph.D., Chair

Ramona Jean-Perkins, Ph.D.

Renee Akbar, Ph.D.

Zwila Burks-Martinez, Ed.D.

Associate Dean of Graduate Programs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my gratitude to God our Lord, who gave me the spiritual calling and fortitude to complete this doctoral program. It was He who said yes when others said no. God gave me the strength, knowledge, and road map to accomplishing this degree and ensured those He put in my life gave me the support and encouragement I needed to endure this arduous journey.

I want to acknowledge my deceased mother, father, brother, sister, and son Clarence Jr. I know you are with me in spirit. I also want to recognize Donna Watkins and my two sisters, Linda, and Thelma, for their support. Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank those exceptional individuals that made this research study possible.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Timothy Glaude, I cannot thank you enough for your continued support in developing this dissertation with me. Your patience, support, guidance, and confidence in me is the reason I completed this dissertation. You are the ‘guru’ I thought you were. I would go on the battlefield with you any day. Thank you! I want to thank Dr. Ramona Jean-Perkins, my academic advisor, for the opportunity and excellent guidance you provided me. Your support for other veterans and I did not just happen today. You believed in us long before Xavier had a doctoral program. Thank you for ensuring I was on track and monitoring my progress. To Dr. Renee Akbar, thank you for your support and for being the excellent instructor you are. I enjoyed your class and learned a great deal. Your guidance and academic suggestions improved my dissertation and allowed me to move forward. Thank you! Dr. Zwila Burks-Martinez, thank you for serving as my methodologist. You provided valuable information that strengthened my dissertation. Thank you for your support and encouragement throughout the dissertation process.

A SACRIFICE FOR THEIR COUNTRY AND A COMMITMENT TO THEIR COMMUNITY:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF VETERANS TRANSITIONING FROM SOLDIER
TO STUDENT

ABSTRACT

by Clarence A. Becknell, Sr., Ed.D.
Xavier University of Louisiana
May 2023

Chair: Timothy J. Glaude

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. This study focused on identifying gaps in support services that hindered the needs of former military men and women enrolled in higher education institutions. According to a study by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2021), former military men and women encountered common challenges during re-adjustments, such as employment, maintaining healthy relationships, and pursuing educational endeavors. Using a descriptive phenomenological research design, the research study gathered information from individuals who have lived, witnessed, and joined a branch of the United States military. The research study revealed six themes that emerged from participants responses. (1) the Registration Process; (2) Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits; (3) the Environment; (4) Veteran Advisor; (5) Veteran Specific Services; and (6) Retention. The responses indicated a consistency in the themes identified as challenges encountered by former military men and women who transitioned from the military.

Key Words: Challenges, Encounter, Experiences, Exploring, Phenomenological, Transition, Veteran.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
LIST OF TABLES	IX
LIST OF FIGURES	X
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Questions	8
Significance of the Study	8
Overview of Methodology.....	11
Delimitations.....	11
Assumptions.....	12
Definitions of Terms	12
Organization of the Document.....	13
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	15
Theoretical Framework.....	15
Schlossberg’s Transition Model	15
Organizational Culture.....	22
Military Culture	23
Collectivism	24

Rigid Hierarchy.....	25
Masculinity	26
GI Bill (Brief History and Purpose).....	27
Veterans in Higher Education.....	28
Challenges Transitioning from Soldier to Civilian Life	30
Lazarus' Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping.....	33
PTSD-Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	37
Support for Student Veterans.....	38
Institutional Role in Credit Transfer.....	40
Knowing What Credits Will Transfer from Military Experience.....	41
Three Ways Military Transfer Credit Awarded.....	42
Veterans Who Become Students.....	43
Summary.....	45
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	47
Organization of the Chapter.....	47
Research Questions.....	47
The Rationale for Research Methodology	48
Assumptions.....	49
Population and Site Selection	49
Instrumentation	52
Demographic Profile.....	52
Interviews.....	52
Observations Field Notes.....	53

Data Collection Procedures.....	53
Data Analysis	57
Role of the Researcher/Bias.....	58
Validity/ Trustworthiness.....	58
Ethical Considerations	60
Limitations	60
Delimitations.....	60
Summary	61
CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS.....	62
Introduction.....	62
Thematic Findings	69
Research Question 1:	70
Theme: The Registration Process	70
Theme: Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits	73
Research Q 2:.....	77
Theme: Environment	77
Theme: Veteran Advisor.....	85
Research Question 3:	91
Theme: Veteran-Specific Services.....	92
Theme: Retention.....	96
Summary of Findings.....	101
CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION.....	103
Overview of Study/Organization of Chapter	103

Review of Research Statement	103
Review of Methods	103
Review of Findings	104
Research Question 1:	105
Research Question 2:	109
Research Question 3:	113
Recommendations for Student Veterans.....	117
All potential veteran students should schedule an appointment with a local Veteran Administration to review GI Bill Benefits entitlements before enrolling in any college or university.....	117
If you are a disabled veteran, visit the university's Office of Disability and get information regarding accommodations.	117
Tour the campus environment yourself and speak to students.	117
Visit the registrar's office and get registration and process information.	117
Speak to a campus VA representative.	117
Implications for Colleges and Universities.....	118
Orientation	118
Identifying Campus and VA Representatives.....	118
Creation of a Veteran Resource Center	118
Recommendations for Further Studies.....	119
Conclusions.....	120
REFERENCES	121

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Student Veteran Rose.....	63
Table 2 Student Veteran Henry.....	64
Table 3 Student Veteran Judy.....	64
Table 4 Student Veteran John.....	65
Table 5 Student Veteran Jim.....	66
Table 6 Student Veteran Nick.....	66
Table 7 Student Veteran Bertha.....	67
Table 8 Student Veteran Lilly.....	68
Table 9 Student Veteran Rick.....	68
Table 10 Student Veteran Ron.....	69

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Schlossberg's Transition Model.....	18
Figure 2 Lazarus' Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping Model.....	34
Figure 3 Theme Diagram: Research Question 1.....	70
Figure 4 Thematic Diagram: Research Question 2.....	77
Figure 5 Thematic Diagram: Research Question 3.....	91

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all current military soldiers, veterans, and deceased soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the United States of America. Thank you for your service to our country and for putting a downpayment on freedom for us. I also dedicate this dissertation to three other individuals who entered my life in the 1970s and able to have an opportunity to thank them today.

I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Norman C. Francis, former President of the Xavier University of Louisiana. You accepted the Viet Nam Veterans by opening the doors of Xavier to us and earned a BA Degree. I say Thank you. Next, I dedicate this dissertation to Mrs. Audrey Oger Jean, who I met in 1975 when I was assigned to Phillips Elementary school as a probationary fifth-grade teacher. The days I spent observing you teach in your classroom is where I learned the mechanics of teaching. Many years I used your methods and strategies throughout my teaching career. What I learned from you brought new heights for me in my teaching career.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Ramona Jean Perkins, who supported and provided academic assistance to the Viet Nam veterans attending Xavier in the 1970s for many years. As Dr. Francis saw a need for educational assistance for veterans, you, as a student, were selected to provide tutoring to veterans. You rejuvenated their confidence by providing academic tutoring. I recall the success stories told by my fellow veterans. It was also evident in their improvement in coursework. Other Viet Nam veterans of Xavier and I thank you for your service. You were a part of our success.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Military personnel at all ranks were impacted by horrific acts of aggression, including invasions, armed conflicts, blockades, revolution riots, insurrection sabotages, terrorism, nuclear attacks, and genocides. Such acts contributed to military personnel's decision to move into civilian careers or enroll in institutions of higher learning for different opportunities (Winkie, 2021). A twenty-first-century example of this is documented below.

On September 11, 2001, the United States of America fell victim to terrorism when extremists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations hijacked four commercial airliners (Rodriguez, 2022). The hijackers had flown two commercial airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York City, hitting the north and south towers. The third airliner hit the west section of the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC, and the fourth airliner crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Approximately 3,000 lives fell victim to these terrorist attacks, which caused a major U.S. initiative that prevented terrorism and protected the United States. Terrorist acts, such as the one mentioned above, elicited patriotic responses and hence an inspiration for men and women enlisted in the armed forces.

According to DeSimone (2022), approximately 181,510 Americans enlisted for active duty service, and 72,908 enrolled in the reserves in response to the September 11th attacks. Years later, many enlisted fulfilled their military obligations, retired from the United States military, or received a medical discharge. Eventually, all returned to a civilian lifestyle. In this light, the discharged veterans decided on their next professional endeavor. Military work ethics, such as commitment, integrity, accountability, loyalty, and service before self, now had to be tested and transferred to a civilian career, whether part-time or full-time.

The transition process and the choice of a new job warranted soldiers to decide if preparation in higher education was necessary for post-military careers. According to Neitzel (2017), the advantages of earning a degree after completing military service improved job opportunities and eased the transition to a civilian lifestyle. Results from a study conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2022) indicated 87% of employers agreed hiring college graduates was a sound investment, as they tend to be better prepared for employment.

This researcher explored the challenges military veterans encountered as they transitioned from active duty to higher education, such as interacting with other students and established friendly relationships on campus (McGee, 2022), adjusted and fitted into a campus culture (Belanger et al., 2021), from an elevated (military) structure to a relaxed (higher education) environment (Jones, 2017).

According to Chandra (2021), a culture of nonacceptance of student veterans and the demand for veteran-specific student services were apparent in higher education. Robinson and Robinson (2022) argued veterans who continued their education with adequate support bolstered their key to success and eased the transition from soldier to civilian life. Student Support Services Programs (SSSPs) were examples of the kind of services veterans needed on college campuses.

The purpose of SSSPs was to escalate services that accommodated students with statuses of disabled, low-income, and first in the family who attended and received a college degree. SSSPs addressed financial aid, counseling, and health issues that hindered academic achievement. These support services were tools students used to break barriers (U S Department of Education, 2022). Previous studies, such as Falkey (2016), LeMire (2017), Alshuler and

Yarab (2018), and Lim et al. (2018) provided important information related to available to student support services and identified distinct groups that received administrative and academic assistance. One such group was the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) students.

In a research study conducted by Eisenberg et al. (2017), qualitative data were collected related to LGBTQIA+ students from higher education communities and available support resources. The study examined social climate indicators such as community, the well-being of individuals, and economic and psychological welfare, which are potential risk factors among the LGBTQIA+ community and populations in higher education. These factors were relevant as they dealt with the nonacceptance of same-sex couples, hate crimes, and employment discrimination. The Eisenberg et al. study provided evidence those social climate indicators impacted a person's ability to adapt to an unknown environment, thus impacting academic achievement. Results from this study highlighted similar challenges veterans encountered as they transitioned from soldiers to students.

Additionally, a study by Yssel et al. (2016) was conducted and investigated students with disabilities in higher education. Specifically, the researchers examined perceptions of the relationships between students and faculty and the possible effect of relationships on the college experience for students with disabilities. The results of this study revealed the importance of faculty-student relationships, independence/self-determination, and a desire to be like any other student.

According to Hattie (2020), teacher-student relationships positively affected student learning. When a teacher demonstrated a sense of caring, students with disabilities become

secure, comfortable, and feat equal to others despite a disability. These students also experienced increased levels of confidence.

As students developed trust and confidence in instructors, students worked harder, took risks, and was not afraid of mistakes (Hattie, 2020). Such was the case with veterans who returned home and enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Former military men and women were described by some students as outsiders, which made forming social connections difficult (McGee, 2022).

The importance of the faculty-student relationship was nothing new for veterans. In the military, soldiers considered the first sergeant their father, mother, and teacher. The first sergeant considered the soldiers under his/her command as sons, daughters, and students. He/she was responsible and ensured soldiers grasped soldier skills under his/her command. These skills were leadership skills, teamwork, communication skills, dependability, accountability, and work ethics. The relationship between first sergeant and soldier was a team effort and achieved the goal of competence in soldier skills.

In addition to the soldier skills, a research study conducted by Culpeper and Kan (2020) emphasized a bond and a respected relationship between instructor and student veterans which allowed the two to work jointly toward the goal of academic achievement. Results from Culpepper and Kan's study indicated that student veterans found learning to be enjoyable. These researchers cited building social relationships, interacting with traditional students and instructors, and establishing trust and confidence in staff and students as challenges. Once those barriers were removed, student veterans discovered ease as they transitioned and began to enjoy academic learning. In a further research study, Pedler et al. (2020) suggested positive relationships between student veterans and instructors eliminated feelings of intimidation.

Statement of the Problem

According to a research study by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs V A (2021), former military men and women encountered common challenges with re-adjustment. The challenges former military men and women faced as they transitioned were long-lasting and stressful, particularly as they moved from a highly structured military environment to a relaxed higher education environment (Jones, 2017). Favorably addressing these issues supported former military men and women who transitioned from military personnel to student veteran.

This research study addressed the challenges student veterans encountered when transitioned from military to civilian life. Among the challenges encountered were coping with the transition process into institutions of higher learning and identifying resources and support systems that institutions of higher education had in place.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women who transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. To assist higher education institutions in providing meaningful support to veterans, in 2013, the Obama administration developed a series of "8 Keys to Success" designed to assist veterans and service members in transitioning into higher education classrooms and thriving once they are there (Baker, 2013). The series of success factors included:

- Trusted the campus community to promote success for veterans.
- Ensured consistent and sustained support from the university campus.
- Ensured veterans received academic counseling.

- Coordinated and centralized campus efforts and created a designated space for veterans.
- Involved local communities, organizations, and government agencies.
- Used specific instruments to collect and monitor veterans' information.
- Provided comprehensive professional training for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
- Developed systems that ensure the sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

Successfully incorporating multiple aspects of the aforementioned “Keys to Success” served as one crucial step minimized the challenges of veterans' who transitioned to uncharted territories.

According to the U. S. Department of Veteran Affairs (2022), the University of Chicago received marked results as a participating member of the Military Assistance Program, Principles of Excellence Program, the “8 Keys to Success” Program, and the Yellow Ribbon Program. The university provided each student veteran and dependents with a cost of tuition plan, an academic plan with a timeline, a financial and an academic advisor, and acknowledged deployments such as students who were members of the military received official military orders and reported to their assigned units for a specific military troop movement overseas. The college or university acknowledged deployments via received student military orders and reported for active military duty.

According to Brown (2021), the University of Chicago was ranked number six out of 443 national universities. Schools were ranked according to accepted indicators of excellence, such as enrollment, federal programs enrollment, outcomes, graduation rate, and student veteran

services. According to the U. S. Department of Veteran Affairs (2022), listed below are highlighted accomplishments made by the University of Chicago:

- **Enrollment**
 - In the 2022 academic school year, the University of Chicago registered 17,834 students.
 - There was an increase of 55 student veteran enrollments for the 2022 academic school.

- **University of Chicago Federal Programs**
 - Principles of Excellence Program
 - “8 Keys for Success” Program
 - Yellow Ribbon Program
 - Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- **University of Chicago Outcomes**
 - In 2018, the University of Chicago established the Veteran Scholars initiative. This comprehensive program provided customized admissions, pre-orientation, advising, housing and resources that welcomed and supported the success of veterans.
 - The University of Chicago’s initiative was recognized for supporting student veterans.
 - The University of Chicago ranked #2 in Best Colleges for Veterans by U.S. News and World Report.
 - The University of Chicago ranked #6 in National Universities.
 - The University of Chicago ranked #12 in Best Value Schools.

- The University of Chicago was named the nation's best college for veterans.

Research Questions

This phenomenological study explored the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women who transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. The study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What challenges do veteran students encounter when enrolling in institutions of higher learning?

RQ2: How do veteran students cope with transitioning from soldier to student?

RQ3: What resources and support systems are institutions of higher learning utilizing to sustain former military men and women in their transition from soldier to student?

Significance of the Study

This research study identified transition strategies for former military men and women as they matriculated to an educational setting and informed institutions of higher education of the support services and structures needed to be examined what was in place and what needed to be added. This study's findings provided veterans with resources that guided transitions into higher education.

Resources included, but was not be limited to, the development and functional implementation of a student veterans crises line, student veteran center, student veteran organization, student veteran spiritual advisor, student veteran cultural activity developer, disabled student veteran parking, student veteran for student government association, and priority veteran registration and orientation. Further resources included an organized veteran student support team with representatives from the institution responsible for admissions, registration, financial aid, veterans' benefits, academic advising, student health, personal or

mental health counseling, career advising, disabilities services, and any other office of the institution that provides support to veteran students on campus.

Institutions of higher learning utilized the findings from this research study and developed operational manuals. These operational manuals included, but was not be limited to, the student veteran manual, credit transfer procedures, a procedure for filing complaints, academic planning manual, student disabled veteran's manual, financial aid, tuition assistance, and military observance manual. All of this was housed in a dedicated office space on the university's campus.

Karmelita (2018) and Whilby (2022) conducted studies on the challenges of former military men and women encountered as student veterans transitioned from the military to student veterans. The first researcher, Karmelita (2018), conducted a narrative study and determined the necessary components to establish a program to assist adults in transition. Participants for the study were recruited and selected from a similar transition program for adult learners and enrolled or considered enrolling in an institution of higher learning. Participants provided lived experiences for the research and perspectives of postsecondary support through interviews and observation notes. The findings of this research indicated six elements needed for a successful transition program: (1) providing a genuine college experience, (2) relating the curriculum to real-life experiences, (3) connecting students to support each other, (4) integrating technology, (5) providing remediation, and (6) fostering effective relationships.

The second researcher, Whilby (2022), examined the lived experiences of international students who were ethnoculturally and linguistically diverse (ECLD) and experienced an academic transition to postsecondary education. Whilby's focused pertained to the challenges those students encountered while transitioned to academic writing and teaching approaches in a

Western Canadian university. The participants were selected based on educational backgrounds and the lived experiences of international students outside of Canada. Eight participants from a university in Western Canada, ethnoculturally and linguistically diverse, participated in the study.

The sharing of participants' lived experiences educated faculty, staff, and students about the unique experiences and challenges students faced with the academic transition. These experiences and challenges were crucial for policymakers that made sound decisions for transitional support initiatives for international students.

The results of Whilby's study (2022) revealed that linguistic, social, and cultural factors that affect academic transition. Awareness of international students' experiences educated the university's decisions to develop more effective transitional support programs for international students,

Future research studies were also necessary and assessed Schlossberg's 4S Transition Model to comprehend the transitioning of former military men and women from military to student veterans. Schlossberg's Transition Model (Schlossberg et al., 1995) proposed four factors that influence an individual's scope to manage the transition: (1) situation, (2) self, (3) support, and (4) strategies. The situation factor outlined incidents an individual experiences while transitioning. The self-factor expounded on how encounters influenced an individual's transition. The support factor was the aid accessible during the transition. The strategy factor focused on existing coping strategies that helped guide the transition. The significance of Schlossberg's Transition Model was discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Overview of Methodology

This phenomenological study explored the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. A qualitative research design was utilized to answer the study's research questions. According to Bhandari (2020), this process involved gathering and interpreting data from lived experiences to understand a phenomenon better. The researcher utilized this approach to conduct semi-structured interviews, took observational field notes, and constructed a survey instrument to gain insight into the lived experiences of each participant.

The researcher examined the lived experiences of former military men and women helped the researcher to understand a veteran's life phenomenon. According to Delve and Limpaecher (2022), a phenomenon was an event occurred in one's life. This study used structured interviews to extract a description of these events and occurrences as told by the participants.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants. Purposive sampling, as defined by Nikolopoulou (2022), is a process whereby the researcher, at his/her preference and understanding of the topic, selects a sample of individuals from a population for participation in a research study. The main goal of purposive sampling was to select individuals ideal for assisting the researcher in addressing the research questions.

The sample size for the study consisted of 10 former military men and women who shared those aspects of their lived military experiences that were relevant to the study's research questions.

Delimitations

Delimitations described the content of the research or established parameters. Delimitations were self-imposed restrictions applied to the to study compared to limitations that

had inherited limits to the methodology (Miles & Scott, 2017). Furthermore, delimitations furthered limitations actively put into place by the researcher to control factors that affected the results or focused more specifically on a problem (Theofanidis et al., 2019). In this phenomenological study, the following was declared delimitations:

- The study only included institutions of higher learning in Louisiana.
- Participants were former military men and women.
- The focus or scope of the study was on veterans and their transitional challenges from military to college campuses.
- The study will not focus on degree completion.

Assumptions

Assumptions are elements that were out of the researcher's control. In this study, it was assumed the responses provided by the respondents was truthful.

The researcher also assumed that a sample size of 10 participants was adequate for understanding the phenomenon and the data collected from this sample size was applicable and appropriate information for the study. Finally, the researcher assumed the results from this study had implications for veterans in institutions of higher learning, regardless of the veterans' locale and area of study.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this research study, the following terms were defined as follows:

Commander referred to a military officer in charge of a command. He/ she was an officer with the rank of captain or lieutenant in charge of 100-250 soldiers. The responsibilities of a company commander was to develop soldiers to perform their military duties (Crisp, 2021).

First Sergeant was the assistant to the commander. He was the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the company commander and oversaw management of all allocated human and material resources in accordance with Army Policy, and other official guidelines. He was accountable and responsible for the maintenance of organizational property (Crisp, 2021).

Institution of Higher Learning was a college or university that offered academic studies beyond high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was represented by a code that identified specific job specialties in the United States military (Veteran.com, 2021).

PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) was a psychological reaction that occurred after experiencing a highly stressful event (Patterson, 2022).

Veteran referred to an individual who served and completed his military obligation in the armed forces (SVA, 2019).

Veteran Student referred to a current or former member of the active-duty military, the National Guard, or Reserves regardless of deployment status, combat experience, legal veteran status, or GI Bill use enrolled in an Institution of Higher Learning (SVA, 2021).

Organization of the Document

In summary, the Introduction provided background information on veterans and factors that affected transitioning out of the military. The transitional challenges the veterans faced were described in the Statement of the Problem, followed by an explanation of how the findings from this study aided institutions of higher learning in providing an infrastructure of support for military students. The questions that guided the research study were also provided in Chapter One, along with an overview of the methodology and the sampling method.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review, provided an in-depth review of related studies on the transition process, specifically, veterans transitioned from military to civilian life. Chapter Three provided a more detailed description of the study's research design and the rationale for the chosen methodology. Participant demographics and the type of sampling method used for the study was discussed. Finally, details regarding the instrumentation, data collected procedures, and data analyzed techniques was discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review included a wide range of studies written by scholars and authors who know about the intersectionality of military life and civilian life. A research study conducted by Yin (2018) explained how members of society who were unfamiliar with general aspects of transitioning from military to civilian life misinterpreted or ignored research on the transition process. On the contrary, knowledgeable researchers viewed transition research as an opportunity that deepened their understanding of the transition process and discovered additional information how that supported student veterans as they moved from a military culture to a civilian lifestyle.

The literature reviewed began with an explanation of the theoretical framework followed by discussions of the Schlossberg Transition Model, the military culture, the GI Bill, and the views on veterans in higher education. Next, studies addressed the challenges of transitioning from soldier to civilian life are discussed, followed by a detailed explanation of Lazarus' Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping. The literature review concluded with relevant studies on how veterans navigated interactions between the military and institutions of higher learning.

Theoretical Framework

Schlossberg's Transition Model

Schlossberg's Transition Model was developed by Nancy K. Schlossberg in 1995 and updated in subsequent years. The Schlossberg Model focused on an individual's transition type, impact, position, and resources. Additionally, how a person coped and the process used was based on a person's situation, self, support, and strategies. Schlossberg's (1995) transition model served as the theoretical framework for this descriptive phenomenological research study. This

model emphasized how student veterans coped with transition, feelings, process utilized transitioned, and recalled the process of change according to Schlossberg's four types of transition which were situation, self, supports, and strategies, referred to as the 4Ss of the transition model (Schlossberg, 2008).

Schlossberg's Transition Model (Schlossberg et al., 1995) posed four factors: situation self, support, and strategies that influenced a student veteran's scope to cope with the transition. The first factor, situation, outlined incidents student veterans encountered in transition. Self, the next factor, expounded how encounters impacted a student veteran in transition. The third factor, support, referred to the help that was accessible and eased student veteran's transition. The final factor, strategies, addressed solutions used by student veterans to cope with issues during the transition. The 4-S factors furnished an avenue for individuals to comprehend the factors that impacted student veteran's transition outcomes and coping resources that student veterans utilized that made sense of control during the transition process (Goodman et al., 2006). Schlossberg's Transition Model, when applied, was effective in comprehending and helped student veterans adjust to transitioning.

Schlossberg's theory advanced into a framework that highlighted and defined coping mechanisms student veterans utilized the transition. (Evans et al., 1998). Therefore, Schlossberg's Transition Model was chosen and applied to the student veterans' transition because the model provided an adaptable structure for the lifestyle changes of soldiers to student veterans.

Schlossberg also referred to transition as event or non-event when roles, habits, relationships, and regular routines resulted in a change within individuals (Anderson et al., 2022). The individual's perception of experiencing an event, or non-event, played a key role in

the transition process. For an individual to comprehend the meaning of transition, consideration was given to the context and type that impacted the transition on an individual. The transition types were situation, self, supports, and strategies (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995).

Schlossberg's Transition Model (see Figure 1) was applied to this research study as the theoretical framework. This framework addressed encounters, experiences, and needs related to student veterans, with recommended support services organized within the 4 Ss of the transition model for student veterans. Roberts (2022) conducted a qualitative research study that examined transition experiences encountered by undergraduate students departed health profession areas, such as radiologic, nursing, and dental hygiene, at East Tennessee State University. The results indicated alignment with the theoretical framework of Schlossberg's Transition Model (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1991; Schlossberg et al., 1995). Roberts (2022) acknowledged Schlossberg and reiterated that the occurrence or no occurrence of events impacted one's assumptions.

Figure 1 Schlossberg's Transition Model



Note. StudentAffairs.com: (Evans, N.J., Forney, D., S., Guido, F., M., Patton, I., D., and Renn, R., A., (2010). Asynchronous RA Training.

Schlossberg's model addressed four suggested resources for coping, including situation, self, support, and strategies. Unlike many classmates, veterans' experiences are vastly differed from most student populations in college. Whether one served in combat or not, the military responsibilities and experiences acquired remained unparalleled to nonveterans. Whilby (2022) added that individuals reviewed available coping resources during the transition. Individuals' approaches to coping differed from each other.

Parsons and Ash (2022) conducted a research study and examined National Guard members' transition challenges. The findings of the research study indicated that challenges of

National Guard students were the same as those for student veterans. The Schlossberg Transition Model was implemented and addressed coping issues for these National Guard students.

According to Schlossberg (1995), transition was any event or non-event that resulted in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles. Embracing Schlossberg's model of transition in this research study meant accepting the findings of events or nonevents that affected an individual's roles, assumptions, relationships, and routines of student veterans' ability to move through a transition. More importantly, this theory allowed individuals to understand the effects of Schlossberg's resources for coping, including situation, self, support, and strategies veterans used as they transitioned into a new life (Anderson et al., 2011).

Situation. The situation was assessed based on the degree that influenced factors such as (a) trigger (i.e., the factor that started the transition); (b) timing (i.e., good or bad time for the transition); (c) control (i.e., the influence and power of an individual during the transition); (d) duration (i.e., the change permanent or temporary by the transition as); (e) role change (i.e., the responsibilities, duties, and positions of a person); (f) similar experiences (i.e., previous transitions are similar to the current transition); (g) concurrent stress (i.e., stressors caused by the transition); and (h) assessment (i.e., the situation is positive, negative (Schlossberg, 1995).

A service member adjusted to transition positively or negatively depended on the timing of the situation. As student veterans entered an institution of higher learning, factors indicated affected an individual as situations occurred. Student registration triggered stressful situations for veterans due to the time it took to register for a class.

Self. In a research study conducted by DiRamio et al. (2008), demographic and personal psychological characteristics were two categories of resources. The demographic characteristics were ethnic origin, gender, educational level, and marital status. The psychological

characteristics were intelligence, emotional state, temperament, and personality. When former military men and women enrolled in higher education, many faced the reality of academic deficiency and needed academic support. Service members entered higher education perform under different values that were difficult to adapt to after leaving the military.

Furthermore, Baechtold and De Sawal (2009) suggested former military men and women re-examined themselves for a world in which they must become adjusted. Livingston (2019) agreed with Baechtold and De Sawal and further added although academics was the focus for student veterans in higher education, adjusting to a new environment affected academic performance.

Support. The Schlossberg's Transition Model categorized four entities related to support. Each category included a network of friends, institutional support, relationships with others, and strength of family support. With the absence of transitional support from colleges, former military men and women face difficulty. A veteran's transition success depended on the amount and level of support received from family, friends, and other resources such as church pastors, counselors, and veteran support groups. According to Veneziano (2021), the transition process was eased when former military men and women joined veteran organizations for support on campus and opened to differences.

Strategies. This factor described an individual's coping in response to stressful situations. Schlossberg et al. (2012) argued that coping was not behavior with conviction. Coping strategies was determined by one's responses to changing the situation and controlled the problem and stress after the transition.

According to McBain (2012), colleges or universities found a lack of support for student veterans. The research study further added veterans appreciated advisors, faculty, and staff when they know the military culture or how to speak their language.

Whilby (2022) confirmed the 4S system of situation, self, support, and strategies positively affected one's adjustment to change. Each factor had variables that affected individuals transitioned.

Schlossberg's four types of transition emphasized how student veterans coped with transition feelings, processes utilized during the transition, and recalled the change process. All of those transition types contributed to factors provided answers for the study's research questions.

In an updated version of the model, according to Roberts (2022), the second edition of the Schlossberg Model (Schlossberg et al., 1995) indicated three clear types of transitions associated with college students: anticipated transitions, unanticipated transitions, and non-events. The transitions defined were as follows:

- Anticipated transitions referred to a predicted outcome of an event.
- Unanticipated transitions referred to unpredicted or unscheduled events, such as car accidents.
- Non-events referred to events expected to occur but do not, such as failure to be admitted into law school.

Student veterans encountered transitions from time and through phases, which Schlossberg named moving in, moving through, and moving out of transitions (Schlossberg et al., 1995).

Moving in, moving through, and moving out was described as the transitioning process for student veterans. The moving-in type of transition referred to one who mastered the rules and regulations of an organization or institution and complied, such as a soldier who enrolled in an institution and now becomes a student veteran learning its rules and regulations indicated in the student handbook. A second type of transition, moving through, was when an individual acknowledged, experienced, and adjusted to the new environment. Here the student veteran adjusted to the institution and confronted the challenges of transition by functioning satisfactorily in this new environment. Moving out of this type of transition was a culmination of the transition process. The journey of the student veteran comes to an end when they completed the required program of study, and a degree is bestowed by the university president.

Schlossberg's four major factors may or may not impacted a person's ability to cope with transition. In the next section of this research study, the researcher explored organizational culture and the characteristics of an organization's member's behavior such as emotions and reactions to incidents.

Organizational Culture

Kapur (2020) and Schein (1999) defined organizational culture as a set of collaborative assumptions related to an organization's values, expected behavior, and normal beliefs. These assumptions were formal and informal rules and regulations such as standards, expectations, and norms that stir up acceptable or unacceptable behavior for members of the organization. Schein (2010) described the personality of an organization and the reasons for the behavior of its members, such as emotions and reactions to incidents.

The Organization Culture Model discussed in this section of the research study paved the way for organizations relative to culture. In the next section, military culture addressed an

understanding of the military organization as applied to its culture. Adhocracy organizational model culture emphasized putting into practice creative skills contributed in an effective manner leading to enrichment.

Military Culture

Military culture, as defined by the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC, 2019), embraced an organization's foundational values, beliefs, and behaviors consistent with its role and identified mission. Military culture changed consistently to maintain alignment with the military's mission. According to McCormick et al., (2019), the culture of the military was vital. Sensible values, such as honor, duty, integrity, loyalty, personal courage, respect, and selfless service, defined the military culture.

According to McCormick et al. (2019), military culture was important because it represented the structure to pilot exemplary behavior in the military. The need for additional research on the acceptance and long-lasting effect of military culture better addressed the needs of US military veterans' benefits such as healthcare, education, and home ownership. Expanding the vitalness and understanding of military culture was crucial for veterans it enhanced core values and beliefs and closed the culture gap between civilian society and its military.

Pease et al. (2016) indicated veterans of the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) era wars experienced problems such as education benefits, health care, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) issues. The culture of the military continued to be essential because it closed the gap between civilian society and the military.

Jacobs (2014) argued language and culture defined students. Understanding the language and culture of an institution helped students academically and socially. Furthermore, Jacobs

posited that language, and the elimination of cultural barriers was crucial for the success of former military men and women in higher education.

The findings of Mayott and Seal (2014) agreed with Jacobs (2014). To understand military culture, one must understand the person's perceptions, beliefs, and expectations. Additionally, Koenig et al. (2014) described culture as organizational and perspectives as a standard practice.

Furthermore, Hall (2011) suggested former military men and women was a diverse group of individuals. Many perceived military culture as the opposite of the civilian environment. For the research study, culture was defined as norms of behavior, a code of manners, language, customs and beliefs, dress, and rituals (Reger et al., 2008). A research study conducted by Arminio et al. (2014) detailed three components of military culture that affected former military men and women in transition: collectivism, rigid hierarchy, and masculinity.

Collectivism

According to Arminio et al. (2014b), collectivism in military culture was when one sees oneself as part of the group and defined the goals of the group as a priority over personal goals. Military unity developed group unification and unit identification, leading to a positive spirit, confidence, and preparation for combat (Arminio et al., 2014b; Petrovich, 2012). Assimilation into military culture was an experience all members of the military shared. Demers (2013) found basic combat training gave recruits a new purpose and goal. Petrovich further asserted that individuals enlisted in the military come from many diverse backgrounds and experiences. Navon and Morag's (2004) research findings agreed that the military gave personnel a new identity, social life, new ways, practices, and eligibility for GI Bill benefits such as home loans,

healthcare, and education benefits. Collectivism in this research study was important because it addressed the fact individuals saw themselves as part of a group rather than separate and apart.

Rigid Hierarchy

Arminio (2014) focused on the hierarchical structures and social relations between management members over subordinates. Each military branch had a similar chart of authority structure consistent across the military.

Upon arrival at basic military training (BMT), recruits were introduced to the basics of military culture with a new set of rules and standards that was the core of the military's rigid hierarchy. These standards, such as proper haircut, marching, photo identification, uniforms, saluting, and curfew, are regulations mandated for each service member and enforced by members of a higher rank (Suzuki & Kawakami, 2016).

According to Absher (2022), in 1951, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) was authorized and implemented by the Executive Orders of the President of the United States pursuant his authority under Article 36, UCMJ (10 USC § 836). The purpose of the UCMJ was to execute laws to protect discipline within all ranks of the military, promoted satisfactory order in the armed forces, and mandated consequences for non-compliance by any member of the armed service.

The UCMJ was a set of laws implemented and addressed criminal acts such as drunk driving, drug use, rape, larceny, and murder, in addition to conduct affecting satisfactory order and discipline in the military. Those laws included offenses such as absence without leave (AWOL), disrespect towards superiors, desertion, dereliction of duty, and failure to obey orders. Military members were accountable to a strict standard of conduct which is driven by all levels

of authority in the military according to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the Manual for Courts-Martial (Meyer, 2015).

According to McCormick et al. (2019), the military was an isolated and self-sufficient culture, and contracted negotiations were the only interactions with the corporate environment. After service members departed the military, they continued to live by the same military standards. According to Suzuki and Kawakami (2016), many private and public companies viewed military culture as excessively strict and regulated-driven. Although the military had strict rules and regulations was mainly for military members to work as a team (Hall, 2011).

Masculinity

In the earlier years of the military, the draft mandated all males 18 years of age serve their country by completing a military obligation of 2 years. Though females were not mandated by the draft, they were inducted into the military on a voluntary basis. The draft was intended for males.

According to Strong et al. (2018), the military traditionally consisted of male-dominated individuals by design, the draft. The research study conducted by (Arminio et al., 2014) suggested 85.4% of active-duty military are men. All advertisements were designed to attract men. The military continued to assume male dominance over female members of the military. A review of male vs. female rank, males outranked females in all branches. A disparity of promotion between males and females was only a portion of male dominance in the military.

A study conducted by Rumann and Hamrick (2012) suggested the use of cadence songs by commanders amplified male dominance in basic military training. Though the military bared these types of cadence songs, they continued to exist. The study acknowledged an increase in diversity. However, the military culture had not transformed into equalization for men and

women. Thomas (2022) further suggested collectivism, masculinity, and rigid hierarchy affected former military men and women in transition within the military culture. The culture of the military as a society lived according to its own set of values, beliefs, history, and sociology, such as a code of conduct, oath of office, customs and beliefs, dress, and rituals.

The next section of this research study provided more detailed information relative to the GI Bill.

GI Bill (Brief History and Purpose)

A review of the GI Bill is well-documented, with veterans receiving benefits dated back to 1636 (V.A. History, 2021). The Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony implemented a law to support returning disabled soldiers in the colony. Years later, the Continental Congress of 1776 provided pensions to Revolutionary War-disabled soldiers. The GI Bill is connected to this study because of its educational benefits awarded to soldiers. Veterans utilized GI Bill benefits to fund education costs, home loans, and healthcare.

Soldiers who returned from military service required attention and assistance in areas such as medical, unemployment, education, and housing to continue life after military service. In the early years dated back to 1636, soldiers who returned were given very little assistance from the government. In 1944, the U S Government addressed this issue and created the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (National Archives, 2022).

According to the National Archives (2022), the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, referred to as the GI Bill, became law on June 22, 1944. The purpose was to address and decrease unemployment and the possibility of postwar depression among returning veterans. The GI Bill assisted veterans who returned with adjustment to civilian life in the areas of education, hospitalization, purchase of homes, and especially education benefits for tuition. This act also

provided tuition, equipment, books, supplies, subsistence, and counseling services for veterans to continue their education in school or college. A research study performed by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS, 2017) suggested the overall goal of the GI Bill was to provide opportunities such as higher education, technical training, healthcare, and home ownership for former military men and women veterans of the U.S. military, and that goal continued to be a high priority.

In a summary report by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA, 2022), the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act was signed into law on August 16, 2017, by former President Donald J. Trump. The “Forever Bill” was named in honor of Harry W. Colmery, a national commander of the American Legion. He wrote the language for the original GI Bill in 1944. The new bill increased benefits for housing, education, and dependents.

A study conducted by Hill (2019) found former military men and women were a growing population on college campuses. In the United States, about 4% of all undergraduate students are veterans. Furthermore, Hill (2019) agreed with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2017) estimated 5 million former military men and women registered for universities or colleges by 2022. According to Sachdev (2021), there were five advantages of having a strong support system. They were improved self-esteem, a sense of belonging, improved overall health and well-being, reduced stress, and emotional support. Student veterans relied on the benefits of the GI Bill to fund their education. This research study provided information for student veterans in the application of the GI Bill.

Veterans in Higher Education

Former military men and women enrolled in colleges and universities after military service to become competitive in the employment workforce. Skills acquired in the military did

not align with civilian occupations such as combat arms or infantry. Many former military men and women retrained for other occupations for employment.

According to Bryant (2021), approximately one million Americans utilized GI Bill® benefits for higher education programs. In 2020, student veterans who pursued higher education degrees amounted to 80% enrolled full-time. Student veteran postponed enrolling in higher education to serve their country. Student veterans are often older, married, and work full- or part-time jobs while in school. Therefore, veterans tended to study and work in fields unrelated to their military specialty.

According to the Student Veteran Census Survey (SVA, 2019), nearly two-in-three student veterans' major or field of study was not similar to their military specialization. Student veterans-maintained motivations for taking courses was one of the factors contributed to the fracture:

- Enrolled in college or university to change careers
- Was more competitive in the job market and job promotion
- Maintained their knowledge and skills
- Better pay to support families and self
- Career Advancement and Career Achievement
- Self-achievement
- Specialized training certification within an industry or job field
- Future financial stability

Higher education policies existed to assist academic growth and academic achievement at higher education institutions. It was important to understand how higher education policies were designed by higher education institutions By doing so higher education policy recommendations

can then be formed. These policies provided guidance for parents relative to enrollment, financial aid, housing, and tuition.

A research study conducted by Wisker and Masika (2017) confirmed that higher education policies were designed to assist, support, and enhance academic growth and achievement for all students. The research study conducted by Cheslock et al. (2016) further confirmed that institutions consider students' academic growth and achievement when developing policies for management, operations and fiscal environment in setting goals, outcomes, and policies that could possibly affect students. In another research study, Deming and Figlio (2016) encouraged higher education institutions to developed and implemented policies to promote academic achievement as well as being held institutionally accountable.

Challenges Transitioning from Soldier to Civilian Life

Life in the military was significantly different from life as a civilian. Transition to military life began the day a cadet arrives at basic training. Men and women who entered the military was introduced to an occupation based on aptitude test results. This was a rite of passage because one transforms from being a civilian to becoming a soldier. Men and women learned a new way of life. Soldiers lived by the values of discipline, respect, and loyalty. Veterans completing a military obligation found themselves struggling upon returning home. In a research article by Morse (2022), former military men and women encountered various struggles as they returned home from completing military obligations. Those struggles were caused by relating to others not aware of experiences, changed environment, PTSD, reconnecting with friends, and employment. Each veteran's struggles will differ from the others.

Zaber and Wenger (2021) suggested veterans faced an inflated economy that made it difficult for Americans to achieve a middle-class lifestyle status due to challenges such as

unemployment, pandemic health issues, cost of living, and career advancement. Those challenges were trends veterans encountered as they transitioned from military to civilian workforce progresses. Furthermore, a research study conducted by Ramchand (2021) further added veteran challenges included mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), housing, unemployment, and suicide.

According to Gumber and Vespa (2020), challenges were disturbing. There were indicators evidenced veterans have overcome transition challenges. For example, indicators such as gainful employment, enrollment in higher education, regular medical attention, and stability served as evidence veterans answered and conquered transitioning challenges. Transitions were completed when veterans adjusted to the environment. According to Stilwell (2022), transitions for veterans were completed according to timelines set by the veteran who met the needs of each veteran. Those needs were employment, education, health care, and managing expectations.

A research study by the U.S. Census Bureau (2019) indicated veterans are often not successful in completing college. The study indicated only 26% of veterans 25 years of age received a bachelor's degree. Veterans influenced this percentage of degree completion and continued with the challenges of transitioning from soldier to civilian.

There was a vast difference between the college and military life structure. College life embraced a very lax environment, while the military embraced a very high-energy lifestyle. These differences in lifestyles were challenging for individuals. College students consistently challenged institutional authority by closely reviewing the factual basis for claims. Veterans were trained to follow orders.

Elliot (2015) compared traditional students to student veterans. His research study indicated that traditional students challenged authority. Student veterans are trained to be

obedient and trained to respect and obey authority. Traditional students developed personal viewpoints, while student veterans were accustomed to adhering to authority.

Student veterans and traditional students encountered several challenges during the transition process, such as financial aid, homesickness, adapting, and other factors affecting a student's college career. According to Terry (2018), obstacles faced by student veterans included missing home, financial concerns, and adapting to a new environment. He further confirmed those obstacles hindered the success path to academic success. The research study results revealed barriers were divided into intellectual, financial, and emotional categories.

The academic barriers for student veterans involved transitioning from the military to a college environment. Creating a Veteran Resource Center on campus provides a haven designed for veterans to communicate with other veterans who understand veteran experiences. Azpeitia and Emerson (2022) confirmed that Veterans Resource Centers satisfy student veterans' needs, such as counseling, career, academics, and VA benefits certification. The study surveyed 130 student veterans to determine access, services, and utilization of the Veteran Resource Center. The results indicated that student veterans' needs were met with the assistance of a Veteran Resource Center.

In addition, veterans' primary financial barrier is managing educational expenses and personal finances. Student veterans continued to achieve despite these barriers. The Veterans Resource Center was an excellent resource support for student veterans.

As the number of veterans increased on college campuses pursuing an advanced degree, institutions of higher education benefited from guaranteed additional funds to develop and implement support services for student veterans. Institutions of higher education rarely included

funding in their annual budget review for specific veteran projects. The institution's lack of funding made it difficult to support proposed projects for student veterans.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE, 2022), in 2013, a college scorecard was developed by the U.S. Department of Education in conjunction with the US Government as an online tool for the public, parents, prospective students, and student veterans to view. Interested prospective students were allowed to view a college or university's cost and value in five areas such as graduation rate, cost per semester, employment rate, average amount borrowed, loan default rate, programs, and veteran information. These institutions were in dire need of governmental financial assistance to support student veteran projects.

To assist institutions of higher education in support of student veterans, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE, 2012), under the leadership of Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, awarded more than \$14.3 million in higher education. Those awards were designed to assist institutions of higher education in developing programs to support student veterans. The awards stipulated assistance and support for student veterans transitioning from military life to civilian life Department of Education, (2012). The U.S. government initiative further emphasized the need to help train and recognize student veterans' challenges when entering community colleges. Chief information officers developed and provided training opportunities for student veterans in the areas of data science training programs, information technology trainees, health systems specialists, and deputy chief information officers.

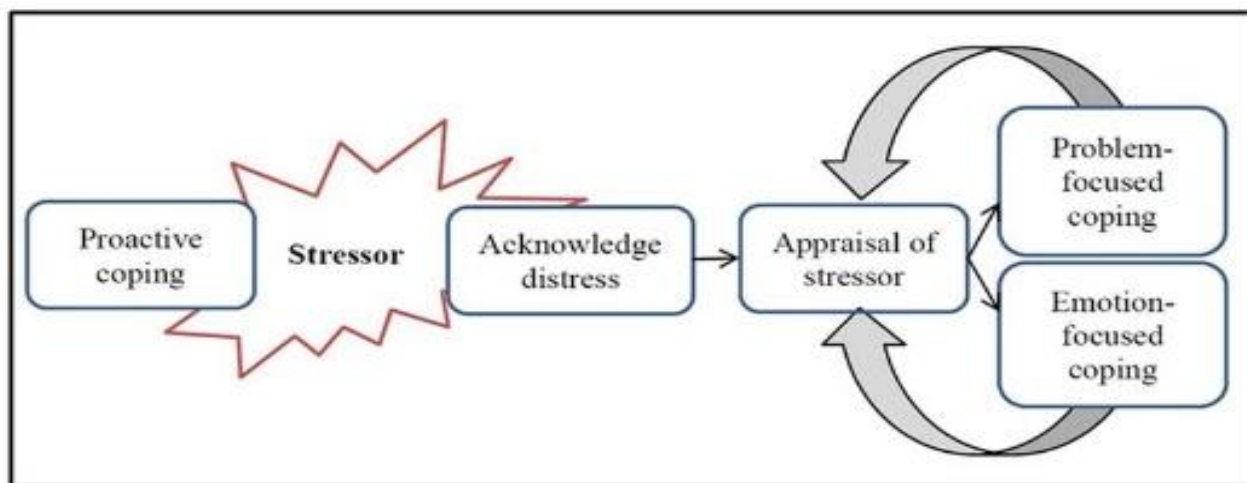
Lazarus' Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping

Transitioning from soldier to civilian was a disaster for some returning home after serving in the military. Former military men and women faced challenges such as communicating with other students, adapting to a new environment, health issues, and personal problems. Many of

these challenges were burdensome, and veterans benefited from strategies that helped to cope with transitioning along with addressing the stress that accompanied the transition process.

As early as 1987, Lazarus and Folkman developed a model (see Figure 2) that described stress in 1966 (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The model emphasized the person-environment transaction (proactive coping) influenced the individual's stress response.

Figure 2 Lazarus' Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping Model



Note. ResearchGate: Jensen, C., Forlini, C., Partridge, B., & Hall, W. (2016). Australian university students' coping strategies and use of pharmaceutical stimulants as cognitive enhancers.

Lazarus' Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping Model and Schlossberg's Transition Model indicated two distinct connections related to this proposed research study. The first connection was Lazarus Model of Stress, Appraisal, and Coping Model performs assessments of stressors and resources. The second connection was Schlossberg's Transition Model. This model focused on an individual's transition type, resources, and how an individual copes, the process utilized is based on a person's situation, self, support, and strategies.

Sanderson (2022) explained psychologist Richard Lazarus developed the transactional theory model of stress and coping in 1960. The transactional model stress was based on two

assessment factors: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal was the assessment of the stressors, and secondary appraisal was the assessment of the resource. An individual evaluated the stressors (primary appraisal) when an individual realized the presence of stressors. Resources to overcome stress (secondary assessment) were applied the moment stressors took effect. Coping strategies impacted primary and secondary inspections selected by an individual. Psychological well-being, social functioning, and long-term health were affected by the stress response to coping. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the transactional theory model appraised the stimuli of stress and coping consistently in the environment. When stimuli are appraised as harmful, challenging, or threatening, the appraisal process generated emotions.

The Schlossberg Transition Model was used for this research study because it focused on an individual's transition type, impact, position, and resources. Additionally, how a person coped and processes used was based on a person's situation, self, support, and strategies (4S). This model emphasized how student veterans coped with transition, feelings, process utilized while transitioning, and recalled the process of change according to Schlossberg's four types of transition which are situation, self, supports, and strategies referred to as the 4Ss of the transition model (Schlossberg, 2008).

The research study of Hopwood et al. (2022) defined person-environment transactions as how an environment affects the behavior of an individual. The study examined the individual, the environment, and the transactions with his/her personality while in that specific environment. An individual's behavior was characterized by the environment, which was fuel for a specific behavior. Stressors played a vital role in one's behavior. The unusual behavior of a veteran was associated with a diagnosed case of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

In a research study conducted by Patterson (2022), transition stress and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were crucial elements that caused havoc in the transition from soldier to civilian. Transition stress was a high level of stress tied to moving into civilian life. PTSD was a psychological disorder that affected a veteran's physical well-being and mental and social. PTSD in veterans was associated with exposure to combat, acts of terrorism, experiencing sexual assault, and experiencing the death of a loved one.

Additionally, Clemmenson (2022) concluded returning soldiers encountered challenges during the transitioning process. Veterans, as they began the process of transitioning, encountered experiences such as difficulty relating and communicating with others. In their absence, families may have created new traditions, and overall, adjusting to an environment they once knew now is unknown. Clemmenson (2022) further concluded completion of military obligation and soldiers returning home was a rite of passage for former military men and women. These soldiers may or may not have been prepared for this change in life. The stressors, such as employment, health care, education, resume writing, relationships, housing, and financial stability, was a distraction or stressful situation.

Transitioning from military service to a civilian lifestyle was no easy task. Daily activities was difficult until a routine was established and became a part of one's life. Everyone's transitioning is different. Transition was tailored for everyone, depending on their preparation for civilian life. One must remember this new life for former military men and women was very difficult to manage. The need for support services was crucial. These services, offered through the local Veterans Affairs, provided former military men and women services such as health care, financial counseling, stress, education, and of course, procedures for applying for and receiving benefits for the GI Bill.

The researcher for this study identified problems student veterans faced daily lead to stress. The Lazarus model addressed problem-based focused coping and emotion-based focused coping strategies useful to student veterans in transition.

PTSD-Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD was defined by the veteran's administration (VA, 2022) as a mental health problem caused by individuals observing life-threatening or traumatic events. Individuals with PTSD were a part of a disastrous event or series of events such as witnessing or being part of active combat, bombings, horrific motor vehicle accidents, or someone passing away. PTSD can manifest through a series of symptoms, such as interpersonal relationships and sleep disorders and cause personality or lifestyle changes. The symptoms of PTSD occurred when something reminded the sufferer of a disturbing event, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs VA (2022).

PTSD was prevalent among student veterans. According to Medina (2022), awareness and knowledge of PTSD provided medical assistance to individuals. Employers who acknowledged the awareness of PTSD brought positive energy to the workforce due to their understanding of how it impacted an individual's mental health. Individuals diagnosed with PTSD received assistance from support groups, family, and medical assistance. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs VA (2022) PTSD was still problematic for some student veterans.

This researcher's personal experiences as a student veteran in the 1970s, who encountered enrollment challenges with higher education institutions, witnessed a lack of knowledge within the staff and faculty in working with veterans' issues and resources and the institution's lack of cultural awareness to interact with veterans appropriately. According to Blecker (2021), issues that

are challenges for veterans was resolved by investing in resources, recruiting quality staff, and delivering regular training on veteran culture and needs.

The study conducted by Blecker (2021) added many issues were challenges for a veteran not known to staff. Veterans struggled with transition issues such as those listed below:

- Obligations outside of school, such as caring for families while pursuing their degrees.
- Mental health needs.
- Financial difficulties, food insecurity, and lack of shelter create further obstacles to education.
- Many campus staff and faculty are not culturally informed of veteran experiences and unique needs.
- Disability offices and faculty may have a limited understanding of service-connected injuries that have the potential to impact academic performance.
- Veteran resource centers (VRCs) on campus may be under-resourced and lack service coordination with other departments on campus.

Support for Student Veterans

A large number of veterans enrolled in colleges and universities have brought awareness of student veterans on campus. Just as these student veterans were adjusting to a new environment, culture, and population, faculty and staff were also adjusting to having student veterans in class. Though veterans, faculty, and staff of colleges and universities were adjusting to each other, there was a disconnect between student veterans, faculty, and university policies.

Today, student veterans were older and married and brought a wealth of knowledge and experiences. Student veterans were transitioning from a high energy to a relaxed environment.

Many student veterans encountered challenges, such as communication and enrollment barriers, adjusting to a new environment, interacting with younger students, health issues, and financial problems, that may be unfamiliar to faculty and staff. Because faculty members were unaware or unfamiliar with the challenges veterans encountered, veterans felt a sense of not being accepted or wanted by the university and traditional students. Veterans become withdrawn and isolated themselves from faculty and students. As a result, veterans experienced a sense of alienation, unsupported, and disconnectedness, and veterans will seek assistance from other veterans in order to survive the challenges encountered.

To assist higher education institutions in providing meaningful support to veterans, in 2013, the Obama Administration developed a series of "8 Keys to Success" that may help veterans and service members transition into higher education classrooms and thrive once they are there (Baker, 2013). These success factors include:

- Trust in the campus community to promote success for veterans.
- Ensured consistent and sustained support from the university campus.
- Ensured veterans receive academic counseling.
- Coordinated and centralized campus efforts and create a designated space for veterans.
- Involved local communities, organizations, and government agencies.
- Used specific instruments to collect and monitor veterans' information.
- Provided comprehensive professional training for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
- Develop systems that ensure the sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

Successfully incorporated multiple aspects of the aforementioned “Keys to Success” served as one crucial step in minimizing the challenges of veterans' transition to uncharted territories. Colleges and universities who received federal funding were mandated to comply with these requirements. Student veterans came to college with health issues resulted from being in the military. These health issues and other challenges created difficulties for faculty and staff in working with students. College and university facilities, administrators, and others were reviewed how student veterans perceived.

Kognito and Craig (2022) involved colleges and university faculty and staff in determining the perception of working with veterans. The findings revealed 70% of faculty members could not identify signs of health issues in veterans, such as distress, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide; 44% lacked knowledge related to challenges veterans encounter daily; 42% expressed management issues in class debates that are sensitive for veterans; and 95% indicated that they were not familiar with the challenges faced by veterans.

Furthermore, Kognito and Craig (2022) strongly suggested faculty and staff engage themselves in student veteran activities, such as visiting a veteran resource center to show support as veterans pursue their academic degrees and future career growth. The results of Kognito and Craig’s study was knowledge and understanding for faculties and staff as they provided instruction for student veterans. Faculties and staff got a view of the challenges encountered by students.

Institutional Role in Credit Transfer

Another university-based challenge was the limited amount of knowledge universities and colleges had related to the awarding of military transfer credit. This has become a concern for veterans and the veterans' administration. The concern was whether or not universities and

colleges followed federal and state guidelines in the awarding of military transfer credit. The registrar's office, certifying officials, and advisors have refused to acknowledge military transfer credit.

This refusal caused veterans enrolled in courses previously taken at accredited institutions and used education benefits to pay for the classes. The VA received an enormous amount of complaints related to the awarding of military credit.

Research by Bueche (2020) found colleges and universities carefully revisited the transfer of military credit into postsecondary academic credit practices and policies. The purpose of revisiting was to adjust and created new practices or policies to comply with federal and state guidelines in awarding academic credit for military education.

Knowing What Credits Will Transfer from Military Experience

Returning soldiers from military duty found enrolling in colleges or universities challenging. The military failed to prepare former military men and women for the student enrollment process. Several soldiers were not aware that military experience could count toward college credit.

The military education office had the responsibility to educate and inform soldiers of all available education resources. However, it was the soldier's responsibility to seek assistance. When soldiers returned home and enrolled in a college or university, academic advisors and counselors were not advising these returning soldiers of college credit for military experience.

According to Absher (2022), the function of the Joint Services Transcript (JST) was to review submitted applications for transfer of military credit to colleges and universities on behalf of service members. Absher further explained the JST notified the institution of interest through documented transcripts and information for recommendations. All active members and veterans

were eligible for this service. The Joint Services Transcript (JST) gave a detailed synopsis of a service member's academic record. It also assisted academic advisors and counselors in career planning for service members and veterans. Student veterans were required to provide an official transcript to the registrar for transfer of credit.

Three Ways Military Transfer Credit Awarded

In recent years, the military allowed soldiers to continue their higher education by contracting with local colleges and universities that provided college courses on military bases in the evenings for soldiers. This allowed soldiers to work toward advanced degrees. Several members of the military have accrued college credit hours.

Military service members have taken advantage of this opportunity. However, many service members complained about the procedure to get credit for college courses and credit for military experiences. Many service members were not aware of the procedures or guidance for applying for college credit. This research study addressed this issue with useful information.

An article published by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2022) explained the procedures for receiving credit for military service experiences through its Military Guide. The purpose of the military guide was to provide institutions with academic support and guidance in awarding college credit. A contractual agreement between the Department of Defense (DOD) and ACE was established to provide a source of information for courses and occupations.

The Military Guide includes:

- An uploaded feature for service.
- A streamlined course and occupation summaries format.
- Courses and occupations evaluated by ACE for all military.
- Multiple ways to search for courses.

ACE evaluates courses offered by military-affiliated defense institutions, joint DOD programs, and government agencies. These evaluations were located in the ACE national guide, which provided information about the evaluated course that was not in the Military Guide.

There were three standard methods by which service members received credit for military experiences:

1. College or university decides to award credit
2. Academic record assessment
3. Course description allotment

Veterans Who Become Students

According to Whitworth et al. (2020), veterans were a diversified population consisted of many comparable groups. A defined similarity between these former military men and women was they are now veterans. The research study results found 200,000 veterans transitioned out of military service on a yearly basis. Half of the 19 million US veteran population were under 65, and ten percent were women.

Wilke (2018) stated veterans transitioning out of military service caused confusion in their normal life. Through their lived military experiences, veterans changed the American business landscape. Many articles and studies focused on veteran transition as it relates to Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), homelessness, and alcohol and drug addiction. The culture of veterans, such as a learned and practiced leadership style, behaviors, mannerisms, and values, has consistently found a way into American business and culture.

According to Jones (2017), life after military service was not always an easy transition process from military to civilian life to student veterans. Student veterans were required to adjust

from living in a highly structured environment to a more relaxed environment. This way of life was one that many student veterans were not accustomed to while serving in the military.

Transitioning from military service to civilian life was one of the most difficult challenges faced by soldiers returning from completing a military obligation.

Former military men and women began a new life after completing their military obligation. The transition of these veterans was challenging as they adjusted to life as a veteran. Many of these veterans took advantage of the GI Bill education benefits and enrolled in higher education to pursue a degree. Returning home from military service was a challenge for veterans in seeking employment. Today's employers were seeking individuals who met specific technical skill requirements. Veterans who lacked employment requirements found themselves enrolling in higher education to acquire training skills to compete in today's job market. Veterans enrolled in higher education increased each year.

A research study conducted by the Student Veterans of America (SVA, 2021) found that student veterans were enrolled as full-time students in higher education institutions. Student veterans enrolled in 4-year public schools were 59%, 2-year public schools was 18%, 4-year private (not-for-profit) schools were 16%, and private for-profit or proprietary schools was 4%, and other was 3%.

The Student Veterans of America (SVA, 2021) also revealed that 1 million student veterans received GI Bill benefits for tuition assistance and that student veterans are married, older, and employed full- or part-time. Also, the research study further suggested female veterans consisted of 31%. The veteran female population was vastly growing. Veterans were the fastest-growing demographic group in the U.S. Since 2016, female student veterans have grown to 4 %.

Blecker (2021) explained that challenges faced by veterans were a result of limited knowledge by college or university staff responsible for assisting veterans. College and university staffs needed proper training on GI Bill benefits, interacting with veterans, and services offered to veterans by the college or university. Issues encountered by student veterans was resolved by investing in professional development and interaction with the veteran's administration.

Furthermore, Blecker (2021) revealed that student veterans encounter the following challenges as they transition from soldier to student:

- Veterans enrolled in a college or university and not ready for the responsibility.
- VA education is exhausted.
- Food, housing, and transportation are obstacles.
- Family obligations.
- Mental health issues continue to hinder student veteran success.
- Lack of training for staff and faculty.
- Availability of reasonable accommodations.
- Lack of support for veteran resource centers (VRCs).

Student veterans will continue to encounter challenges until colleges and universities understand veterans and their lived experiences.

Summary

The Literature Review presented several studies conducted to justify the positions of several scholars relating to this research study. Studies such as Anderson et al. (2022) conducted a research study to define transition; Whilby (2022) conducted a research study to examine coping resources for veterans during the transition; Clemmenson (2022) investigated challenges

that student veterans encounter during the transition process; Patterson (2022) conducted a research study on transition stress and post-traumatic stress during the transition; and Zaber and Wenger (2021) conducted a research study to examine an inflated economy and its effect on student veterans.

Chapter Three focused on the Research Design and Methodology. Information about the participants and the sampling method will be provided, along with the researcher's role in avoiding potential biases during the interview process. Chapter Three also included a discussion on data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Organization of the Chapter

This study aimed to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. Additionally, this study focused on identifying gaps in support services that hindered the unique needs of former military men and women who desired to enroll in institutions of higher learning.

The chapter introduced the overall purpose of the study. This study was linked to (1) the rationale for the research design, (2) the methodology and how suited it was for this study, and (3) the assumptions and restraints of the researcher. Chapter III also introduced the site selection, interview protocol, and detailed participants and the data collected procedures. Finally, the chapter concluded with information on how the data was analyzed. The delimitations and limitations of the study shaped the scope or focus of this research.

Research Questions

The descriptive phenomenological study aimed to explore the challenges among veterans and their lived experiences while transitioning from military assignments to student veterans. Former military men and women experienced significant obstacles while serving the United States of America, which caused many of them endured emotional trauma and physical distress. Moreover, many former military men and women also encountered excessive issues while transitioning back into civilian life, such as enrolling in higher education and receiving adequate professional development training. To gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon with

veterans who transitioned from soldiers to college students, the following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What challenges do veteran students encounter when enrolling in institutions of higher learning?

RQ2: How do veteran students cope with transitioning from soldier to student?

RQ3: What resources and support systems are institutions of higher learning utilizing to sustain former military men and women in their transition from soldier to a student?

The Rationale for Research Methodology

This phenomenological study explored the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women transitioning from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. A qualitative research design was chosen to answer the study's research questions. According to Bhandari (2020), this process involved gathering and interpreting data from lived experiences to understand a phenomenon better. This approach allowed the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews, take observational field notes, and construct a survey instrument to gain insight into the lived experiences of each participant.

Examining the lived experiences of former military men and women helped the researcher understand a veteran's life phenomenon. According to Delve and Limpaechem (2022), a phenomenon is an event or occurrence in one's life. Therefore, this researcher used interviews to extract a description of the lived experiences as told by former military men and women in an interview.

Assumptions

Simon and Goes (2013) suggested that assumptions are out of the researcher's control. The section presented critical assumptions of the research study. As supported by Simon and Goes, the following assumptions occurred during this research:

- Responses were accurate.
- Questions for veterans were impartial.
- Perceptions of respondents received immediate attention.
- Prejudice or personal judgment was not a part of the interview.

Population and Site Selection

The population targeted for this research study were ten retired or former military men and women enrolled or completing a degree program studies at a college or university. All research participants resided in the state of Louisiana. Also, research participants consisted of retired members who served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, and National Guard.

A research study by Lodico et al. (2010) stressed that the minimum number of participants within the study should be at the point of data saturation. However, Creswell (2012) argued depending on the diversity of responses, the sample size may range from one to forty participants. Bunce and Johnson (2006) suggested depending on the method design used, a participant range must be appropriate for the research study.

This research study explored the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women transitioning from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. The essential requirement to participate in the research study was each participant was a former military man or woman who retired, completed, or enrolled in a college or university. This was the only specific criterion stipulated by the researcher.

The veterans' organizations received fifteen interested potential participants' contact information and forwarded it to the researcher. Once the researcher received each potential participant's contact information, a master list of potential participants was organized to contact. The IRB Approval Letter, A Letter of Request to Participate, and a Demographic Background Information Form were forwarded via email with a followed-up text message to each potential participant. (See Appendix E, IRB Approval) (See Appendix F, Letter of Request to Participate) and (See Appendix G, Demographic Background Information Form).

The researcher reviewed each participant's Letter of Request to Participate Form for signature and each participant's Demographic Background Information Form. Then, the researcher used demographic information and ensured each participant was appropriate for the research stud. A demographic Form collected name, age, gender, ethnicity, education level, and profession. Hammer (2022) indicated that the background information of each research study participant assisted researchers in comparing other research studies with similar populations.

The researcher selected ten of the fifteen potential participants for the research study. The remaining five potential was declared not suitable for the study due to three of the five potential participants were on active duty. The remaining two potential participants had availability issues due to their employment schedules. When the potential participants agreed, the researcher organized a master list of the ten selected research study participants with contact information for future notification emails.

The researcher emailed each of the ten selected participants of their selection for the research study. The researcher also emailed each participant an Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study Form for signature. (See Appendix H, Informed Consent to Participate in a

Research Study). Once each participant returned the signed informed consent form to participate in the research study, the researcher developed an official participant research study roster.

The researcher met with each participant via Zoom and provided further information, such as the process and length of each interview. Each participant agreed to a place, time, and date for the interview session. Each participant preferred to be interviewed at their home office. All participants received a copy of the interview questions for review. (See Appendix I for Interview Protocol Questions).

The researcher used purposeful sampling to acquire information from former military men and women participants. In purposeful sampling, participants were selected based on age and gender and possessed similar military service, characteristics, and experiences. Nikolopoulou (2022) suggested purposeful sampling is deliberate in selecting participants for research studies. As a result, participants shared similar traits and experiences. This population was small but significant in both experience and knowledge.

Establishing a rapport between the researcher and research participants was essential because it helped establish trust. This trust ensured responses were genuine, truthful, and accurate. The researcher found his role as a researcher, not as a colleague. The researcher's main objective was to obtain data for the study from the number of participants.

The researcher encouraged participants to find a secure and private location for confidentiality. The researcher and each participant agreed upon an appropriate place, date, and time for the participant to be interviewed. All participants used individual home offices.

The researcher used Zoom video conferencing software and conducted ten 30-minute online interviews with each participant. Zoom video conferencing was a valuable and convenient tool when it was challenging to meet in person.

Instrumentation

Demographic Profile

Upon receipt of each participant's signed informed consent form to participate in this study, a Demographic Background Information form was issued to each participant. This information provided the researcher with background information such as gender, ethnicity, age, religion, profession, and marital status. The researcher used this information and ensured the participant's background was suitable and similar to the population for this research study.

According to Hammer (2022), researchers must provide a comprehensive narrative of research participants for researchers and readers to make comparisons of a specific population for future research studies. Hammer further explained background information is crucial in research studies. Gaps within the current research studies were exposed and encouraged future researchers to provide background information in their research studies.

Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to retrieve data from participants. The researcher used semi-structured interviews because the questions developed were generated based on the framework of this research study. George (2022) described semi-structured interviews as the research framework that will guide questions in collecting data. The researcher will explore for information. Due to the location and availability of the research participants, interview sessions were documented by Zoom conferencing. This method was most appropriate and convenient for the researcher and participants involved in the research study.

The study conducted by Archibald et al. (2019) recommended researchers used Zoom video conferencing for interviews when location, availability, and other circumstances prevented the researcher and research study participants from meeting in person. Archibald further

explained Zoom conferencing is a cloud-based video conferencing service with special features and services such as safety features for recorded sessions, group messaging services, and capabilities for online meetings. In addition, researchers and research participants can communicate in real-time geographically using computers, mobile devices, or laptops. This study utilized the recording feature offered through Zoom and stored sessions securely without any claims. This feature was essential because it complied with the mandate of Xavier University Louisiana's Informed Consent Form. Confidential. The information was confidential to protect compassionate data. In addition, Zoom has a secured safety feature.

Observations Field Notes

When research was conducted for the study, the researcher documented notes of actions occurred. The notes reflected a sequence of events from start to finish, which included observations of the environment, persons they conversed with, and other observable facts. The researcher used this information for future use in gathering information. The notes were essential as the researcher organized and analyzed the data.

The research study by Phillippi and Lauderdale (2017) expressed how important field notes were for research studies. The researchers further encouraged researchers to take field notes for improved and factual data. Field notes were essential for research studies because they documented incidents that occurred in real-time while the researcher conducted research. The researcher of the study developed field notes during the interviews for each participant. In addition, the researcher organized observable actions from the Zoom recordings.

Data Collection Procedures

The following procedures were used to facilitate the proposed data collection procedures:

1. Upon approval application from the Institutional Review Board, correspondence was forwarded to Disabled American Veterans, the Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs, and the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, Inc., Veterans of Zulu veteran organizations that supported veterans. Correspondence included background information, participant criteria, and the approved letter from Xavier University of Louisiana's Institutional Review Board Committee. (See Appendix B, Letter - Disabled American Veterans), (See Appendix C, Letter- Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs, (See Appendix D, Letter- Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, Inc., Veterans of Zulu). (See Appendix E, Xavier University of Louisiana's Institutional Review Board Approved Letter).
2. The veterans' organizations received fifteen interested potential participants' contact information and forwarded it to the researcher. Once the researcher received each potential participant's contact information, a master list of potential participants was organized to contact. The IRB Approval Letter, A Letter of Request to Participate, and a Demographic Background Information Form were forwarded via email with a followed-up text message to each potential participant. (See Appendix E, IRB Approval) (See Appendix F, Letter of Request to Participate) and (See Appendix G, Demographic Background Information Form).
3. The researcher reviewed each participant's Letter of Request to Participate Form for signature and each participant's Demographic Background Information Form. Then, the researcher used demographic information that ensured each participant was appropriate for the research study—the demographic Form collected name, age, gender, ethnicity, education level, and profession. Hammer (2022) indicated that the

- background information of each research study participant assisted researchers in comparing other research studies with similar populations.
4. The researcher selected ten of the fifteen potential participants for the research study. The remaining five potential was declared not suitable for the study due to three of the five potential participants were on active duty. The remaining two potential participants had availability issues due to their employment schedules.
 5. When the potential participants agreed, the researcher organized a master list of the ten selected research study participants with contact information for future notification emails.
 6. The researcher emailed each of the ten selected participants of their selection for the research study. The researcher also emailed each participant an Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study Form for signature. (See Appendix H, Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study).
 7. Once each participant returned the signed informed consent form to participate in the research study, the researcher developed an official participant research study roster for future reference.
 8. The researcher met with each participant via Zoom and provided further information, such as the process and length of each interview. Each participant agreed to a place, time, and date for the interview session. Each participant preferred to be interviewed at their home office.
 9. All participants received a copy of the interview questions for review. (See Appendix I for Interview Protocol Questions).

10. The researcher used purposeful sampling to acquire information from former military men and women participants.
11. The researcher Established a rapport between the participants because it helped establish trust. This trust ensured responses were genuine, truthful, and accurate. The researcher found his role as a researcher, not as a colleague. The researcher's main objective was to obtain data for the study from the number of participants.
12. The researcher conducted the interviews.
13. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to retrieve data from participants. The researcher used semi-structured interviews because the questions developed were generated based on the framework of this research study.
14. Due to the location and availability of the research participants, Zoom Video conferencing was used for recorded interview sessions. Therefore, zoom Video conferencing was most appropriate and convenient for the researcher and participants involved in this research study.
15. Zoom was a cloud-based video conferencing service with special features and services such as safety features for recorded sessions, group messaging services, and capabilities for online meetings. In addition, researchers and research participants communicated in real-time geographically using computers, mobile devices, or laptops.
16. The study utilized the recording feature offered through Zoom to store sessions securely without any claims. The quality was essential because it complied with the mandate of Xavier University Louisiana's Informed Consent Form Section A:

Confidentiality. The information was confidential to protect compassionate data.

Zoom had a secured safety feature.

17. Next, the researcher analyzed the data.

Data Analysis

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained data analysis encircled the collection, organization, and preparation of data that analyzed the collected data. The researcher collected, organized, and prepares data that explored the challenges and experiences of former military men and women who transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. The researcher used Creswell's (2009) six-step process and analyzed the qualitative data for the research study.

Step 1: The researcher collected, organized, and prepared the data to be analyzed. The researcher reviewed the Zoom recorded sessions and prepared the data for analysis.

Step 2: The researcher thoroughly reviewed the transcripts to gain a general sense of the data developed for a broad understanding of the ideas expressed and conveyed by the research participants.

Step 3: The researcher began the data analysis coding process. First, the researcher segmented the data into categories by segmenting sentences based on common language noted in the research participants' responses.

Step 4: The researcher used the coding process to describe the types representing the emerged themes generated by the data analyzed. During this step, the researcher identified codes and generalized the categories and emerging themes that described the overarching themes identified in the study.

Step 5: The researcher determined how the qualitative narrative represented the themes.

Step 6: The researcher interpreted the meaning of the participants' responses to articulate their perceptions and stories accurately.

Role of the Researcher/Bias

The researcher's objective and responsibility were collecting material related to the research study. The purpose was to retrieve data without bias. As a veteran who transitioned from the military culture into the higher education culture, it was crucial to remain proficient and respond appropriately to participants. The research study by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggested that it is essential to focus on the participant's responses and remain objective.

The researcher's role was to capture incidents as they occurred and document notes to be included in the research. According to Mehra (2002), a researcher documents an individual's responses, including specific reactions. She further added a person who feels comfortable during an interview is confident in their responses and does not allow personal emotions to influence their decision to respond truthfully.

According to Sorsa et al. (2015), bracketing in descriptive phenomenology research is when researchers reserve previously acquired understandings, attitudes, beliefs, judgments, and personal opinions for future learning. Mars (2021) recommended the following actions to avoid making judgments: (1) be understanding; (2) listen carefully; (3) get the facts; (4) focus on similarities, not differences; and (5) accept others' flaws. This researcher adhered to these recommendations.

Validity/ Trustworthiness

Responses from the participants assured the validity of this qualitative research study, and the findings reported by the researcher were correct and accurate. A research study

conducted by Creswell and Creswell (2018) identified approaches used by researchers that ensured the validity of a research study. These approaches included triangulation, member checking, external auditing, rich and thick descriptions, negative or discrepant information, researcher bias clarification, prolonged time, and peer debriefing. To further validate the research study's findings, the researcher used interviews and observational field notes to collect data. These methods confirmed emerged thematic themes of the research study.

The dissertation chair and committee members completed an audit of the participant Information which included an informed consent form, demographic background, and participant's transcript for review. Additionally, according to Motulsky (2021), member checking was a method used by researchers to present statements or quotes made by research participants for accuracy and correctness. The researcher used member checking and forwarded a copy of each participant's transcript to review for accuracy and correctness.

Trustworthiness in a research study consisted of the inclusion of four main ingredients, which are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable. In addition, researchers must ensure these entities are visible to validate the research study.

A research study by Pallipedia (2022) gave clear and concise, straight-to-the-point explanations of each entity of trustworthiness:

Credibility - are findings true and accurate?

Transferability - are the research study's conclusions pertinent to other students?

Confirmability – results are based on the participant's responses.

Dependability - future researchers can clone your study using this study's literature and information.

Ethical Considerations

To protect the identity and confidentiality of each research participant, pseudonyms, which are fake names, were assigned to each participant of the research study. Furthermore, after carefully reviewing the transcripts, the researcher forwarded a copy of the text to each participant to allow them to clarify and correct any misconceptions or to amend the text of the interview. The researchers' laptop was password secured to protect transcriptions of the data recorded. After one year, all files associated with this research study are scheduled for destruction.

Limitations

Limitations are described as weaknesses within a research study because of the researcher's scope and target population. Limitations are also restrictions and constraints within the research study (Simon & Goes, 2013). Due to its purpose, the study was limited to former military men and women. This phenomenological study aimed to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. This does not apply to all members, gender, race

Delimitations

Delimitations are defined as chiefly concerned with the scope of the study. Delimitations describe the content of the research or establish parameters. Delimitations are self-imposed restrictions to the survey compared to limitations that have inherent limits to the methodology (Miles & Scott, 2017). Furthermore, delimitations are further limitations actively put into place by the researcher to control for factors that might affect the results or to focus more specifically on a problem (Theofanidis et al., 2019). In this phenomenological study, the following declared delimitations:

- The study only included institutions of higher learning in Louisiana.
- Participants were former military men and women.
- The study's focus or scope will target veterans and their transitional challenges from military to college campuses.

Summary

Chapter Three entailed the purpose of this research study relating it to the rationale for the design and methodology and its appropriateness for this research study. Information about the participants, site selection, sampling methods, and the interview process were provided. The chapter included a discussion on the data collection procedures used and analyzed. The chapter concluded with information on how the data was analyzed and how the delimitations and limitations of the study shaped the scope or focus of the research.

Chapter Four provided findings of the research study and demographic and background. Also, information about the study's participants was presented along with the study's research design, followed by thematic diagrams arranged by categories or themes that emerged during the interview process.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The aim of this descriptive phenomenological research study was to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. In Chapter 4, demographic and background information for the study's participants were presented along with the study's research design, followed by thematic diagrams arranged by categories or themes that emerged during the interview. Finally, the chapter concluded with a summary.

The researcher used a descriptive phenomenological research design approach to gather data from lived experiences, as ten research study participants described. Semi-structured interviews were used in meetings with former military men and women who lived, witnessed, or joined a branch of the United States military and transitioned to an institution of higher learning. The data collected during their transitional phase permitted the researcher to identify support services and strategies for transitioning from military life to students in higher education institutions.

The researcher developed a roster using "fake names" once each participant agreed to participate in a scheduled 30-minute Zoom Conference. Pseudonyms, fake names designated to each participant indicated in interviews, collected data, and other textual data were designed to protect and not reveal the participant's name (Heaton, 2021). Participants responded to questions depicting their experiences and challenges while transitioning from soldier to student. Demographic information for the study's participants was listed in the following tables.

Table 1 Student Veteran Rose

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Female	Associate Degree	Marine Corp	22

Rose was a Black 51year old retired female Marine Corp Veteran. She was a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After completing high school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Rose enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps, served 22 years of active duty, and deployed twice to Iraq. Upon her retirement, several years later, Rose became divorced with three children. She became the sole provider of her family.

Rose decided to reside in Destrehan, Louisiana, with her three children and continued her education to embark on her new life as a single parent with a positive new beginning. She applied for G. I. Bill benefits and enrolled in Southern University in New Orleans to pursue a degree in Political Science. However, the challenges and academic demand was a bit overwhelming for her. She indicated during the interview that registration was very confusing and challenging, and there was a lack of support services for veterans. She also noted the need to develop more virtual learning programs for working veterans.

After completing her first year at Southern University successfully, Rose decided to enroll in a two-year law enforcement program and received an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Delgado Community College in New Orleans, Louisiana. She indicated Delgado was less stressed and received better assistance. At the time of the interview, Rose became employed as a U. S. Marine Corp Protocol Officer with the Marine Force Reserve located in Algiers, Louisiana. In addition to her duties, Rose counseled veterans on the challenges they may encounter in transitioning from military to civilian life.

Table 2 Student Veteran Henry

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Male	Doctorate	Army	16

Henry was a Black 55year old Army Veteran. He was a native of Indianapolis, Indiana. After completing high school in Indianapolis, Indiana, Henry enlisted in the U. S Army and served 16 years of active duty, and deployed to Iraq. Upon his retirement, several years later, Henry divorced with one child.

Henry enrolled at the University of Indianapolis and received a B.A. in Education. Henry indicated he experienced challenges with the University of Indianapolis enrollment process and receiving his G.I. Benefits which were delayed for a semester. He noted during the interview he vowed to organize veterans to begin a support group to support veterans since the university lacked the support system to assist veterans.

After completing his Master's Degree in Administration, Henry was accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Indianapolis and received a Doctor of Education Degree. Henry was employed part-time with the Department of Veterans Affairs as an Educational Consultant serving veterans in the Indiana area.

Table 3 Student Veteran Judy

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Female	Masters	Army	32

Judy was a Black female, 60 years of age veteran, who served 32 years in the United States Army. Judy is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Upon completing high school, Judy entered the U. S Army to receive education benefits to fund her college. Judy was a divorced mother with three children. She served in the Louisiana National Guard and 21 years, was a federal employee.

After retirement, Judy applied her G.I. Bill benefits towards advancing her education. She graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, La., and received a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from the Trident University of California. Following her studies at Southeastern Louisiana University, she was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army Reserve Officers Training Corp. She transferred to Louisiana National Guard in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1989.

During the interview, Judy expressed concerns about the lack of support for veterans, the challenges veterans encountered during enrollment, veteran support services, and the lack of a campus veterans resource center. In addition, Judy volunteered with Baton Rouge VA, counseling veterans transitioning to civilian life after the military

Table 4 Student Veteran John

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Male	Bachelor	Navy	20

John was a retired Black male Navy veteran 48 years of age who entered the U. S. Navy upon completing high school in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was a native of New Orleans, Louisiana. John was married with four children and served 20 years in the Navy. After completing his military career, John applied for and received G. I. Bill Benefits to fund his education. He enrolled in Southern University in New Orleans, Louisiana local, and received a degree in accounting

When John was interviewed, he expressed disappointment with the lack of veteran assistance when he attended registration at the university. He indicated no one could assist veterans with G.I. Bill issues, enrollment assistance, or guide veterans with the process. He was adamant about needing a V.A. representative on campus to help veterans.

John applied and accepted a position as a certifying official at a local community college. John formed a veteran's group to assist and educate veterans on available benefits entitled to veterans via the Education G I Bill. He also worked as a work-study support liaison for veterans.

John organized a veteran's organization designed to build peer relationships among student veterans to share experiences as a means of support among themselves because there was no veterans center.

Table 5 Student Veteran Jim

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Male	Masters	Marine	5

Jim was a Black 60 old year male U. S. Marine Veteran who served five years of service with the U.S. Marine Corp. Jim was a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, and married with four children. After completing his military obligation, Jim returned home, used the G.I. Bill education benefits, enrolled in Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, and received a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

When Jim was in the Marine Corps, he was introduced to mechanical engineering. He was trained as a level 1 engineer working with engines such as steam and gas turbines, internal combustion engines, power-using machines, and electric generators. Jim indicated in the interview he continued in the field of Engineering when he enrolled in Tulane University's Mechanical Engineering Program. Though excited about the school, he also indicated frustration with the university for not having resources for veterans, which caused stressful situations for him. In addition, the absence of a V.A. representative to assist Veteran students was challenging.

Table 6 Student Veteran Nick

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Male	Doctorate	Army	20

Nick was a native of New Orleans, Louisiana. He was a 50-year-old Army veteran married with three children and resided in New Orleans, Louisiana. Nick entered the Army after graduating from high school. He was trained as an Army Medic in the Army and became interested in the medical field. After serving 20 years in the Army, Nick continued his interest in the medical field, enrolled in the Xavier University of Louisiana, and graduated with a degree in Biology. He continued his pursuit in the medical field when he enlisted in the Tulane School of Medicine and successfully graduated in the field of medicine.

When Nick was interviewed, he recalled his deployment experience in Iraq. He indicated many soldiers had PTSD, which affected daily life.

He also integrated with his interview, and he was concerned universities lacked PTSD support services for veterans.

Table 7 Student Veteran Bertha

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Female	Master's Degree	Army	22

Bertha was a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She was a Black 45 years of age female Army Veteran. She was married with two children and resides in Belle Chase, Louisiana. Bertha served 22 years in the U. S Army. After she retired from the Army, Bertha enrolled in Delgado Community College, New Orleans, Louisiana. She earned an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice. She continued her education, registered at the University of New Orleans, and received a Master's in Political Science.

In her responses to questions in the interview, Bertha was very explicit in her frustration and disappointment with the university she attended relative to supporting veterans. She indicated in the discussion there was a lack of knowledge about G.I. Bill issues, support services, and no veteran service center. Bertha volunteered her services at the university to assist veterans.

Table 8 Student Veteran Lilly

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Female	Master's Degree	Army	20

Lilly was a Black 47-year-old female Army Veteran married with two children. Lilly was a native of LaPlace, Louisiana. She served 20 years in the U.S. Army. After completing her military obligation with the U. S. Army, Lilly made Belle Chase, Louisiana, her permanent residence. She enrolled at Dillard University and received a degree in Political Science. She furthered her education, attended Louisiana State University (LSU), and earned a Master's in Accounting.

When interviewed, Lilly expressed concern about how universities are unprepared to receive the influx of veterans enrolled in their universities. She spoke of her experiences and challenges with the enrollment process, G. I. Bill benefits, and support services for veterans. The Veterans Administration also employed Lilly as a Veteran counselor.

Table 9 Student Veteran Rick

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Male	Bachelor Degree	Army	15

Rick was a Black 60-year-old male Army veteran. Rick was a native of Alexandria, Louisiana. After completing high school, Rick enlisted in the U. S. Army and served 15 years of active. Unfortunately, Rick was seriously injured in a training exercise and could no longer perform his military duties. He received a Medical Discharge and returned home.

Rick married with three children and made New Orleans, Louisiana, his home of record. Rick enrolled in the University of New Orleans and received a B.A. in Elementary Education. When interviewed, Rick clearly stated his dissatisfaction with the university and how unprepared they were to accommodate veterans. His main concern was the enrollment process and the

service provided to veterans. Rick was evident in the need for a V.A. representative to assist veterans.

Table 10 Student Veteran Ron

Gender	Educational Level	Branch of Military	Years of Service
Male	Bachelor	Navy	6

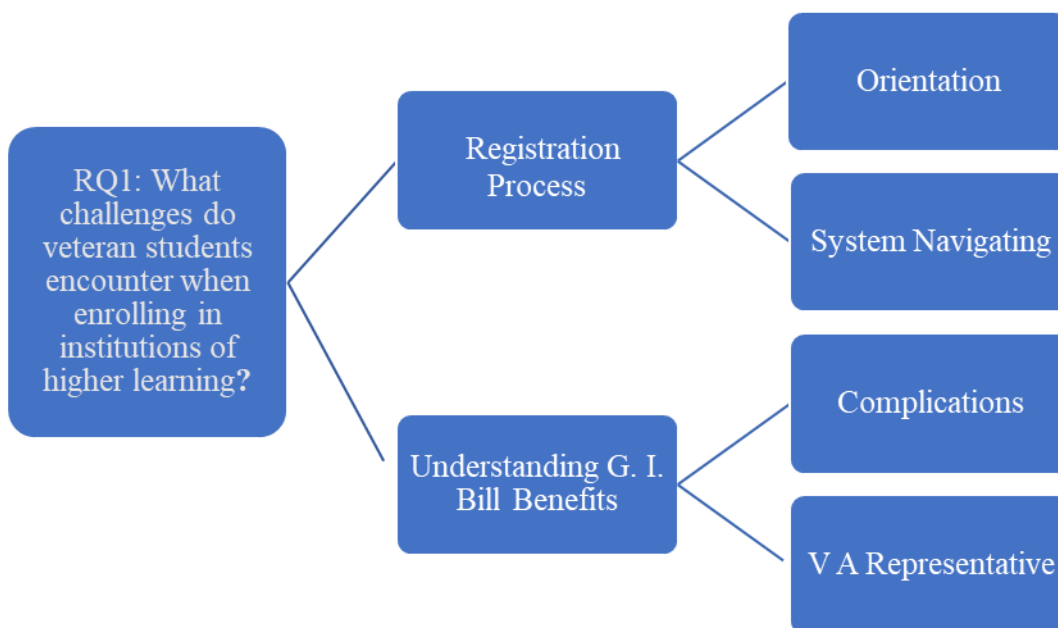
Ron was a Black 60-year-old Navy veteran who served six years of service with the U.S. Navy. Ron was a native of Lafayette, Louisiana. After completing high school, Ron enlisted in the U. S. Navy and completed six years of active duty. After fulfilling his military obligation, Ron married with two children and made New Orleans, Louisiana, his home.

Ron enrolled at the University of New Orleans and received a Bachelor's in education. He became a certified teacher in New Orleans Public Schools. When Ron was interviewed, he described his frustration and stressful situations caused by the lack of veteran support services. He indicated universities should make every effort to accommodate veterans in the enrollment process and other assistance as needed to welcome veterans.

Thematic Findings

There were six main themes and twelve sub-ordinate themes. These included: (1) Registration Process with a subordinate theme of (a) Orientation; (b) System Navigating (2) Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits with the subordinate themes of; (a) Complications; and (b) V. A. Representative; (3) Environment with the subordinate themes of; (a) College Culture; (b) Social interaction (4) Veteran Advisor with the subordinate themes of; (a)Availability; (b); Degree Mapping (5) Veteran Specific Services with the subordinate theme of; (a) PTSD; (b) Counseling; (6) Retention with the subordinate themes of; (a) Curriculum Adjustment; (b) Virtual Education Programs. (See Figures I, II, and III for Themes and Subthemes).

Figure 3 Theme Diagram: Research Question 1

**Research Question 1:**

What challenges do student veterans encounter when enrolling in institutions of higher learning?

Theme: The Registration Process

Soldiers returning from completing their military obligation to pursue a higher education degree for the first time encountered challenges within colleges and universities' registration process. All ten participants' responses agreed there was a need for a separate orientation designed to address the specific needs of veterans as a priority. When interviewed by the researcher, participants clearly expressed dissatisfaction with the registration process. Six of the ten participants felt a different orientation for veteran students would have prepared them to understand the college or university's registration process. Participants also expressed that a separate orientation for veteran students would have provided guidance in working through the process, such as knowing where specific offices are located and required information from veteran students.

Participants, when interviewed, also expressed their lack of registration information and knowledge caused difficulties as they navigated through the registration process. However, the other four participants found navigating the system not problematic as other veteran students did because they received assistance from friends who the university employed.

Subtheme: Orientation

The number of former military men and women enrolled in higher education increases yearly, Walter, (2019). As participants were interviewed, the results indicated all ten participants' responses agreed there is a need for a separate orientation designed to address the specific needs of veterans as a priority.

Rose stated: *"A different orientation is needed because we need specific information to address our needs as veterans. Some of us have different needs, and the more information we get, the better off we will be."*

Henry stated: *"I believe we need a different orientation. This is a big campus; a tour will show us where everything is housed."*

Judy stated: *"I am interested in the university's support services to meet our needs as veterans. Some of us have specific needs, and I want to know what they are and how we get them."*

John stated: *"Financial support is my pet peeve. I want to know what financial support is available to veterans besides the G. I. Bill and the V.A. representative."*

Jim stated: *"We need to know what clubs and organizations are in place and how to become involved. This is an excellent way to interact with other students."*

Nick stated: *"I want to know about the university organizations for veterans and how we can establish one for veterans."*

Bertha stated: *"I am interested in academic support programs such as writing, tutoring, and math assistance."*

Lilly stated: *"I want to know about the various departments and their functions."*

Rick stated: *"I am interested in the medical department and how we can access medical services."*

Ron stated: *"We need to meet the faculty and staff to interact to establish an understanding of veterans. "*

Subtheme: System Navigating

The subtheme of navigating emerged from participant responses to the interview question. The results from participant responses indicated six participants, Rose, Henry, Judy, John, Jim, and Nick, found system navigating in the registration process difficult for veterans. The other four participants, Bertha, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, found system navigation not problematic.

Rose stated: *"I found it challenging to find where to go for services. I was not given perfect instructions. We were not told this in the orientation. It seems you have to find a thing out for yourself."*

Henry stated: *"I found the health office after asking several people where the office was located. However, this was stressful and confusing."*

Judy stated: *"At the base, we were assigned a sponsor to help us get around and find things."*

John stated: *"Once we settle in and meet people, we will be all right."*

Jim stated: *"I was so lost trying to find where the financial office was located. I figured I would try and finish tomorrow. This was the pits. They expect you to know where everything is without the right directions. This was disgusting. "*

Nick stated: *"I found it challenging to navigate the process. They do not give you instructions and expect you to know where you are going. As a result, the process was very stressful. "*

Theme: Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits

All ten research participants described their vivid experiences concerning receiving their G. I. Bill educational benefits at their respective colleges or university in their responses. Complications and V.A. Representative were two subthemes that emerged from this theme. The findings of former military men and women experience receiving G.I. Bill educational benefits at their respective colleges or university in conjunction with complications, and a V.A. representative is consistent with the research study of (Naphan & Elliot (2015); Mendoza, S. (2016); Goldsmith, (2017); Baskas, (2021). Furthermore, the participants of this research study and previous studies of (Naphan & Elliot (2015); Mendoza, S. (2016); Goldsmith (2017); Baskas (2021) were compelled to describe their vivid experiences with the G. I. Bill in conjunction with complications and a V.A. representative to address issues of veterans.

Veterans found complications and the absence of a V.A. representative as issues that affected their enrollment process and experienced a delay in receiving benefits.

Subtheme: Complications

The subtheme complication provided a view of the participant's responses when asked about receiving G.I. Bill benefits and included evidence regarding how each participant responded. Seven of the ten participants, Rose, Judy, Jim, Rick, Lilly, Nick, and Ron, who

applied for educational benefits experienced complications receiving benefits in time for registration. The other three participants, Henry, John, and Bertha, received their gifts on time; however, the amount was incorrect.

Rose stated: I was frustrated with V.A. for not ensuring my benefits arrived on time. I became more frustrated when the lady in the registrar's office could not find my paperwork. Before I became emotional, I just left and went to the V.A.

Lilly stated: *"When the university finance office notified me I would not be cleared to attend class, I went to the university and found the university certifying official did not receive any correspondence from the V.A. After that, my pressure got high, and I became so emotional I left before I got myself in trouble."*

Rick stated: *"It is sad the way veterans are treated. You sacrifice your life to protect your country, and they cannot see your benefits are available for you."*

Ron stated: *"I was appalled that the V.A. messed up getting my check to me. The pits were due to the V.A. not sending me my check-in time. As a result, I could not be cleared to attend classes. "*

Judy stated. *"I was not surprised. Several veterans did not get their checks. The university did not understand at all. All they wanted was their money."*

Jim stated: *"I was agitated because my check did not arrive on time. As a result, I could not attend class until the university received payment. The university was not interested in the V.A. not sending payments. They just wanted their money. "*

Nick stated: *"I became distraught my check did not arrive on time. The university could have been more understanding about us not receiving our checks in time. However, the university should have a deferred payment plan for veterans."*

Henry stated: *"I was very disappointed and disgusted I did not receive my educational benefits on time. However, I completed all the necessary paperwork. My frustration and stress came when I was told I had to go out of pocket."*

John stated: *"I was agitated and dissatisfied when I received a letter from the university informing me my financial obligations were unmet. I contacted the V.A. and was told payment was paid to the university, and I was cleared. I notified the university and was told the university had not received any fees. This issue continued until I discovered payment was made but filed under the wrong social security number. The whole ordeal made my pressure go up."*

Bertha stated: *"I was embarrassed and disgusted my benefits did not arrive on time. The situation worsened, and I began to experience stress due to the problem. I started to drop out the way I was treated."*

Subtheme: V.A. Representative

All colleges and universities employ a permanent veteran's service representative to advise and assist veterans in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled under federal, state, and local legislation. They provide advice for specialized social services, information about available service

The subtheme V.A. representative emerged as participants responded to questions about the availability and location of the Veteran's office on campus for veterans to visit for assistance. An analysis of the participant's responses from the interviews conducted shows the results indicated five, John Jim, Rick, Nick, and Henry of the ten participants experienced difficulties with the V.A. representative, and the remaining five participants,

Rose, Lilly, Ron Judy, and Bertha, did not experience problems with the V.A. representative.

John stated: *"He was never there when I saw the veteran representative. Though he indicated the time he would return, he did not."*

Jim stated: *"He would schedule a meeting with the V.A. representative, but he would never attend. So, I called the V.A. and reported him."*

Rick stated: *"I became very frustrated with the V.A. representative because he took too long to respond or give assistance."*

Nick stated: *"It was a waste of time speaking with this individual. He would always refer me to the V.A."*

Henry stated: *"Each time I met with the V.A. representative, he made me uncomfortable by blaming me for my issues. He never offered solutions. I decided to visit the regional V.A. for assistance."*

Rose stated: *"The VA representative at the school I attended was a student himself and was only available when not in school. Though this fact inconvenienced some veterans, they understood his situation and supported him by being patient."*

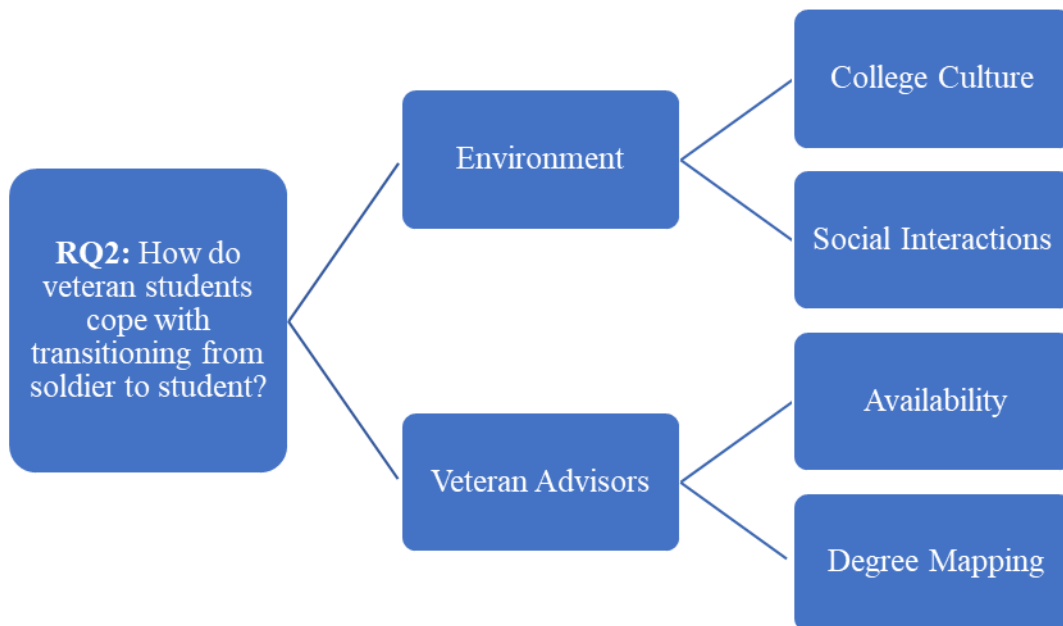
Lilly stated: *"I had no problems scheduling an appointment with the V.A. representative. He was consistently seeing veterans, and I can appreciate him for that. All I did was put my name on the list. The wait time was one week."*

Ron stated: *"I was surprised to see the enormous number of veterans enrolled in the university. I did not have any problems with the V.A. representative. He was available. However, because of his scheduled appointments, it took about a week to see him."*

Judy stated: *"To be very blunt about it. I had no problems with the V.A. representative. All I did was schedule an appointment."*

Bertha stated: *"I had no problems seeing the V.A. representative. He was very helpful to me. Though bombarded with appointments, he managed to see who he could."*

Figure 4 Thematic Diagram: Research Question 2



Research Q 2:

How do student veterans cope with transitioning from soldier to student?

Theme: Environment

The theme, Environment, examined the experiences of veteran students accustomed to living in a different environment from the colligate Environment. When compared yields the military and colligate environments, the military is highly structured and disciplined with rules and regulations supported by a chain of command all soldiers are required by law to follow. On the other hand, the colligate Environment is more of a relaxed, unstructured atmosphere governed by local laws of the state. All ten research participants described their lived experiences of the Environment at their respective colleges or university in their responses.

College culture and social interaction were two subthemes that emerged from this theme. The findings of former military men and women's experiences with college or university environments through college culture and social interaction are consistent with the research of (Kirchner et al., (2014); Heineman (2016); Hara (2017); Hunter-Johnson, Y. (2020).

Furthermore, the participants of this research study and previous studies of (Kirchner et al. (2014); Heineman (2016); Hara (2017); Hunter-Johnson, (2020) were compelled to describe their lived experiences with the college or university environment to address issues of veterans.

Former military men and women enrolled in colleges and universities experience a form of shock as they enter their environments. In addition, the change in Environment often causes a culture shock for veteran students not accustomed to an unstructured college atmosphere.

The subordinate themes, College Culture and Social Interaction, analyzed the experiences and difficulties of coping in an unfamiliar environment as told by the participants being interviewed by the researcher.

Subtheme: College Culture

The subtheme, College Culture, emerged while students responded to questions about the college environment the researcher asked. Seven of the ten participants, Rose, Henry, John, Jim, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, responded by telling of their experiences entering a new environment. The remaining four participants, Judy, Nick, and Bertha, had no issues with the Environment.

Jim stated: " When I returned home from active duty, I felt I was in a new world. All my old friends were gone or married, and the old neighborhood became new. It me about a year before I realized it was a new beginning. I had to regroup and get myself together. After being turned down for job after job, I decided to attend college and get a degree. I enrolled in the university and was hit with another eye-opener, the college environment

was so different from the military Environment. I am twenty-six years old, attending class with eighteen-year-old young men and women. What frustrated me was the constant complaining about the assignments to turn in. All these youngsters wanted to do was party. I wanted no part of them because our priorities were different. I also had to adjust to a lazy environment where the attitude was Who cares."

"Henry stated: "I was shocked when I enrolled in the university. I felt a little out of place because of the age difference. Here everyone was so relaxed at what they did no matter what. The kids were kids with all the complaints I had to hear each day. I would always tell myself if they only knew how good they had it. The Environment on campus was not so bad. My only complaint was that the university had no special activities designed for veterans. Everyone at the university said the same old saying, "Thank you for your service." I had no real problems because I attended class and left because I had a job. I do recall one incident that happened in class. A student had a video game he was playing while waiting for class to start. The video game he was playing gave off gunshot sounds. When I heard those machine gun sounds. I hit the floor for cover as though I was back in Iraq. When I realized where I was, I got up and explained to everyone I had PTSD. Some thought it was a joke and laughed. I became very emotional with tears because my battle buddy was killed. I decided I should go as I was leaving the classroom. My instructor grabbed and hugged me and said, "I understand, son."

Lilly stated: "The Environment at my university was laid back from what I was accustomed to. I was a little dissatisfied because there were no organizations for veterans. Everyone on campus lived in their little world. I found it challenging to communicate with others because they were not friendly. I would say good morning while

passing, and no one would return the gesture. I noticed during registration while going from office to office that personnel in each office seemed angry with the world. They did not greet you or welcome you. I felt not wanted. I expressed my concerns by completing the Form and dropping it in the box."

Rick stated: "When I arrived on campus for registration. I did feel a little out of place because of my age. However, the Environment, in my opinion, was very relaxed. When I was registering for classes, everyone I came in contact with was very cordial.

Unfortunately, this was not the same for my classmates. The instructor had each of us introduce ourselves to the class. When I introduced myself as a veteran, I could see the cold expressions on some classmates' faces. As classmates continued to introduce themselves, five classmates said they had lost a loved one in the war. At that moment, everyone in class looked at me as though I was responsible. A student who had lost a loved one approached me and said, "You are lucky." In speaking with other veterans, they experienced the same. As I moved about campus, the Environment was relaxed, but I found individuals on campus not receptive to veterans. "

"Rose stated: I was very comfortable in the campus environment because my mother worked there for years, and I also knew many people who worked there. Individuals However, this was not the case with other veterans. I witnessed the cold treatment some veterans received when conducting business. Typically, I found the Environment to be the opposite of the military. The military's Environment is a twenty-four-hour operation with individuals prepared to move out in New York second as part of their mission. The only twenty-four-hour procedure on campus is the security police. Some departments on the military base operate twelve-hour shifts while the campus does not. Overall, I think the

Environment is good for veterans. The administration can do more to promote Veteran awareness. After all they pay tuition as well."

John stated: "I was very disappointed when I arrived to start my education career on campus. I heard of the cold treatment the Viet Nam veteran received when they returned home, and now I see what these veterans went through. First, there was no veteran representative on campus to assist us. We are trying to navigate an unfamiliar environment and adjust to a new system. In this day and age, you would think colleges and universities would welcome veterans with open arms. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Many of us felt with the influx of veterans enrolled in these colleges and universities, one would think the administration would improve the Environment to accommodate veterans. Though the need for improvement in welcoming veterans is a reality, university employees should receive staff development training sessions from serving veterans."

Ron stated: "I found the campus environment challenging because it was unfamiliar. However, the university could have appointed someone to welcome veterans. I was amazed as I attended the student orientation, and veterans were not mentioned in any of the presentations, nor was there a Veteran representative. Some employees who worked in the offices were cordial, but I found the majority unpleasant. When you asked for information, they either did not know or did not bother to refer you to someone who could provide you with the correct information. Veterans were looking for signage promoting veteran awareness. However, there is no such thing for veterans. In this campus environment, veterans are a stand-alone population living in an environment that could care less what we protected and sacrificed."

Subtheme: Social Interaction

The subtheme of Social Integration reflects the results of vivid experiences as described by participants of this study as they responded to questions during the interview. The results of this subtheme indicated eight of the ten participants, John, Nick, Judy, Bertha, Jim, Henry, Lilly, and Rick, described their experiences of social interaction among traditional students. The remaining two participants, Rose and Ron, indicated they had no problems with social interaction among conventional students.

John stated: "When I went to class, most of my classmates were younger than me. As we introduced ourselves and I told them I was a veteran, some said, "Thank you for your service." I was not shocked at this because this is the norm. They all seem to be lovely kids. I got to know them in class discussions and when we had to work on group projects together. Then the demons came out. In a class discussion, one classmate said, "That was then, this is now; stop living in the past. That was the old way of doing things." I became emotional and gave her a piece of my mind. After class, we continued the healthy discussion for both of us. Eventually, we became friends and respected each other's age."

Nick stated: "I got along with the kids in my classes. When we introduced ourselves, I noticed several classmates had a parent deployed. I guess this made a difference because we had something in common. However, some needed an attitude check. I pretty much communicated with those classmates whose parents were deployed. They invited me to meet their parents, which I did and established a bond. As I met their parents, several were in the sandbox (Iraq) while I was there. Overall, I found these kids had no social skills before entering college. Interacting among college kids is challenging for all, not just veterans."

Judy stated: *"I found interacting with younger students challenging to handle. Many students in my class had bad experiences growing up or felt the world owed them something. I have a child their age and was shocked at how they talked to each other and the instructor. In class discussions, there were negative comments and a lack of respect for each other. I was very dissatisfied with the etiquette of these classmates. I tried talking to several of these classmates about their attitudes and reasons for their negative attitudes and was told to mind my business. After talking to classmates in other classes, I was told several of their applications were rejected by some clubs and organizations. The university should have mandatory social activities to improve social relations with students and veterans."*

Bertha stated: *"My social interactions with traditional students were horrible. After they knew I was a veteran, they did not have much to talk to me about. I felt they were very standoffish. When I attempted to converse with them, I felt the coldness in their voice. In speaking with other veterans, some shared the same feelings with me. During the orientation, I noticed no mention of social interaction activities that included veterans. Most of the veterans at the university felt the need for student activity planners should consist of veterans. This would be a great way to bring the two together."*

Jim stated: *"I was not so concerned with the social interaction aspect of going to college though it is important because you work together. You must remember we are going into an environment where we know the population will be students younger than you who do not have the experiences you have. Many of them think they are God's gift and know everything. The social activities sponsored by the university did not include veterans."*

Therefore, regarding social interactions among traditional students, veterans are on their own."

Henry stated: "I feel social interaction among veterans and traditional students. In the military, we are trained to work as a team to accomplish our goals. I realize these are immature kids with not many experiences as us, but we must find a way to interact with them. The university needs to develop a social interactions committee of veterans and traditional students to plan social events to unite the two."

Lilly stated: "There is a need to address social interaction among veterans and traditional students. I know of veterans who experienced issues with social interactions as I did. When we were at the orientation, all veterans sat together. However, all the conversations by presenters did not include veterans. I attended a freshman social and found myself the only Veteran there. This was done as the announcer called out the different groups."

Rick stated: "Social interaction is essential in organizing veterans and traditional students together. I felt the separation in the classes I attended. Instructors attempted to integrate veterans and traditional by telling everyone they did not want to see separate sections between veterans and traditional students. He purposely organized veterans and traditional students together when he assigned groups for a class project. However, I do not think the university is doing enough to promote social interaction among veterans and traditional students. Military activities are scheduled quarterly to promote social interaction among all ranks. This gives individuals a sense of belonging. "

Theme: Veteran Advisor

Veteran students enrolled in higher education attending colleges and universities depend very heavily on advisors to provide proper guidance and a pathway to completion of their academic studies, Rankin, (2021). The veteran advisor is responsible for retrieving resources, Counseling, providing educational planning, and other assistance beneficial to veteran students in achieving their academic goals. A VA-accredited representative will assist you in understanding V.A. benefits and entitlements V.A. (2022).

Eight of the ten study participants shared their experiences with veteran advisors of their respective colleges or universities. There were two subthemes, availability and degree mapping, that emerged from the theme leading theme Veteran Advisor.

The findings of veterans receiving services from veteran advisors that included availability and degree mapping are consistent with the research studies of Poole (2015), Kraft-& Kau (2019; Zhang et al., 2019; Rankin (2021).

Subthemes: Availability

The subtheme availability revealed the results of lived experiences as described by participants of this study as they responded to questions during the interview. The results of this subtheme indicated eight of the ten participants, Rose, Henry, Judy, John, Nick, Bertha Lilly, and Ron, described their experiences of the veteran advisor's availability to provide service to veteran students. The remaining two participants, Jim and Rick, indicated little or no interaction with the veteran advisor.

Lilly stated: *"I was disappointed with the veteran advisor because he would keep his appointment. I scheduled an appointment with him three and each time, he was not there.*

When I met with him, I was unsure where he had placed my appointment card. I did not feel comfortable with him because he did not give me any solid advice. He lacked knowledge of my program and was unsure if I needed to see my academic advisor. I did meet with my academic advisor, and it was the opposite. She reviewed my class schedule and gave me her contact info for future appointments."

Rose stated: "My veteran advisor was unavailable when I saw him. I was very dissatisfied because I had G. I. Bill issues, and he could have helped me. However, I did meet with my academic advisor. She was great. We somewhat agreed on my class schedule but worked it out."

Ron stated: "I could not meet with my Veteran advisor. However, I met with my academic advisor, who covered my schedule. I need to see my Veteran advisor because I had benefit issues. I rescheduled with him several times, and his availability was the pits. My academic advisor informed me the V.A. pulled him for training. To get my issues addressed. I went to the regional V.A. office, and they assisted me. Since I needed to get my class schedule corrected, my academic advisor was beneficial. I did get something accomplished."

Nick stated: "At the university I attended, the veteran advisor was on campus but overwhelmed with servicing other veterans. I was very dissatisfied because I had issues receiving my benefits. Though he was unavailable, my academic advisor was there to assist me with my schedule. The university should have more than one Veteran advisor because of the increased number of veterans enrolled. I am surprised the university did not get someone trained by the V.A. to assist at the university. The availability of veteran

advisors is just as important as academic advisors. I had to schedule an appointment with the V.A."

Bertha stated: "The veteran advisor at the university was difficult to pin down because of the number of veterans he scheduled to meet. I had issues with my benefits and needed to see a Veteran advisor. The finance office informed me they had not received my tuition payment from the V.A. I contacted the V.A. and was told my application was incomplete and they needed information from the school. It took me two days to track down the Veteran advisor to expedite my application and assist me in clearing up the mess at the finance office. If I could not satisfy the financial obligations, all my classes would be placed on hold. "

John stated: "My veteran advisor was somewhat challenging to see because of the number of veterans he scheduled. The university's number of veterans enrolled increased; I guess others needed to see him, and the time I needed to see him. I had to wait two days before I finally got in to see him. I had benefit issues, and he corrected them immediately. The wait was worth it. Since there have been many veterans in colleges and universities, the V.A. and the university need to revisit adding or training an additional individual to assist veterans. The finance office will place you on hold, and you cannot attend class."

Judy stated: "I can appreciate having a Veteran advisor on campus to assist veterans. However, they must be accessible and available to veterans. I know veteran enrollment is at an all-time high, but the colleges and universities should visit, adding the person to accommodate this increase. Unfortunately, I had to wait nearly two days to see the veteran advisor. This is also frustrating to me because of my PTSD issues. I become very

emotional when irritated, and waiting is difficult. I am sure other veterans experience the same symptom."

Henry stated: *"The veteran advisor at the university is tough to see. I appreciate him notifying all veterans of the increase in veterans scheduling an appointment. In addition, he was very thoughtful in placing a notice in the university news bulletin of his availability due to the increase of veterans requesting assistance. Though these colleges and universities were notified of the limited availability of the veteran advisor, the university should address this problem by adding additional support or requesting support from the V.A. Veterans are spending too much money not to have access to a V.A. or a different representative. I'm sure they can assign an additional individual to help reduce the workload."*

Subtheme: Degree Mapping

Degree mapping is a means to determine the length of time when a person will graduate. The degree map was designed for students to visualize their year for graduation from the year they enrolled in a two- or four-year program. The degree map provides requirements and recommended courses for each academic term, giving each student a map to follow to complete the degree. The results of this subtheme indicated all ten participants felt degree mapping was a necessary tool with positive results when used.

Rose stated: *"One of the first questions I asked when I enrolled in school was how long will it take me to complete all the classes for a degree.? She explained the entire course of study by semester. This gave me an idea of my graduation year. I appreciated her taking the time to explain what requirements and procedures I was expected to take. She also pointed out to me which courses are offered during the summer. With degree*

mapping, I knew which systems would require me to concentrate more because of the demands of the course. "

Henry stated: "Degree mapping allowed me to plan for the future, especially for the year I will be expected to graduate. It allowed me to budget for the years I will have additional expenses the V.A. will not cover. I was delighted to know where I was going and how long it would take me to get there. I advise every Veteran going to college to get with their academic advisor and veteran advisor and discuss degree mapping to plan their future."

Judy stated: "I heard of degree mapping from another veteran. I met with my academic advisor, and she explained everything to me. All my classes were laid out for me by semester. We also discussed each course and the level of difficulty for each period. My advisor also pointed out which courses are offered during the summer if I wanted to attend summer school. Degree mapping gave me pointed out to me the year I can expect to graduate. This allowed me to plan and budget for those expenses not covered by the V.A."

John stated: "My academic advisor scheduled an appointment with me to cover degree mapping. I heard other veterans discussing its usefulness as we began discussing my road to receiving my degree. I was able to decide what I needed to do to ensure I was enrolled in each semester because I have a full-time job and must adjust accordingly. Degree mapping gave me the year I was expected to graduate and the courses required for a degree. I found it to be instrumental."

Jim stated: "When I enrolled in the university. I asked my academic advisor to schedule an appointment for me to devise my degree map. We met, and I appreciated her taking

the time to chart my path to graduation. She was able to lay out all the courses for me and explained the level of difficulty. The leading information I needed was my graduation year. Degree mapping was most helpful to me. "

Nick stated: " Degree mapping was most beneficial for me. I was able to plot out the course of study with my advisor. I wanted to know what year I was expected to graduate. My academic advisor and veteran advisor met me and worked with me to devise my map for success. I knew where I was going and what it took to get me there. Degree mapping was beneficial for me. I would recommend degree mapping for all veterans."

Bertha stated: "My advisor met with me to devise my degree map. I was very appreciative she took the time with me to plan my success. We covered all the courses in the academic bulletin by semester and determined a graduation year. She also pointed me to the classes most students had difficulties with each semester. I would recommend to all veterans to make sure they get with their advisor and create a degree map. "

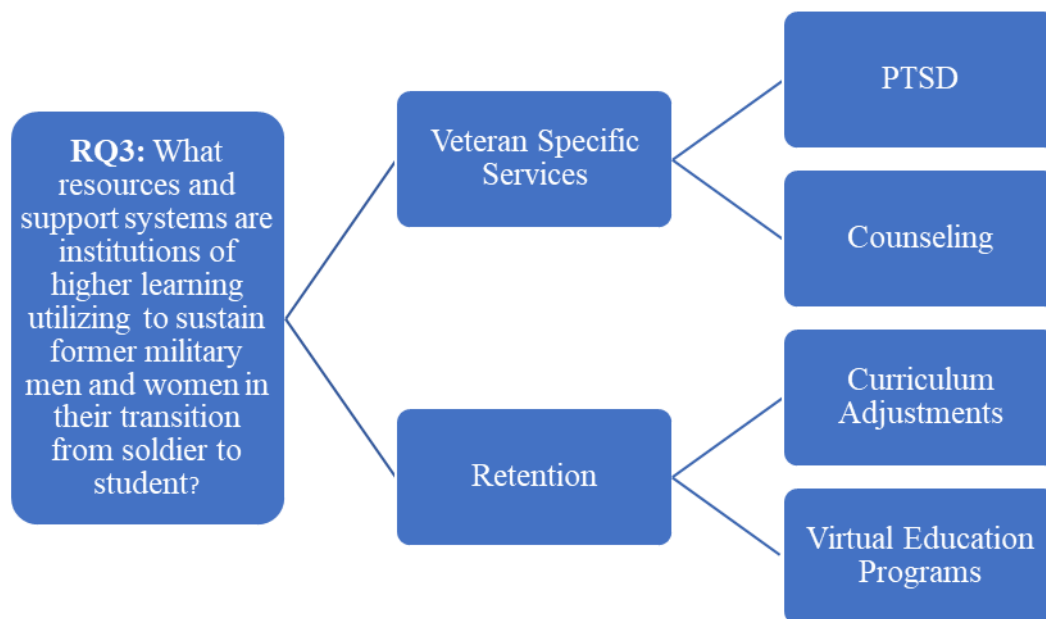
Lilly stated: "Degree mapping was a great way my academic advisor assisted me in determining the year I was expected to graduate. This was most helpful because it allowed me to plan financially for those incidentals the V.A. did not cover. My advisor also pointed out several courses and their level of difficulty. Degree mapping is a must for all veterans because it gives you an idea of what to expect and what classes you need to complete."

Rick stated: "Degree mapping should be the first thing all veterans should devise with their academic advisor. It allowed me to plan my future with my advisor and know where I was going and what it took to get me there. With degree mapping, my advisor painted a clear picture for me of all the courses involved in the program of studies. I was

appreciative of knowing the expected graduation year. I strongly suggest all veterans meet with their advisors and devise a degree map."

Ron stated: "Degree mapping was beneficial for me. I met with my advisor and the Veteran advisor to devise a degree map. Degree mapping determined my graduation year. My advisor reviewed all the courses in the academic bulletin and was able to point out those courses most students had difficulty with. In addition to degree mapping charting my road to completing all requirements, it allowed me to plan financially and schedule my work hours with my employer. I strongly suggest all veterans see their academic advisor and devise a degree map."

Figure 5 Thematic Diagram: Research Question 3



Research Question 3:

What resources and support systems are institutions of higher learning utilizing to sustain former military men and women in their transition from soldier to student?

Theme: Veteran-Specific Services

Many colleges and universities are revisiting the services offered to various populations, specifically veteran students. Veteran-friendly colleges and university campuses commit to providing specific services to meet the needs of veteran students. Services such as academic support, financial aid, and Counseling. These colleges and universities are focused on providing services that will address the needs of veterans. All ten research participants described their lived experiences with Veteran Specific Services at their respective colleges or university in their responses. PTSD and Counseling were two subthemes that emerged from this theme. The findings of former military men and women's experiences with Veteran Specific Services at their respective college or university through PTSD and Counseling is consistent with the research of Falkey, 2016); Lemire (2017); Alshuler and Yarab (2018); and Lim et al., (2018), Chandra (2021).

Subtheme: PTSD

Veterans who returned home after completing their military obligation could have been exposed to various traumatic experiences during their time in the military. Veterans' traumatic experiences are intense responses to stimuli, including combative or protective behavior, anxiety, and flashbacks. This subtheme emerged due to participants telling of their lived experiences and the challenges they face today. All ten participants responded with some feeling of emotion.

Rose stated: *"I know a lot of veterans with PTSD. I was diagnosed with PTSD. However, when I was in school, I felt instructors had no clue about what we, as veterans, have been through. I often felt pressured when pressured for the correct answers. I would sometimes reflect on the days I was in Iraq. I guess what I am trying to say is individuals with PTSD will, at times, reflect on those days. The universities should address the*

specific needs of veterans. A trained professional should be on staff who can provide PTSD services to veterans."

Henry stated: *"With the increase of veterans on college and university campuses, I think they need to adjust to us instead of us adjusting to them. Veterans who have PTSD should have specific services available to accommodate their needs. I feel veterans deserve more than what they are giving us."*

Judy stated: *"Concerning specific services to address veterans with PTSD, Colleges and universities will begin to lose veterans if proper services are unavailable. Veterans need these services to survive on campuses and at home."*

John stated: *"I was diagnosed having PTSD. I informed my classmates and instructors of my condition so they would know what to do and who to call if anything was to get out of the ordinary. The sad part of having PTSD is you never know when it will hit you. PTSD requires consistent monitoring."*

Jim stated: *"Veterans with PTSD should have access to necessary services as needed. I strongly feel colleges and universities should begin to realize they must evaluate their campuses to see what alterations must be made to accommodate the Veteran."*

Nick stated: *"All I have to say about veteran-specific services for veterans is that colleges and universities should do a better job when providing services. I feel it's not that colleges and universities do not want to do anything for veterans. Instead, I think they do not know where to start."*

Bertha stated: *"Colleges and universities could begin to look at veterans differently. Veterans are a part of the student population and should be treated as such. They pay tuition and other fees just as traditional students do. Veterans should be a top priority for*

the university. No one can ever repay the men and women for their sacrifice for our country."

Lilly stated: *"Veterans need specific services on campus. Unfortunately, the V.A. is not always accessible to veterans without an appointment. Universities and colleges should evaluate their campuses to adjust to accommodate the Veteran."*

Rick stated: *"I have PTSD and feel fine. I take medicine as prescribed and stay from incidents I know will trigger off a reaction. PTSD is controllable. It is up to the individual."*

Ron stated: *"I care about those men and women who attend higher education institutions who fail in their responsibilities to accommodate veterans. I am pretty sure they know the specific services veterans need. Veterans deserve better than what they are getting today. I want a federal mandate requiring colleges and universities to have specific services for veterans."*

Subtheme: Counseling

Veteran students seek counseling services for several reasons. These reasons can be for an interpersonal relationship, PTSD, symptoms of depression and anxiety, discomfort in Social settings, and other reasons. Whatever the case, counseling services must be available for Veteran students. This subtheme emerged from participants telling of their lived experiences with counseling services. All ten participants responded with some feeling of emotion. However, all ten participants also indicated they preferred to use the V.A. because of the limited resources at colleges and universities.

Rose stated: *"Though I very seldom used the services of a counselor, I was aware this service was available to all veterans. Veterans mostly used the counselors at the V.A."*

since they were better equipped to handle veterans. At the V.A., not only did you have access to felt limited resources."

Henry stated: "I knew the counseling department was available for all veterans, but most of the veterans preferred to go to the V.A. because there were more resources for veterans. Also, most counselors were veterans; some had much in common with veterans. So, if I needed Counseling, I would prefer to go to the V.A."

Judy stated: "Counseling is essential for Veterans because it is a method that allows veterans to open up without fear and release the anxiety which hounds veterans. In addition, in speaking with other veterans, they felt more comfortable talking to a V.A. counselor because both were soldiers. I prefer a V.A. counselor for the same reason."

John stated: "I strongly prefer using the services of a V.A. counselor because I feel we have more in common than a university counselor. However, I was glad to know the university offered counseling services for veterans. Most of the veterans I spoke to felt the same way."

Jim stated: "A young lady who spoke at the orientation represented the counseling department. She was talking to the traditional students because she never mentioned veterans. I prefer going to the V.A. because I am a disabled veteran."

Nick stated: "At the orientation, a representative told us the university provided counseling services for all students. I thought I was a disabled veteran receiving counseling services from the V.A. I would prefer continuing the sessions at the V.A. I also thought about the resources at the V.A. compared to the university."

Bertha stated: *"I appreciate the university offered counseling services, but I was seeing a counselor at the V.A. I had already begun receiving counseling services before the orientation. The VA has opened a case for me which I shared with the counseling department."*

Lilly stated: *"The counseling services at the V.A. was more intense with available additional resources than the university's counseling department. However, I did have a conversation with the director of the counseling department and shared with her my intent to use the services of the V.A. "*

Rick stated: *"The university had counseling services available for students. However, I decided if I needed counseling services, I would prefer using the benefits of the V.A. I felt the V.A. would be better because they deal with veterans all the time and had the resources."*

Ron stated: *"The university offered counseling services at the orientation. However, I visited the counseling department and notified them I had been receiving counseling services from the V.A. for the last six months. I preferred the V.A. because they had the additional resources I needed and participated regularly."*

Theme: Retention

For several years, colleges and universities have enjoyed the influx of veterans enrolling in their schools. These veterans brought a wealth of knowledge and V.A. funding sponsored by G.I. Bill educational benefits. However, when veterans' needs are unmet, they leave the college or university to pursue a college or university that will meet their needs. All ten research participants described their vivid experiences with the retention rate at their respective colleges or university in their responses. Curriculum adjustments and virtual learning programs were two

subthemes that emerged from this theme. The findings of former military men and women's experiences with college or university in regards to Retention through curriculum adjustments and virtual learning programs are consistent with the research studies of (Tucker-Kulesza et al., 2018);(Southwell, 2018); (Dixon, 2019);(Spriggs, 2022).

Subtheme: Curriculum Adjustment

One of the retention issues that guided the non-retention of veterans at some colleges and universities was the adjustment in the curriculum to meet the needs of veteran students. Colleges and universities compete for veteran enrollment because of the guaranteed tuition for veteran students through the G.I. Bill.

This subtheme emerged from participants telling of their lived experiences with colleges and universities adjusting their curriculum to attract and retain veterans. All ten participants responded with some feeling of emotion. All ten participants also indicated they preferred to attend colleges and universities prepared to adjust their curriculum to accommodate the Veteran. Each research participant described their lived experiences and thoughts about colleges changing the curriculum for veterans.

Rose states: *"The transition began when veterans returned from active military duty. Many will enter higher education to earn a degree for a better life. However, many veterans return from active duty with disabilities and find some colleges and universities' curricula cannot accommodate them because of their disabilities. I worry about veterans who use a wheelchair, those whose sight is limited, and other disabilities that prevent veterans from enrolling in higher education. I would like to see colleges and universities adjust their curriculum to accommodate our veterans who have disabilities."*

Henry stated: *"Colleges and universities should be mandated to review the number of veterans needing accommodations and design their curriculum based on need, veteran level of disability, and the frequency of classes offered. For example, some veterans have full-time jobs to support their families and can only attend classes in the evening."*

Judy stated: *"I think colleges and universities have a long way in adjusting their curriculum, especially with virtual learning, which is very accommodating. My son has taken online courses, and he found them to be worthwhile. Also, I know several veterans restricted to a wheelchair, and online courses were great for them."*

John stated: *"When colleges and universities adjust their curriculum, they accommodate veterans, which is a great way to retain them. Additionally, veterans are selecting schools based on programs, curriculum, and diversity in class offerings."*

Jim stated: *"If colleges and universities are adjusting their curriculums to meet the needs of veterans, I would like to thank them for caring for the Veteran. This is long overdue. Veterans attending college or university struggle to juggle attending class and work."*

Nick stated: *"I am glad some colleges and universities are considering reviewing their curricula to accommodate veterans. Veterans struggle to adjust their time to attend classes because of their work schedules. The adjustment of the curriculum, I am sure, will benefit all veterans."*

Bertha stated: *"If schools adjusted their curriculum to accommodate veterans, they would be on the right track. Then, veterans will attend schools that fit their needs. This is a great way to retain veterans."*

Lilly stated: *"I never thought about colleges and universities adjusting their curriculum. However, veterans are accustomed to the norm, and changing their curriculum will*

retain and attract more veterans. In addition, these men and women have families, which is a top priority, not school."

Rick stated: "Veterans enrolling in schools look at the time element when deciding to attend school. I was employed full-time and did not want to jeopardize my job for school. Also, I had a family to support, and they came first. I think if colleges and universities could adjust their curriculum to meet the needs of veterans, this would be very helpful for veterans".

Ron stated: "I wanted to go to school, but the time of school conflicted with my job. I looked at several schools' class offerings and their time, and there was no way I could be in both places simultaneously. Providing for my family was first."

Subtheme: Virtual Education Programs

This subtheme emerged from participants telling their lived experiences with colleges and universities instituting virtual learning programs to attract and retain veterans. All ten participants responded with some feeling of emotion. All ten participants also indicated they preferred to attend colleges and universities that offer virtual learning programs to accommodate veterans who cannot participate in regular classes during the day due to employment hours. Each research participant described their experiences and thoughts about colleges instituting virtual learning programs for veterans.

Rose stated: "We did not have virtual learning when I enrolled in college after the war. However, online programs' luxury allowed veterans and others to go to school from home and not interfere with their employment."

Henry stated: *"Virtual learning was not available when I attended school. I wish we had the opportunity as those today. Also, this is another way to retain veterans because of their employment schedule."*

Judy stated: *"I am unsure if I wanted virtual learning because my computer skills were not up to par. However, I heard you are in trouble if you do not have power and your internet goes out. This is good for those veterans who have to work."*

John stated: *"I was first introduced to virtual learning during the COVID Pandemic. My children's schools used this feature, and I found it to be the same as being in the classroom. This is very good for veterans who cannot attend regular class schedules."*

Jim stated: *"Veterans would find this very good because they could continue working and attending class. This is a plus for full-time veterans who cannot adjust their work schedule to attend classes."*

Nick stated: *"If colleges and universities offer online classes, this would be a plus for veterans and other adults. Online learning was used during the pandemic. I am of this learning for veterans. It also bests the hustle and bustle of attending classes on campus."*

Bertha stated: *"I think colleges and universities are moving in the right direction with offering online classes. This is a positive step in attracting and retaining veterans. Veterans seek ways to attend college without interfering with their employment."*

Lilly stated: *"If colleges and universities are to attract and retain veterans, they must review their curriculum and find innovative ways to appeal to all who want to continue their education. Offering online instruction is the way to go."*

Rick stated: *"that virtual learning is the most innovative way to accommodate veterans."*

Many veterans have families, and attending college and university during the day would interfere with their employment. Online learning is a great way to accommodate veterans."

Ron stated: *"Colleges and universities offering online programs are providing a needed service to veterans. Many veterans want to go to college to earn a degree but cannot because classes during the day interfere with the time of their employment. Online programs offered by colleges and universities would allow veterans to attend school."*

Summary of Findings

The aim of this descriptive phenomenological research study was to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. The targeted sample size for this research study amounted to 10 former military men and women who completed or enrolled in a college or university after completing military obligations.

Participants of the study shared their lived experiences when interviewed by the researcher. However, the research study's findings indicated consistency in the challenges former military men and women encountered. The six themes that emerged from participants' responses revealed to the researcher represented issues faced by former military men and women who transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning.

The research study's findings disclosed six of the ten participants interviewed experienced difficulty with student orientation and navigating through the Registration Process. The remaining four participants revealed minimum problems. In Understanding the G.I. Bill Benefits, seven of the 10 participants disclosed complications with receiving payment benefits, and the remaining three indicated they received payment benefits but incorrect amounts.

Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the presence of a V.A. Representative. With the Environment theme, seven participants disclosed challenges adapting to the culture and interacting socially within the college or university environment. At the same time, the remaining three participants had no problems. Finally, regarding the theme of Veteran Advisors, eight of the ten participants disclosed challenges with the availability of a Veteran Advisor, while the remaining three indicated no issues.

Additionally, ten of the ten participants agreed with the Degree Mapping Process. With Veteran Specific Services ten participants indicated problems with specific services that included PTSD issues and a lack of counseling services for veteran students. Finally, regarding the theme of Retention, ten participants agreed that the lack of Curriculum Adjustments and Virtual Education Programs were reasons colleges and universities experienced a reduction in veteran student enrollment.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Overview of Study/Organization of Chapter

This descriptive phenomenological research study aimed to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. This study focused on identifying gaps in support services of former military men and women enrolled in higher education institutions.

Schlossberg's Transition Model (1995) was used as the theoretical framework. This framework guided the researcher in identifying support services for those encounters, experiences, and needs of student veteran transitioning from military life to institutions of higher learning. Schlossberg's model is centered around four coping strategies: situation, self, support, and strategies. The Model provided a flexible structure for the understanding lifestyle changes from soldiers to student veterans.

Review of Research Statement

A research study conducted by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs V A (2021), indicated former military men and women encountered common challenges in re-adjustment. The challenges former military men and women faced while transitioned were long-lasting and stressful, particularly as they moved from a highly structured military environment to a relaxed higher education environment (Jones, 2017). Favorably addressing these issues supported former military men and women as they transitioned from soldier to student veteran.

Review of Methods

This descriptive phenomenological research study explored the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women who transitioned from military assignments to

students in institutions of higher learning. A qualitative research design was utilized that answered the study's research questions. In addition, the researcher gathered, organized, and interpreted the data from interviews given by the participants who shared their experiences with the researcher to understand the phenomenon better.

The researcher intended to capture firsthand information from individuals who lived, witnessed, or was part of the United States military and transitioned to an institution of higher learning. To that end, a descriptive phenomenological approach was selected for the research design. Kashef's (2022) research study explained that phenomenological research aims to expound on the phenomena experienced by an individual in a particular situation. A previous research study by Frogner et al. (2016) and the recent survey of Kashef suggested that lived experiences were described by a phenomenological research design.

This phenomenological descriptive research design provided the researcher with an in-depth knowledge of the interactions between student veterans and selected personnel from institutions of higher learning. As Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated, a phenomenological study seized the moment of a phenomenon as told by individuals who participated in it. Such was the intent of the researcher in the research study.

Review of Findings

Six significant themes emerged from the participants' responses when they described former military men's and women's experiences as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. Through interviews with each participant of the research study, the researcher noted six phenomenological themes that emerged from interviews: (1) Registration Process, (2) G.I. Bill Benefits, (3) Environment, (4) Veteran Advisor, (5) Veteran Specific Services (6) Retention.

Research Question 1:

What challenges do veteran students encounter when enrolling in institutions of higher learning?

The challenges encountered by former military men and women enrolled in institutions of higher learning included adjusting to a new environment, interacting with other students to establish friendly relationships on campus (McGee, 2022), adjusting and fitting into the campus culture (Belanger et al., 2021), and changing from an elevated (military) structure to a relaxed (higher education) environment (Jones, 2017). Additionally, a culture of nonacceptance of student veterans and the demand for veteran-specific student services was apparent in higher education (Chandra, 2021). Finally, a lack of adequate veteran student support services programs (SSSPs) contributed to those challenges, as Robinson and Robinson (2022) indicated.

Registration Process

This research study revealed participants encountered problems with the college or university registration process. The findings indicated six of the ten research participants, Rose, Henry, Judy, John, Jim, and Nick, had difficulty registering. As the participants were interviewed by the researcher, their responses revealed very strong emotional feelings with the dissatisfaction and difficult challenges encountered with the registration process. The most interesting finding from the research study revealed six research participants enrolled in six different universities expressed identical emotional feelings of dissatisfaction with the registration process from their respective university.

This researcher was astonished it took a research study to allow these former military men and women student veterans the opportunity to release problems encountered in past years.. All of the research participants indicated a sense of not being accepted by university personnel.

Participants recalled traditional students and office workers were very cold towards them. Instructors acted as though they did not care.

Participants became very emotional, and you could hear the frustration in their tone of voice as they recalled their stories. The research participants revealed to the researcher orientation was a joke because those who conducted the orientation could not answer questions related to student veterans. There was no information specifically intended for student veterans. Participants also discussed frustration with not being able to navigate the process because they lacked the information and had no map for directions which made it difficult to locate various offices on campus.

The remaining four, Bertha, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, experienced no problems. Research participants revealed they had relatives, friends, and others who worked at the university got someone to help them with registration. These individuals worked in the registrar office, financial aid office, and personally gave them assistance. Participants also revealed their friends' sons and daughters who attended the university acted as a sponsor, otherwise they would have problems as their fellow student veterans.

The findings of former military men and women regarding the registration process challenges experienced by six of the ten research participants were consistent with the research studies of (Beck, 2020); (Francis, 2021) and (Reynolds, 2022).

The results of the research study conducted by (Beck, 2020) found student veterans encountered navigating the registration process was confusing and frustrating which was consistent with responses from research participants. A further research study conducted by (Francis, 2021) found student veterans encountered challenges were stressful caused by understanding the application and admissions process. Finally, (Reynolds, 2022) conducted a

research study and found identified obstacles such navigating the admission process, communication, and lack of assistance made the registration process difficult. This was consistent with the responses from research participants. Therefore, the participants of this research study were compelled to describe their vivid experiences with the registration process.

Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits

Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits was another theme from the participants as they responded to a research question. This research study revealed that participants encountered problems with receiving G.I. Bill Benefits. The findings indicated seven of the ten research participants, Rose, Judy, Jim, Nick, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, indicated difficulty receiving benefit payments.

The research participants were very eager to talk about their experiences not receiving their G.I Bill benefits. You could hear it in their voices and facial expressions of the frustrations and disappointment endured. Seven of the ten participants indicated they were notified by the registrar's office and finance office of delinquent tuition payment and failure to submit payment by a specified date would nullify enrollment due to nonpayment of tuition.

Each participant told of their disappointment and lack of understanding by the university in addressing this situation. Three of the participants became so emotional as they told their stories, the researcher allowed each participant to recompose themselves. The remaining four participants showed signs of sorrow and sadness and indicated to the researcher how it was a shame how veterans were treated. Seven of the ten participants facial expressions showed signs of disappointment and how citizens show no appreciation for those who sacrifice their lives for their freedom.

Seven of the ten participants filed a complaint with their respective university, and each indicated it fell on deaf ears. Seven participants also filed a complaint with the VA. It was very interesting and a coincidence each participant from seven different universities filed a complaint with the VA. Participants indicated the VA eventually notified each individual university and resolved each problem. The interesting finding of this theme was participants indicated they were more disappointed with the university for not being understanding than the VA.

The remaining three research participants, Henry, John, and Bertha, showed they experienced no problems. Each indicated they applied for benefits at least three months in advance prior to the beginning of the semester,

The findings of former military men and women regarding understanding the G.I. Bill Benefits indicated seven of the ten research participants felt universities were more concerned about receiving VA tuition payments than educating the student veteran. The problems experienced were consistent with the results of research studies conducted by (Jordan, 2019); (Baskas, 2021) and (Bibeau, 2022).

The results of the research study by (Jordan, 2019) indicated student veterans who did not receive VA educational benefits at time of registration was not allowed to register or attend classes until the university received payment. Another study conducted by (Baskas, 2021) indicated veterans were confronted with numerous barriers such as eligibility for benefits, high tuition costs, and delay in benefits made it challenging for former military members to commit to attending college using their G.I. Bill educational benefits. The results of the (Bibeau, 2022) research study indicated the VA found mechanical problems with their automated processing system that caused delays for veterans receiving correct benefits. This prevented enrollment in

universities. Therefore, the participants of this research study were compelled to describe their lived experiences with understanding the G. I. Bill.

Research Question 2:

How do veteran students transition from soldier to student?

Veteran students cope with transitioning from soldier to student by utilizing support services offered through the local VA. The VA provided former military men and women services such as health care, financial counseling, stress, education, and procedures for applying for and receiving benefits from the GI Bill (VA, 2022). In addition to using the services of the VA, former military men, and women use strategies such as interacting with family/friends, talking about it with a friend, outdoor activities such as fishing, support groups, and counseling. (VA Research Communications, 2017).

Environment

The theme environment emerged from conversations with former military men and women research participants as they were interviewed. The findings for this research study revealed seven study participants encountered problems with colleges and university environments.

The findings indicated seven of the ten research participants, Rose, Henry, John, Jim, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, indicated difficulty adjusting to the environment. The participants described college and universities as very lax and slow moving. The participants also indicated each had a difficult time adjusting. Seven of the ten participants indicated they did not feel welcomed because of their age and students were very immature. Seven participants also indicated to the researcher, students tended to shy away from student veterans and communicating with them was also difficult. Seven of the participants observed students arguing

with instructions that showed a sign of disrespect. Seven participants also indicated they did not challenge those individuals in charge. Several revealed they were shocked the way students talked to instructors and the tone of voice used.

The most interesting point participants revealed to the researcher indicated, it was like they entered into a new world. Participants indicated everything was so different for them. Everyone on campus was so laid back. Participants indicated students and others on campus could care less what you did for the country.

While all participants revealed to the researcher they felt out of out of place in a laid-back environment, each participant indicated environment was challenging. The participants revealed communication, life style, respect for authority, age difference, and interacting with students who displayed an unapproachable attitude was a challenge.

The remaining three research participants, Judy, Nick, and Bertha, indicated to the researcher they experienced no problems. It was interesting to know from each participant, they were familiar with the university and was aware of campus and its environment. They knew beforehand what to expect.

The findings of former military men and women experienced regarding colleges and university environment challenges experienced by seven of the ten research participants were consistent with the research studies of (Johnson, 2020); (Weiss, 2021; and (Umucu, 2022).

The research study conducted by (Johnson, 2020) indicated challenges for student veterans functioning in a unified learning environment (veterans and civilians).The study also provided challenges veterans encountered as they pursued an education and relevant support systems needed, such as academic support, counseling, and healthcare.

A further study by (Weiss, 2021) indicated student veteran success was dependent on the role universities played in welcoming student veterans. The university ensured the environment was veteran friendly. The study indicated President Obama eight keys to success ensured a welcoming environment for student veterans.

The research study by (Umucu, 2022) revealed student veterans average age was 22-46 years old. Challenges such as age and a relaxed environment made it difficult for student veterans to function in an unfamiliar environment. Therefore, the participants of this research study were compelled to describe their experiences in a college and university environment.

Veteran Advisors

The theme of veteran advisors emerged from conversations with former military men and women research participants as they were interviewed. The findings for this research study revealed eight of the ten research participants, Rose, Henry, Judy John, Nick, Bertha, Lilly, and Ron, indicated difficulty with veteran advisors. When participants were interviewed by the researcher, each of the eight participants revealed it was very difficult scheduling an appointment with the veteran advisor because of the number of veterans received confirmed appointments. Participants indicated frustration because of their low tolerance for patience.

Eight of the ten participants also were dissatisfied of the veteran advisor's availability. Participants revealed to the researcher they became very emotional because their PTSD set in and they became more frustrated waiting for an appointment. The veteran advisor was overwhelmed and overload trying to accommodate all veterans on campus by himself.

Another issue the eight participants had was degree mapping with their academic advisor and the credit for transfer policy. Participants were very angry and dissatisfied with the academic advisor because courses were added to their program of studies which they received from an

accredited university. The veteran advisor was needed to resolve the problem. However, the veteran advisor was not available.

The remaining two participants, Jim, and Rick, indicated no problems. Participants indicated they met with both advisors prior to registration and was aware of all course work involved.

The findings of former military men and women regarding veteran advisors' challenges experienced by Eight of the ten participants were consistent with the research studies of (Lazarz, 2019); (Rankin, 2021); and (Morris, 2022).

The research study conducted by (Lazarz, 2019) examined components of the PAVE program (Peer Advisors for Veteran Education) and its effectiveness with student veterans. The study indicated the program utilizes seasoned veterans to assist first year student veterans' services students with navigating college life, campus resources, and support. The results indicated the program assisted more than two thousand student veterans. Another research study conducted by (Rankin, 2021) indicated student veterans adjust and perform better when an advisor assists student veterans with coaching, mentorship programs, counseling, and student engagement. The research study also indicated universities who implement a solid student advisor program showed a high retention rate. Finally, a research study conducted by (Morris, 2022) examined and introduced the Holistic Student Veteran Advising Model by the University of Colorado. The model was based on Schlossberg's four S Theory and was designed to address challenges encountered by student veterans. The model created a venue for faculty and advisors to devise individual student veteran transition plans. The results of the study found faculty members and veteran advisors working together impact student retention and a better

understanding of student veterans. Therefore, the participants of this research study were compelled to describe their vivid experiences with college and university veteran advisors.

Research Question 3:

What resources and support systems are institutions of higher learning utilizing to sustain former military men and women in their transition from soldier to a student?

Institutions of higher learning implemented areas of support to sustain former military men and women in their transition from soldier to student. They included tutoring for coursework, academic advising, workshops for study skills, employment assistance and career planning, financial aid assistance, mental health counseling, and disability support services. In addition, establish partnerships between academic institutions and community support systems to assist transitioning veterans.

Colleges and universities adjusted curriculums, offered afternoon evening classes to accommodate working veterans, and implemented online courses using virtual learning programs.

Veteran Specific Services

The theme of veteran-specific services emerged from conversations with former military men and women research participants as they were interviewed. This research study revealed problems participants encountered due to the lack of veteran-specific services.

The findings indicated ten of the ten research participants, Rose, Henry, Judy, John, Jim, Nick, Bertha, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, indicated having difficulty with available veteran-specific services. When interviewed by the researcher, all ten participants emphatically indicated PTSD as top a priority colleges and universities must address in providing veteran specific services. As

each participant spoke of PTSD, their facial expressions told of their concern for colleges and universities to address PTSD services.

All participants indicated to the researcher colleges and universities needed to provide a trained professional staff to address specific services for student veterans. One interesting note the researcher noticed, all participants revealed to the researcher, they knew of a student veteran who needed assistance with PTSD and the college or university did not have available services to accommodate student veterans with PTSD.

All participants also indicated to the researcher, they felt colleges or universities want to help student veterans by providing specific services. However, they do not know where to start. The last interesting finding was all ten participants felt the federal government should mandate all colleges and universities provide student veteran specific services designed to address student veteran needs.

The findings of former military men and women experienced regarding veteran specific services challenges experienced by ten of the ten research participants were consistent with the research studies of (Jordan, 2019); (Chandra (2021); (Kognito & Craig, 2022).

The research study of (Jordan, 2019) examined how colleges and universities can better serve the influx of veterans. The results of the study indicated colleges and universities designated a specific office and provided service to student veterans. The results also found colleges and universities relied on the VA to provide training for support services personnel. In another research study, (Chandra (2021) results indicated colleges and universities reviewed how to better serve student veterans. Colleges and universities implemented specific services such as career planning, financial assistance, and assistance with campus environment adjustments. Finally, a research study by Kognito & Craig, 2022) results indicated faculty and staff lack the

skills, knowledge, and self confidence in creating a supportive environment for student veterans. The study also recommended colleges and universities seek VA assistance in implementing specific support services for student veterans such as PTSD certified counselors, veteran advisors, and psychological counselors. Therefore, the participants of this research study were compelled to describe their lived experiences with college and university regarding veteran-specific services.

Retention

The retention theme emerged from conversations with former military men and women research participants as they were interviewed. The findings from this research study revealed why participants expressed reasons colleges and universities are experiencing issues with retaining veterans. The results indicated ten of the ten research participants, Rose, Henry, Judy, John, Jim, Nick, Bertha, Lilly, Rick, and Ron, indicated reasons veterans are having difficulty remaining at colleges and universities who do not meet the needs of veterans.

All ten participants revealed reasons student veterans leave colleges and universities. Participants were very emotional in believing once colleges and universities received monies from the VA, they really did not care about veterans. Participants revealed all you have to do is review available services and organizations for student veterans. The finding that stood out the most was a veteran center on campus. All participants indicated colleges and universities should be required to establish a veteran center. This will allow student veterans to meet and intermingle with other veterans and establish a veteran support group.

The most interesting finding revealed by participants to the researcher is student veterans are leaving colleges and universities that do not meet their needs. When this happens, colleges and universities lose federal fundings that could affect employment. Also, participants indicated

student veterans are demanding colleges and universities meet their needs by adjusting in their curriculum to accommodate student veterans.

Participants also indicated to the researcher colleges and universities have realized the retention rate of student veterans are low at some colleges and universities due to they are not meeting student veteran needs. Another finding emerged, student veterans as told by the research participants are selecting colleges and universities who have virtual learning programs for the working student veteran.

The findings of former military men and women regarding retention of veterans at colleges and universities challenges experienced by ten of the ten research participants were consistent with the research studies of (Southwell, 2018); (Maldonado, 2021); and (Reynolds, 2022).

The research study of (Southwell, 2018) results indicated colleges and universities conducted assessments of student veteran retention and found colleges and universities retention rates would increase if they invested in training personnel who provided specific services to student veterans. In another research study conducted by (Maldonado, 2021), results indicated

Retention of student veterans vary from among colleges and universities. The most crucial barriers in the retention of student veterans at colleges were inadequate welcoming, lack of support programs for student veterans, and campus environment. Finally, a research study conducted by (Reynolds, 2022) results indicated colleges and universities retention were low due to several reasons such as the culture shock of entering a college or university campus environment, limited online instruction to accommodate the working student veteran, availability of courses, and lack of specific support services to meet the of student veterans. Therefore, the

participants of this research study were compelled to describe their vivid experiences with college and university regarding veteran-specific services.

Recommendations for Student Veterans

All potential veteran students should schedule an appointment with a local Veteran Administration to review GI Bill Benefits entitlements before enrolling in any college or university.

In order to ensure you receive your benefits in time for Fall, Spring, or Summer registration, you should apply for benefits 60 days prior to the start of the semester you plan to begin classes. possible. The VA takes about thirty days to process your application. You may apply on line, in person. You will need social Security number, Bank Account Direct Deposit, and School.

If you are a disabled veteran, visit the university's Office of Disability and get information regarding accommodations.

You must receive official documents for Physician to complete.

Tour the campus environment yourself and speak to students.

This will give you an opportunity to judge the environment.

Visit the registrar's office and get registration and process information.

Get an application and enrollment bulletin.

Speak to a campus VA representative.

Schedule an appointment with the VA representative to get additional information such as campus veteran services.

Implications for Colleges and Universities

Orientation

The student veteran orientation is a separate orientation designed to provide specific information for student veterans enrolled in a college or university. Topics discussed include introduction of the student veteran advisor, faculty and staff, and support services department representatives. Also discussed include G.I. Bill benefits, academic advisors, student veteran support services, disability services, counseling, financial aid, and veteran resource center. Student veterans will have an opportunity ask questions.

Identifying Campus and VA Representatives

Colleges and universities have assigned staff member to serve as the school's Certifying Official and the VA assigned an Accredited VA Representative to work together to provide VA related services to assist student veterans.

Creation of a Veteran Resource Center

Student veterans benefit from a designated space where they can interact with one another and obtain important information. A dedicated Vet Space optimizes academic success by offering easy access to valuable services such as academic advising and tutoring, supportive peer mentoring, social events, benefits counseling, transition assistance, assistive technologies and training, and referrals to on and off campus resources.

Institutions of higher learning may utilize the findings from this research study to develop operational manuals. These operational manuals can include, but not be limited to, the student veteran manual, credit transfer procedures, a procedure for filing complaints, academic planning manual, student disabled veteran's manual, financial aid, tuition assistance, and military observance manual. This can be housed in a dedicated office space on the university's campus.

The findings of this research indicated six main themes that emerged from veterans' lived experiences. These included: (1) the Registration Process; (2) Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits; (3) the Environment; (4) Veteran Advisor; (5) Veteran Specific Services; and (6) Retention. These themes were challenges veterans encountered enrolling in colleges and universities. These challenges can be problems for traditional students as well. The operational manuals can be applied to conventional students experiencing the problems as veteran students.

When interviewed, the themes that emerged from the participants alluded to challenges experienced by former military men and women when enrolled in colleges and universities warrant future research studies to examine the causes of these challenges. These future research studies are crucial for colleges and universities in retaining veteran students, identifying specific issues to address, and developing a plan to improve the enrollment process in colleges and universities. By doing so, former military men and women will experience a smoother transition from soldier to student.

Recommendations for Further Studies

To test the generalizability of the findings from the current study, several directions for further research are recommended.

1. Repeating this investigation with a larger number of participants. Recruiting more participants would allow for a greater comparison of the challenges between veterans transition from military life to institutions of higher education. A study of this magnitude would also provide a rich pool of information needed to address many of the challenges.
2. Is there a need to conduct a longitudinal study using more participants? If so, what would be the proposed benefits of conducting this type of research?

3. Is there a need to conduct a study comparing male veterans and female veterans? If so, what would be the proposed benefits of conducting this type of research?
4. Is there a need to conduct a study a quantative study comparing the livid experiences of members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines?
5. Is there a need to conduct a study of the livid experiences of former military men and women of the various ethnic populations.

Conclusions

This descriptive phenomenological research study aimed to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transitioned from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. Six themes emerged from this study included: (1) the Registration Process; (2) Understanding G.I. Bill Benefits; (3) the Environment; (4) Veteran Advisor; (5) Veteran Specific Services; and (6) Retention. The findings from this study can serve as a guide for colleges and universities to develop a blueprint for successfully orchestrating the transitioning of former military men and women into higher education institutions.

REFERENCES

- Absher, J. (2022). *The joint services transcript*. Military.Com.
- Achibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G. (2019). Using zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1–8.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919874596>
- Akyol, B., Tanrısevdi, F., Gidiş, Y., Dumlu, N. N., & Durdu, İ. (2020). Organizational culture at university: A sample of a state university, faculty of education. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.14689/issn.2148->
- Alschuler, M., & Yarab, J. (2018). Preventing student veteran attrition: What more can we do? *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 20(1), 47-66.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025116646382>
- American Council on Education. (2022). *Military guide*. <https://www.accent.edu/Programs> Archive. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0003154/>
- Anderson, M. L., Goodman, J., & Schlossberg, N. K. (2022). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking Schlossberg's theory with practice in a diverse world* (5th ed.). Springer Publishing Company.
- Arminio, J., Grabosky, T. K., & Lang, J. (2014b). *Student veterans and service members in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2022). Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value>

- Azpeitia, E., & Emerson, S. (2022). Assessing veteran services and success in higher education: Cal poly Pomona's veterans resource center case study. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 8(1), 29–40. <http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v8i1.238>
- Baechtold, M., & De Sawal, D. (2009). Meeting the needs of women veterans. *New Directions for Student Services*, 126, 35-43.
- Baker, S. (2013). *8 keys to success: Supporting veterans, military and military families on campus*. Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/08/13/8-keys-success-supporting-veterans-military-and-military-families-campus>.
- Baskas, R., S., (2021). Military Veterans' Perceptions of Barriers to College Completion Using the G.I. Bil <https://search.proquest.com/openview/f540222df0c4afbc115a9f7f826431dc/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Beck, K., E., (2020). From GI Joe to College Joe: Bridging the Gap Between Military and College Life. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1341815.pdf>
- Belanger, B., Steele, A., & Philhower, K. (2021). Tailoring higher education options for smaller institutions to meet veterans' needs: enhancing inclusion in higher education: Practical solutions by veterans for veterans. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 7(1), 138–147. <http://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v7i1.229>
- Bhandari, P. (2020). *What is qualitative research?* Scribbr. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiGrf3i6qf6AhWkl2oFHVIVCdcQFnoECE4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.scribbr.com%2Fmethodology%2Fqualitative-research%2F&usg=AOvVaw3WOF--B2_a8hawUqu00Aox

- Bibeau, P., (2022) “Eight Years After Problem Spotted, Veterans Affairs Continues to Overpay on Post-9/11 GI Bill” Military.com
- Blecker, M., (2021). *Unique challenges student veterans face*. <https://www.swords-to-plowshares.org>
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brown, A. (2021). Veterans achieve post-service goals through uChicago education: Increased enrollment by those who serve results in uChicago being named nation’s best college for veterans. <https://college.uchicago.edu>
- Bryant, J. (2021). *New data shine light on veterans pursuing higher ed*. Chief Information Officers Council, Programs and Events. <https://www.cio.gov/>
- Bueche, K., J. (2020). *Institutional adaptation and public policy practices of military transfer credit*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/96791>
- Chandra, S. (2021). *Supporting student veteran in higher education*. <https://www.campusgroups.com>
- Cheslock, J., Ortagus, J., Umbricht, M., & Wymore, J. (2016). The cost of producing higher education: An exploration of theory, evidence, and institutional policy. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 31(1), 349-392. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-26829-3_7
- Chickering, A. W., & Schlossberg, N. K. (1995). *Getting the most out of college*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Clemmenson, E. P. (2022). *Challenges of Transition from Active Duty to Civilian*. Addiction Center.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (Laureate custom ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Crisp, J. (2021). Understanding levels of command authority. U S Army Press.
www.armyupress.army.mil/?linkId=108175601
- Culpeper J., & Kan, Q. (2020). Communicative styles, rapport, and student engagement: An online peer mentoring scheme. *Appl. Linguist.* 41, 756-786.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz035>
- Delve, H. L., & Limpaecher, A. (2022). What is phenomenological research design? *Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data*. <https://delvetool.com/blog/phenomenolog>
- Demers, A. L. (2013). From death to life: Female veterans, identity negotiation, and reintegration into society. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 53(4), 489-515.
- Deming, D. J., & David F. (2016). Accountability in US education: Applying lessons from k-12 experience to higher Education. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(3), 33-56.
<https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.30.3.33>
- DeSimone, D. (2021). *Why 9/11 inspired these service members to join the military*. United Service Organizations. <https://www.uso.org>
- DiRamio, D., Ackerman, R., & Mitchell, R. L. (2008). From combat to campus: Voices of student-veterans. *NASPA Journal*, 45, 73.

- Dixon, M., & Sylvia A., (2019). "A Study of Curriculum Customization in the Era of Standardization of Education" *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs)*. 2698. <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2698>
- Eisenberg, M.E., Mehus, C.J., Saewyc, E.M., Corliss, H.L., Gower, A.L., Sullivan R., & Porta C.M. (2017). Helping young people stay afloat: A qualitative study of community resources and supports for LGBTQ adolescents in the U.S. and Canada [Online]. *Journal of Homosexuality*, August, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1364944>
- Elliott, M., Gonzalez, C., & Larsen, B. (2015). U.S. military veterans transition to college: Combat, PTSD, and alienation on campus. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 48(3), 279-296.
- Evans, N.J., Forney, D.S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory research, and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Falkey, M. E. (2016). An emerging population: student veterans in higher education in the 21st century. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education*.
- Francis, L., K., D., (2021). How To Empower First Generation Students .Drive Student Engagement with our all-in-one Community Platform. <https://blog.campusgroups.com/campusgroups/2021/7/6/empower-first-generation-students>
- Frogner, B. K., Skillman, S. M., & Snyder, C. R. (2016). *Characteristics of veterans in allied health care occupations*. Seattle, WA: Center for Health.
- George, T. (2022). Semi-structured interview. *Definition, Guide & Examples*. Scribbr. Retrieved November 3, 2022, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/>

Goldsmith, K. (2017). Commentary: Restore GI Bill benefits for veterans with career ending PTSD. *Military Times*.

<https://rebootcamp.militarytimes.com/opinion/2017/07/12/commentary-restore-gibill-benefits-for-veterans-with-career-ending-ptsd>

Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N. K., & Anderson, M. L. (2006). *Counseling adults in transition: Practice with theory* (3rd ed.). New York: Springer Publishing Company

Gumber, C., & Vespa, J. (2020). *The employment, earnings, and occupations of post-9/11 veterans: American community survey reports*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

Hall, L. K. (2011). The importance of understanding military culture. *social work in health care: social work with the military. Current Practice Challenges and Approaches to Care*, 50(1), 4-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00981389.2010.513914>

Hammer, C., S., (2022). The importance of participant demographics. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. [https://doi.org/10.1044/1058-0360\(2011/ed-04\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/1058-0360(2011/ed-04))

Hara, M. B. (2017). Learning shock and student veterans: Bridging the learning environments of the military and the academy. *Composition Forum*, 1-12. Variables Affecting Student Veterans' and Student Service Members' Success

Hattie, J., Wisniewski, B., & Zierer, K. (2020). *The power of feedback revisited: A meta-analysis of educational feedback research*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.03010>. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.03087>

Heaton, J. (2021). “*Pseudonyms Are Used Throughout”: A Footnote, Unpacked. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 28, 123 – 132

- Heineman, J. A. (2016). Supporting veterans: Creating a “military friendly” community college campus. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(3), 131-227.
doi:10.1080/10668926.2015.1112318
- Hill, C. B., Kurzweil, M., Pisacreta, E. D., & Schwartz, E. (2019). Enrolling more veterans at high-graduation-rate colleges and universities. *Ithaca S+R*.
<https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.310816>
- Hopwood, C.J., Wright, A.G., Bleidorn, W., & Person, B., (2022). Environment transactions. *Differentiate Personality and Psychopathology*. 1,55=63. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-021-00004-0>
- Hunter-Johnson, Y. (2020), Promoting a Veteran-Friendly Learning Environment. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2020: 111-23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20387>
- Jacobs, A. M. (2014). The construction of language as a constitutive meaning of institutional culture. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 28(2), 466-483.
<https://doi.org/10.20853/28-2-342>
- Johnson, W., H., (2020). Promoting a Veteran-Friendly Learning Environment Wiley on Library
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20387>
- Jones, K. C. (2017). Understanding transition experiences of combat veterans attending community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 41(2), 107-123.
- Jordan, A. T. (2019). Soldier to Student: Understanding the Transition Experiences of Veterans From the Military to Community College. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/5383>

- Kaemink, J. R., Sharp, R. J., Dargan, A. K., & Forder, J. E. (2022). Reflections on the use of synchronous online focus groups in social care research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221095314/>
- Kapur, R. (2020). *Definitions and models of organizational culture*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347411176>
- Karmelita, C. E. (2018). Exploring the experiences of adult learners in a transition program. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 24(2), 141-164.
<https://doi.org/cyber.usask.ca/10.1177%2F1477971418791587>
- Kashef, E., (2022) Applied Study of Phenomenological Research Method in education 1401.
- Kirchner, M. J., Coryell, L., & Biniecki, S. M. Y. (2014). Promising practices for engaging student veterans. *Quality Approaches in Higher Education*, 5(1), 12-18. Retrieved from <http://asq.org/edu/quality-information/journals>
- Koenig, C. J., Maguen, S. Monroy, J. D., Mayott, L., & Seal., K. H. (2014). Facilitating culture-centered communication between health care providers and veterans transitioning from military deployment to civilian life. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 95, 414–420.
- Kognito & Craig, J. (2022). *Are campuses ready to support veterans in distress?* The National Center for Veterans Studies at the University of Utah
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjLiOv5hv76AhWhm2oFHUBIA>
- Kraft-Terry S., & Kau, C. (2019). Direct measure assessment of learning outcome-driven proactive advising for academically at-risk students. *NACADA Journal*, 39(1), 60-76.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1966). *Psychological stress and the coping process*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lazarus, R., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York: Springer.

- Lazarz, L. (2019) Syracuse Veteran Advisor Program Celebrates First-Year Student Veterans. sunews@syr.edu
- LeMire, S. (2017). Supporting our troops: Library services and support for veterans. *Public Services Quarterly*, 13(3), 152-167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228959.2017.1319317>
- Lim, J. H., Interiano, C. G., Nowell, C. E., Tkacik, P. T., & Dahlberg, J. L. (2018). Invisible cultural barriers: Contrasting perspectives on student veterans' transition. 53 *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(3), 291-308. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1179633>
- Livingston, N. A., Berke, D. S., Ruben, M. A., Matza, A. R., & Shepherd, J. C. (2019). Experiences of trauma, discrimination, microaggressions, and minority stress among trauma-exposed LGBT veterans: Unexpected findings and unresolved service gaps. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 11(7), 695-703. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000464>
- Lodico, M., Spaulding, D., & Voegtle, K. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice* (2 ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Maldonado, A., G., (2021). Attracting and Retaining Veterans in Higher Education Veteran Education Project.com blog
- Mars, R., (2021). *How To Avoid Passing Judgement*. Wikihow. <https://www.wikihow.health>.
- Mayott, L., Seal, K. H. (2014). Facilitating culture-centered communication between health care providers and veterans transitioning from military deployment to civilian life. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 95(3), 414-420. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2014.03.016>
- McBain, L., Kim, Y. M., Cook, B. J., & Snead, K. M. (2012). *From soldier to student II: Assessing campus programs for veterans and service members*. Washington, D.C.

- American Council on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/From-Soldier-to-Student-II- - Assessing Campus-Programs.pdf>
- McCormick, W. H., Currier, J. M., Isaak, S. L., Sims, B. M., Slagel, B. A., Carroll, T. D., & Albright, D. L. (2019). Military culture and post-military transitioning among veterans: a qualitative analysis. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 4(2), 288.
<https://doi.org/10.21061/jives.V4i2.121>
- McGee, V. (2022). *Best colleges: Understanding student veteran experiences on campus*.
- Mehra, B. (2002). Bias in qualitative research: Voices from an online classroom. *The Qualitative Report*, 7(1), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu>
- Mendoza, S. (2016). From military to civilian life. *The Hispanic outlook in higher education*, 26, 14–16.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Meyer, E. G. (2015). the importance of understanding military culture. *Academic Psychiatry*, 39(4), 416-418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-015-0285-1>
- Miles, D.A., & Scott, L. (2017). *Workshop: Confessions of a dissertation chair part 1: The six mistakes doctoral students make with the dissertation*. Presented at the 5th Annual 2017 Black Doctoral Network Conference in Atlanta, GA on October 26-29 2017.
- Military Occupational Specialty*. (2021). <https://veteran.com/military-occupational-specialty/#:~:text=Written%20by-,Veteran.com%20Team,-In%20this%20Article> h
- Morse, B. (2022). *Challenges of transitioning from military to civilian life*. Addiction Center: Greenhouse Treatment Center.

- Morris, P., (2022). Presenting a Holistic Student Veteran Advising Model University of Colorado, Colorado Springs https://sc.edu/nrc/system/pub_files/1656092938_186.p
- Motulsky, S. L. (2021). Is member checking the gold standard of quality in qualitative research? *Qualitative Psychology*, 8(3),38406. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000215>
- Naphan, D. E. & Elliot, M. (2015). Role exit from the military: Student veterans' perceptions from the U.S. military to higher education. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 36-48
- National Archives. (2022). Archives.Com.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Profile of undergraduate students*. Retrieved from the National Center for Educational Statistics website: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015167>
- National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. (2017). *Women veterans report: the past, present and future of women veterans*.
- Navon, L., & Morag, A. (2004). Liminality as biographical disruption: Unclassifiable following hormonal therapy for advanced prostate cancer. *Social Science & Medicine*, 58(11), 2337-2347.
- Neitzel, R. (2017). *The best of both worlds: Using applied research to keep workers healthy and safe*. University of Michigan.
- Nikolopoulou, K. (2022). What Is Purposive Sampling? *Definition & Examples*. Scribbr. Retrieved October 12, 2022, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/purposive-sampling/>
- Pallipedia (2022). *Trustworthiness in qualitative research*. <https://pallipedia.org/trustworthiness-in-qualitative-research>

- Parsons, A. M., & Ash, A. N. (2022). National guard service members in higher education: A continuous transition. *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention*, 29(1). Retrieved from <https://pubs.lib.umn.edu/index.php/jcotr/article/view/4871>
- Patterson, E. (2022). *Challenges of the military transition to civilian life: Transition stress vs PTSD*. Caring for Nation's Heroes, Laguna Treatment Hospital.
- Pease, J. L., Billera, M., & Gerard, G. (2016). Military culture and the transition to civilian life: Suicide risk and other considerations. *Social Work*, 61(1), 83–86.
- Pedler M., Hudson S., Yeigh T. (2020). The teachers' role in student engagement: A review. *Austr. J. Teach. Educ.* 45, 48–62.
- Petrovich, J. (2012). Culturally competent social work practice with veterans: An overview of the U.S. military. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 22(7), 863-874.
- Phillippi, J., & Lauderdale, J., (2017). Guide to field notes for qualitative research: Context and conversation. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28(3) 381–388. (Reprinted from [sagepub.com/journals permissions. Av 2018\) https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317697102](https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317697102) journals.sagepub.com/home/
- Poole, J. (2015). Assessing the effectiveness of targeted intrusive advising and student success using an early intervention program. *In Online Submission*.
- Ramchand, R. (2021). *Suicide among veterans: Veterans' issues in focus*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA1363-1.html>
- Rankin, B. E. (2021). Advising Student Veterans in Higher Education. Graduate Theses and Dissertations Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/4359>

- Reger, M. A., Etherage, J. R., Reger, G. M., & Gahm, G. A. (2008). Civilian psychologists in an Reger Army culture: The ethical challenge of cultural competence. *Military Psychology*, 20(1), 21.
- Reynolds, Jada N., (2022). "A Path to Success: A Case Study of Military Veterans at a Midwestern University". Digital Commons @ ACU, Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 519.
- Roberts, M. (2022). *Student Experiences Leaving Health Profession Interest Areas*. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 4021. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/4021>
- Robinson, K. (2022). *Imagine if: Cresting a future for us all*. Penguin Books.
- Rodriguez, I. (2022). *Where were you on 9/11? Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)*.
- Rumanm, C. B., & Hamrick, F. A. (2012). Addressing the needs of women service members and veterans in higher education. *On-Campus with Women*, 40(3), 1-5.
- Sachdev, G. (2021). *Heath shots: Having a strong support system will not make you feel weak*. <https://www.healthshots.com/mindhappiness-hacks>
- Sanderson, C. A. (2022). *What the transactional theory of stress and coping*. The Lecture Series: Introduction to Psychology.
- Schlossberg, N. K., Waters, E. B., & Goodman, J. (1995). *Counseling adults in* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer.
- Schein, E. (1999). *The corporate culture survival guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, E. (2020). *Model of organization culture*. Retrieved November 04, 2020 from managementstudyhq.com

- Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2-18.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1991). *Overwhelmed: Coping with life's ups and downs*. Lexington Books.
- Schlossberg, N. K., Waters, E. B., & Goodman, J. (1995). *Counseling adults in transition* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (2008). *Overwhelmed: Coping with life's ups and downs* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Evans and Company.
- Life: Applications of Schlossberg's model for veterans in transition. *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal*.
- Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2013). *Assumption, limitations, delimitations, and scope of the study* (Doctoral dissertation, Seattle University 2013). Retrieved from dissertationrecipes.com/wpcontent/.../04/AssumptionslimitationsdelimitationsX.pdf
- Sorsa, M.A., Kiikkala, I., Åstedt-Kurki, P. (2015). Bracketing as a skill in conducting unstructured qualitative interviews. *Nurse Res*, 22(4), 8-12.
<https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.4.8.e1317>. PMID: 25783146
- Southwell, K., H.. (2018). The use of university services and student retention: Differential links for student service members veterans and civilian students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 19(4), 394-412.
doi:10.1177/1521025116636133
- Spriggs, D., (2022). The Stop-Out Phenomenon and Retaining Student Veterans: Part II Higher Ed Military

Stilwell, B. (2022). Military transition to civilian life: A guide for veterans. *Army Times*.

<https://www.armytimes.com/2019/09/10/veterans-transition-survival-guide/> of that for you

Strong, J. D., Crowe, B. M., & Lawson, S. (2018). Female veterans: Navigating two identities. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 46(2), 92-99.

Student service members/veterans on campus: Challenges for reintegration. (2017). *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.

Student Veteran of America. (2019). *Student veteran census survey*. <https://studentveterans.org/>

Student Veterans of America. (2021). *Fact sheet*. <https://studentveterans.org>

Suzuki, M., & Kawakami, A. (2016). U.S. military service members' reintegration, culture, and spiritual development. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(11), 2059-2075. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss11/4/>

Terry, Anthony D. (2018). Barriers to academic success experienced by student veterans. *McNair Scholars Research Journal*, 11(12). <https://commons.emich.edu/mcnair/vol11/iss1/12>

Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2019). Limitations and delimitations in the research process. *Perioperative Nursing*, 7(3), 155–162. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022> Abstract.

Thomas, C. (2022). *Transition barriers of U.S. military veterans with combat occupations*. Digital Commons@ ACU, Electronic Thesis and Dissertations.

Tucker-Kulesza, G. L. Liang, E. J. Fitzsimmons, and J. Zacharakis,(2019). “Work in Progress: Investigating the Role of Social Responsibility on Veteran Student Retention,” ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition, Salt Lake City, Utah,

TRADOC, The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2019). Preparing and publishing United States Army training and doctrine command administrative publications.

Regulation 25-35.

Umucu E. (2022). Creating a college adjustment index score for student veterans with and without disabilities. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 13, 1020232.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.1020232>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). Retrieved from American Community Survey (ACS), 2019 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11-ff23.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2012). *The condition of education 2018*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018144.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education. (2022). *U.S. Department of Education strategic plan fiscal years 2022– 2026*. Washington, D.C.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2020). Learn about student veterans. <https://www.va.gov>

United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2021). *VA history overview*. [HTTPS://www.va.gov](https://www.va.gov)

United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2022). *Education and training*.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2021). *Common challenges during re-adjustment to civilian life*. <https://www.va.gov>

United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2022). *Forever GI Bill - Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act* <https://www.va.gov>

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2022). *University of Chicago veteran services & resources*. <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibil>
- Veneziano, J. (2021). *Davenport university 5 tips to help veterans successfully transition to college life*. <https://www.post.davenport.edu>
- Walter, A., (2019) Challenges Faced by U.S. Student Veteran Transitioning to a Community College.p14 pphttps://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations
- Weiss, Eugenia Liberman. (2021). The Positive Functioning of Post-9/11 Student Service Members/ Veterans as a Predictor of Academic Performance. CGU Theses & Dissertations, 232. https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_etd/232. doi: 10.5642/cguetd/232
- Whilby, K. A. (2022). *Taking stock of coping resources: The 4s system- self, support, situation and strategies*. Head of the Department of Educational Administration College of Education.
- Whitworth, J., Smet, B., & Anderson, B. (2020). Reconceptualizing the US Military's transition program: The success in transition model. *Journal of Veteran*.
- Winkie, D. (2021). Unprecedented survey: Why do soldiers leave or stay in The Army? *Army Times*. <https://www.armytimes.com>
- Wisker, G., & Masika, R. (2017). Creating a positive environment for widening participation: A taxonomy for socially just higher education policy and practice. *Higher Education Review*, 49(2). 56-84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800802155192>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Yssel, N., Pak, N., & Beilke, J. (2016). A door must be opened: Perceptions of students with disabilities in higher education. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*.

Zaber, M.A., & Wenger, J.B. (2021). *Limited opportunity: Changes in employment and the American middle class*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA1141-8.html>

Zhang, X., Gossett, C., Simpson, J., & Davis, R. (2019). Advising students for success in higher education: An all-out effort. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory, & Practice*, 21(1), 53

Appendix A

5010 Elysian Fields Ave.
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122
February 15, 2023

Charles Gramlich,
Chair of the Xavier University IRB,
PO Box 115C, Psychology Department, Xavier University of Louisiana,
New Orleans, 70125,

Dear Dr. Gramlich,

I am writing to request an expedited IRB review of my research proposal which is required before submitting a human subject research application. This is a new proposal seeking IRB approval. The following text provides information about key components of the project that will assist you in your determination and approval.

- **Title of project:** A Sacrifice For Their Country And A Commitment To Their Community: A Phenomenological Study Of Veterans Transitioning From Soldier To Student.
- **Funder of project:** Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.
- **Aim of project:** This phenomenological study aims to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transition from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. All participants will be required to sign an Informed Consent Form.
- **Recruitment procedures:** Beginning in February 2023, potential participants, former military men, and women will be asked to participate in the research study, “A Sacrifice For Their Country And A Commitment To Their Community: A Phenomenological Study Of Veterans Transitioning From Soldier To Students. Letters will be emailed to potential participants requesting participation in this research study. Participation in the study is strictly voluntary with no compensation.
- **Participants:** Ten participants are expected to participate in this study.
- **Data collection:** The following instruments will be collected from each participant to include Letter of Request for Participation, Demographic Background Information, Interview Questions, and Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study.
- **Risks to the participant:** There are no risks to the participants in this research study.
- **Confidentiality:** All efforts to ensure participant confidentiality will be maintained. The participant’s data will be coded and the master code will be kept separate from the data in a locked file, only accessible by researchers on this protocol. The researcher will also utilize the

recording safety feature offered through Zoom and will store sessions securely without any claims. This feature is essential because it complies with the mandate of Xavier University Informed Consent Form Section A: Confidentiality.

Please contact me if you need additional information relative to my research project to determine the level of IRB application. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B

February 24, 2023

Disabled American Veterans
Veterans Organization
1250 Poydras Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70230

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Program Director,

I am currently enrolled as an Ed. D Candidate at Xavier University of Louisiana and in the process of writing my Dissertation. The research study is entitled: A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans Transitioning from Soldier to Student.

Due to the nature of the study, the participants will have to complete a 45-minute interview. Interested veterans, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher.

If approval is granted, I would like to receive email addresses of participants. An informed consent will be emailed explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, and confidentiality. The veteran's name and school's identification will be protected using pseudonyms.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) 615-8655 or cbecknel@xula.edu.

Sincerely,

Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix C

February 23, 2023

Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs
1755 Florida Street 3rd Floor
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Program Director,

I am currently enrolled as an Ed. D Candidate at Xavier University of Louisiana and in the process of writing my Dissertation. The research study is entitled: A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans Transitioning from Soldier to Student.

Due to the nature of the study, the participants will have to complete a 45-minute interview. Interested veterans, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher.

If approval is granted, I would like to receive email addresses of participants. An informed consent will be emailed explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, and confidentiality. The veteran's name and school's identification will be protected using pseudonyms.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) 615-8655 or cbecknel@xula.edu.

Sincerely,

Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D

February 23, 2023

Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, Inc.
Veterans of Zulu
732 North Broad Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70119

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Program Director,

I am currently enrolled as an Ed. D Candidate at Xavier University of Louisiana and in the process of writing my Dissertation. The research study is entitled: A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans Transitioning from Soldier to Student.

Due to the nature of the study, the participants will have to complete a 45-minute interview. Interested veterans, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher.

If approval is granted, I would like to receive email addresses of participants. An informed consent will be emailed explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, and confidentiality. The veteran's name and school's identification will be protected using pseudonyms.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) 615-8655 or cbecknel@xula.edu.

Sincerely,

Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix E

**XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA**

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

1 Drexel Drive Suite 217C – Box 68
 New Orleans, Louisiana 70125-1098
 (504) 520-5444 (office) – (504) 520-7901(fax)

TO: Clarence A. Becknell, Sr, Med., Principal Investigator
FROM: Charles Gramlich, PhD, Chair of Institutional Review Board
Xavier University of Louisiana IRB
DATE: February 27, 2023
RE: "A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their
Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans
Transitioning from Soldier to Student."

The above-named study poses no more than minimal risk to the participants and is eligible for expedited review. The following actions have been taken regarding this study.

1. The proposed study is approved.
2. The informed consent is approved.
3. The Demographic questionnaire is approved.
4. The Participant interview Protocol is approved. This study is approved for one year from the date of this memo.

To extend this study for more than one year, a request must be made in writing to the Xavier University IRB at least two weeks prior to

February 27, 2024. Any changes to the proposal that might affect the wellbeing of participants must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Please inform the Chair of the IRB when all data collection has been completed.

This project is assigned study number **#913** in the IRB files. It is very important that you refer to this project number in future correspondence regarding the study.

Reviewed and Approved

Charles Gramlich, PhD, Chair of Institutional Review Board
Xavier University of Louisiana IRB

cc. Kanasha Bailey Akinyemi, Associate V.P. for Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix F

Letter of Request for Participation



Xavier University of Louisiana

1 Drexel Drive New Orleans, Louisiana 70125 (504) 486-7411

Date:

Dear

I am a doctoral candidate at Xavier University of Louisiana. As part of my graduation requirement, I will be conducting a research project entitled, "A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans Transitioning from Soldier Student. This study has been accepted and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Xavier University of Louisiana.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the challenges among former military men and women and their lived experiences while transitioning from military assignments to student. Moreover, many former military men and women encounter excessive issues transitioning back into civilian life, such as enrolling in higher education and receiving adequate support services.

I am requesting your participation as a research participant in this study. Your anonymity will be respected throughout the research and result process. There is no compensation of any kind available for your voluntary participation. You may withdraw your participation at any time you deem necessary without any penalties against you.

I will use your responses as resource material for my research. At your request, I will provide you with a copy of the final draft. Your answers will be reported in the study, however,

your identity, email, and other information connected to you is confidential. No identifying information about you will be available in any draft or final presentation.

If you have any questions about the project or your participation, please contact me immediately at (504) 615-8655 or you can email me at cbecknel@xula.edu. You may also contact Dr. Charles Gramich, Chair of the Xavier University of Louisiana Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (504) 520- 7397.

Thank you for you participation.

Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.

Doctoral Candidate

Appendix G



Xavier University of Louisiana
1 Drexel Drive New Orleans, Louisiana 70125 (504) 486-7411

Demographic Background Information

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Phone #:

Email Address:

The following questions will be asked to gather demographic and basic background information from all participants in the study.

1. Please specify your ethnicity.

- Caucasian/White
- African-American
- Native American
- Latino or Hispanic
- Asian
- Other

2.. What gender do you identify yourself?

- Male
- Female
- (Short Answer Space)
- (Prefer not to answer)

3. What is your age?

- 18 - 25 years old
- 26 - 35 years old
- 36 – 45 years old
- 46 +
- Prefer not to answer

4. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married

5. What is your post-secondary enrollment status?

- Currently Enrolled
- Not Currently Enrolled (Degree Confirmed)
- Not Currently Enrolled (No Degree Confirmed)

6. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- Some High School
- High School
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Trade School
- Prefer not to disclose.

7. What type of post-secondary institution did you attend?

- Two-Year College
- Four-Year State University or College
Four-Year Private University or College
- Others: _____

8. Which degree program did you follow at your post-secondary institution?

- Business
- Education
- Fine Arts
- Language
- Science
- Social/Behavioral Sciences
- Other: _____

9. How many years did you serve in the military?

- 1 - 5
- 6 -10
- 11- 15
- 15 +

10. What Branch of the Military Did You Serve?

- Army**
- Marine**
- Navy**
- Air Force**
- Coast Guard**
- National Guard**

Appendix H



Xavier University of Louisiana

1 Drexel Drive New Orleans, Louisiana 70125, (504) 486-7411

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of Research Project: A Sacrifice For Their Country And A Commitment

To Their Community: A Phenomenological Study Of Veterans Transitioning From Soldier To Student.

Name of Principal Investigator: Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.

Phone Number of Principal Investigator: (504) 615-8655

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Clarence A. Becknell, a doctoral candidate at Xavier University of Louisiana is conducting research entitled, "A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans Transitioning from Soldier to Student. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the challenges among former military men and women and their lived experiences while transitioning from military assignments to student.

Your participation in this research is requested to help the researcher explore veterans' challenges during this transitional phase and to develop strategies that will help veterans to succeed in post-secondary institutions. You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because of your lived experiences as a veteran who attended a higher education institution who may have experienced challenges that hindered you as a student.

B. PROCEDURES:

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

1. Review and sign Informed Consent Form agreement document to participate in this research study.
2. Receive a list of questions for review.
3. Schedule a 30 minutes Interview Session via Zoom.
4. Participant gives oral permission to be recorded during the Focus Group Session.
5. Participant takes part in 30 minutes Interview Session as mutually agreed upon.
6. Participants will take part in one on one 30 minutes interviews as a follow-up to the Zoom Session.
7. End of Participation by Participants.

C. RISKS: There are no known risks.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records and the recordings from this study will be kept confidential. Individual identities will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All data collection and retention methods i.e., questionnaires, tapes, transcripts, summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. After the study is completed, all material will be discarded.

E. BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

There will be no direct benefit or compensation to you for participating in this research study. However, the anticipated benefit from your participation in this study is that your lived experiences will help to create an operational manual that all institutions of higher learning can utilize to ensure the successful retention of veteran students. The researcher believes that your

testimony and the results from this study will help to increase the graduation rates and the presence of veteran students on college and University campuses.

F. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

Your decision whether to participate in this study is voluntary and will not affect your relationship with the researcher or Xavier University of Louisiana. If you choose to participate in this study, you can withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice or consequences.

G. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Clarence Becknell, Sr. by calling (504) 615-8655. You can also contact Dr. Charles Gramlich, chair of the Xavier University IRB, at (504) 520-7397 with any questions about the rights of research participants or research-related concerns.

CONSENT:

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY AFTER READING ALL OF THE INFORMATION ABOVE AND YOU UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION IN THIS FORM, HAVE HAD ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOU TO KEEP.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix I



Xavier University of Louisiana

1 Drexel Drive New Orleans, Louisiana 70125, (504) 486-7411

Interview Protocol (Questions)

The following protocol will be followed by the researcher and participant with proper and suitable decision for adding, adjusting, or eliminating interviewing questions:

Interviewer:

Clarence A. Becknell, Sr,

Interviewee:

Former military men and women veteran attended, attending, or graduated from college or university.

Interview Structure:

These interviews are semi-structured questions which can be omitted or revised during the interview process.

Pre-Interview Issues:

Agreement to voluntarily be interviewed for this research study.

Determine a place for zoom conferencing.

Place to conduct this interview.

Agree on a specific date and time to conduct the interview.

Do I have your permission to record this Zoom Session?

Do you have an any questions or concerns?

Time of Interview:

Begin to record the interview at the scheduled time.

Script:

I want to thank you for participating in this project interview. This interview is a requirement of my dissertation research which is to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transition from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. Your identity will not be revealed in the transcription. The Zoom recording of this interview is for my use only and will be housed in a secure place during the period of analysis. It will be erased upon completion of the project. If you need to ask any questions, please feel free to contact me.



Xavier University of Louisiana

1Drexel Drive New Orleans, Louisiana 70125, (504) 486-7411

Individual Interview Questions

The following interview questions listed are designed to retrieve information from participants to support and guide this research study.

RQ1: What challenges do veteran students encounter when enrolling in institutions of higher learning?

1. Describe your experience during your enrollment process as a veteran student?
2. What areas of the admission's process did you encounter challenges?
 - Registration and admission process
 - Financial Aid
 - Registration of Classes
 - Office of Disability Service

RQ2: How do veteran students cope with transitioning from soldier to student

1. Describe how you felt when you began encountering challenges during the enrollment and admission processes?
2. What coping strategies did you use while encountering challenges during the enrollment and admission processes?

RQ3: What resources and support systems are institutions of higher learning utilizing to sustain former military men and women in their transition from soldier to student?

1. What resources or support systems were provided by the institution to assist you through the enrollment and admission processes?
2. What resources or support systems were available for you to be successful through your educational journey?
 - Mental Health professional

- Tutor

Appendix J IRB application Questionnaire

Please submit your completed in electronic format to ORSP@xula.edu with (IRB application) in subject line. *NOTE: All submissions should be in MS word format. PDF's are acceptable as long as they can be cut and pasted from. If this is an amendment to a previously approved protocol or revision (changes to a protocol, summary sheets, consent form, etc.), all changes need to be indicated in some fashion, usually by highlighting in another color text.*

Title of Study: A Sacrifice for Their Country and A Commitment to Their Community: A Phenomenological Study of Veterans Transitioning from Soldier to Student

Principle Investigator's Name: Clarence A. Becknell, Sr.

Mentor's Name: Dr. Timothy J. Glaude

Principle Investigator's Contact Information:

Address: **5010 Elysian Fields Ave.**

Email: **cbecknel@xula.edu**

Phone: **(504) 615-8655**

The following summary must accompany your proposal. Be specific about exactly what participants will experience when they take part in your research and about the protections that have been included to safeguard them. (Careful attention to the following may help facilitate the review process).

1. In a sentence or two, describe the background and purpose of the research.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the challenges and lived experiences of former military men and women as they transition from military assignments to students in institutions of higher learning. This study will focus on identifying gaps in support services that hinder the needs of former military men and women desiring to enroll in higher education institutions.

2. What is the duration of the proposed research?

The proposed research will begin once reviewed and approved by the Internal Review Board and end no later than April 19, 2023.

3. Who will be the participants in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Participants must be informed about the nature of what they need to do, including a description of anything that they might consider unpleasant or a risk. Please provide an outline or script of the information that will be given to participants before they volunteer. Include a copy of the written solicitation and/or an outline of the oral solicitation. This would include Email solicitations.

Participants for this study will be former military men and women completed or enrolled in a college or university after completion of military obligations. All potential participants will receive a formal invitation for participation via email or U. S. mail. The researcher will schedule a meeting with interested potential participants and request they read the solicit/consent form and answer any questions as requested. A written solicitation communication requesting voluntary participation is attached to this IRB Application.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of human participants in the study.

The researcher will conduct 30 minutes one on one interviews via Zoom Conferencing with each human participant. Participants will respond to a series of questions depicting their lived experiences and challenges encountered while transitioning from soldier to student. A signed consent form will be required for each participant.

5. What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaires or other instruments are used, provide a brief description, and include a copy for review.

The researcher will observe and take filed notes the during the interview process. The session will be recorded which will allow the researcher to review and take additional field notes. All Interview questions are attached to the IRB application.

6. Will the participants encounter the possibility of psychological, social, physical or legal risk? Yes ___ No X If so, please describe. NOTE: being asked personal questions that elicit strong emotional reactions is considered a potential psychological risk.
7. If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the participants or society? NO Please explain. (For example, if the participant will receive educational materials concerning their health, this could be a benefit.)
8. Will there be any physical or mental stress on the participants, including a request for information that participants might consider personal or sensitive? Yes ___ No X If so, please describe.

9. Will the participants be deceived or misled in any way? Yes ___ No X If so, please describe and include an outline or script of the debriefing where the deception will be explained to them after the study.
10. Will the participants be presented with materials that they might consider to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? Yes ___ No X If so, please describe
11. Approximately how many participants will take part in the study? Approximately how much time will be demanded of each participant? If participants will be required to attend more than one session, please indicate the total number of sessions and the amount of time demanded by each.

There will be 10 participants for this research study. There will be one 30-45minute session per participant, totaling 10 sessions

12. What steps will be taken to ensure that each participant takes part voluntarily? What, if any, inducements, or compensations will be offered to the participants?

All potential participants will be given a solicit/consent form for signature agreeing to participate voluntarily. Each potential participant is required to carefully read the Informed Consent Form. Participants will not be compensated for their participation.

13. How will you ensure that participants give their consent prior to volunteering?

Will awritten consent form be used? Yes X No ___
 If so, please include the form. If not, will oral informed consent be obtained? If so, please submit a copy of the script. If neither written nor oral informed consent will be obtained, please indicate why not and complete and attach the *Request for Waiver or Alteration of Requirement to Obtain Informed Consent* form. If either written or oral consent is to be obtained, please complete and attach the IRB *Informed Consent Document Check List*. (These forms are at the end of this Questionnaire.)

14. Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the participants? Yes ___ No X If so, please explain.
15. Will the fact that a participant did or did not take part in a specific experiment or study be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with them? Yes ___ No X If so, please explain.
16. What steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected? Be specific. You should include information about how the data will be stored once it is gathered.

The researcher will transcribe handwritten notes from the research interviews onto a Microsoft Word document. Codes will be used for each participant in order to conceal their identity. The Word document

will have a password protection feature not available to anyone. The Zoom Conference recorded interview will be destroyed, after it has been transcribed, no later than April 19, 2023.

17. Will any data from files or archival data be used? Yes ___ No X If yes, please explain.
18. Has this study been considered or approved by any other IRB outside of Xavier? NO. If so, please indicate which IRB and attach a copy of the approval letter with this questionnaire. This should facilitate our review considerably.
19. Does the research require approval from any of the following Xavier University Committees: The Animal Care Committee (Yes ___ No X); The Biohazards Committee (Yes ___ No ___); The Radiation Safety Committee (Yes ___ No X)? If you answered “yes” to any of the proceeding, has the appropriate clearance been obtained? Yes ___ No ___ If so, please attach the letter of approval to this questionnaire. If it has not, when do you anticipate that clearance will be granted?
N/A
20. What are the sources of funding for the proposed research?
NO SPECIFIC FUNDING NECESSARY
21. List the clinical sites to be utilized during the investigation (If applicable).
NOT APPLICABLE
22. List the contracted facilities for diagnostic tests and procedures, etc. (if applicable). NOT APPLICABLE
Attach a copy of the 1572 to the summary (if applicable). NOTE: The 1572 is required only for clinical trial studies and/or research involving the administration of drugs. The form and instructions for filling it out can be found at: <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/HowDrugsareDevelopedandApproved/ApprovalApplications/InvestigationalNewDrugINDApplication/ucm071098.htm#form1571>

NOT APPLICABLE
23. Attach a copy of the Principal Investigator’s resume/CV. If the research is being conducted under a mentor, include the mentor’s resume/CV as well.
24. Informed Consent Document Check List

Legally effective informed consent is to be acquired from each research participant or from the participant's legally authorized representative or guardian. The following check list is provided to assist investigators in the preparation of their informed consent forms. In general, all of the following must be present in the document:

- ✓ (a) A statement that the study involves research, and an explanation of the purposes of the research,
- ✓ (b) The expected duration of the participant's participation, and the approximate number of participants who will take part in the study,
- ✓ (c) A description of the procedures to be followed,
- ✓ (d) The identification of any procedures that are experimental,
- ✓ (e) A description of any reasonably foreseeable psychological, physical, or legal risks or discomforts to the participants,
- ✓ (f) A description of any benefits to the participants or to others that may reasonably be expected from the research,
- ✓ (g) A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the participants,
- ✓ (h) A statement describing the extent to which confidentiality of records identifying the participants will be maintained,
- ✓ (i) For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation can be expected, and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs, and, if so, what those treatments consist of or where further information may be obtained, including emergency contact numbers. (NOT APPLICABLE)
- ✓ (j) An explanation of who to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and the research-participant's rights, including phone numbers of the principle investigator or their designated representative, and at least one individual, (usually an IRB representative) who is not directly associated with the study,
- ✓ (k) A statement that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled, and that the participants may discontinue the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.




A completed copy of this checklist should accompany your proposal when it is submitted for review.

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OR ALTERATION OF REQUIREMENT
TO OBTAIN INFORMED CONSENT**

- ___ 1) The research involves no more than minimal risk to the participants. “Minimal” risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research is not greater than the risks ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
- ___ 2) The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the participants.
- ___ 3) The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver of informed consent.
- ___ 4) Whenever appropriate, the participants will be provided with additional pertinent information after their participation.

Please explain in detail in the space below how each of the above conditions is met in your proposal. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Appendix K
CITI Certificate

		Completion Date 19-Feb-2021 Expiration Date N/A Record ID 41066444
This is to certify that:		
Clarence Becknell		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research <small>(Curriculum Group)</small>		
Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research <small>(Course Learner Group)</small>		
1 - Basic Course <small>(Stage)</small>		
Under requirements set by:		
Xavier University of Louisiana		
		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w98ae56e5-bf43-4c24-b915-6ad061d500f9-41066444		

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.