MILITARY VETERANS' PERCEPTIONS OF CIVILIAN JOB SATISFACTION BASED ON INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY

BY

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Abstract

Employment is an essential aspect of a person's life fulfillment, socioeconomics, life meaning, and connections with others. To succeed in their employment, the person has to have job satisfaction, which encompasses many factors such as pay, job fit, leadership, trust, and understanding. Job satisfaction will mean something different to military veterans who are used to operating in a work environment that emphasizes teamwork, leadership, dedication, values, and ethics. A military veteran with no civilian work experience can have a *"cultural shock"* when starting their first civilian employment after their military service. There is a lack of literature studies that have researched military veterans' civilian job satisfaction and what factors affect the military veteran's job satisfaction. Understanding what job satisfaction is for the military veteran will allow us to educate and inform others about military culture. Trust and Understanding are important concepts in the military workplace culture since understanding the mission and trusting the leaders are important to complete the job and succeed. Intersectionality Theory will allow us to understand the many factors that affect the job satisfaction of the military veteran in the civilian workplace. A qualitative phenomenological research study where military veterans with civilian employment are interviewed is expected to help us understand what factors affect job satisfaction. The military veterans' perceptions will help us understand what factors intersect in their civilian workplace and clearly understand their perceptions when it comes to their civilian employment. The goal is to understand what factors affect job satisfaction for military veterans in their civilian employment and how these factors affect their job satisfaction.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Job satisfaction means something different to different people, especially for military veterans. Military personnel operates in an environment where teamwork, persistence, leadership, meaningful work, dedication, and a sense of duty are part of the fulfillment of their job, and they maintain these values in their civilian jobs (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2020). Shepherd et al. (2020) stated that the military workplace culture guides its personnel by professional *"values, norms, and practices."* When military veterans with no previous civilian employment experience the civilian work culture for the first time, the differences between civilian and military employment can bring a job *"cultural shock."* The social environment and shared *"values, norms, ideas, symbols, and meanings"* are the basis for cultural norms (Redmond et al., 2015, p. 10). Military veterans may expect their civilian employment environment to be similar to their military employment environment, which can cause an employment *"cultural shock."*

According to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), Intersectionality Theory could help understand military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction. Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) stated that many military veterans in the civilian work environment have a lower level of job satisfaction, which is related to perceptions of organizational fairness and diversity management. Shepherd et al. (2020) stated that being a military veteran will have an effect on the person's social daily life functioning, their attempts to succeed and adjust to their jobs. These challenges the person faces, which affect their job satisfaction, come from the clash between the civilian organizational workplace culture and the military workplace culture of the military veteran (Shepherd et al., 2020). Employment is an essential part of life for socioeconomic status, structure, connection with others, life fulfillment, and meaning (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021; Modini et al., 2016). Employment is also essential since it can better the well-being of the person

and lower their mental health symptoms (Modini et al., 2016). For military veterans to succeed in their civilian employment, many factors come into play when thinking about job satisfaction. According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction is having good employment benefits, an engaging job, employment security, and satisfaction with coworkers and supervisors. Military veterans also have to have a job fit with their civilian employment in order to feel satisfied with their job. Other than benefits, interests, and security, military veterans need others to understand their cultural background as military veterans.

Intersectionality Theory could help in understanding what other factors affect military veterans' job satisfaction, such as the tendency of other people to create stereotypes of things and people they do not understand. As mentioned by Tariq and Syed (2016), Intersectionality theory can *"illustrate how multiple inequalities are likely to cause barriers and challenges for ethnic minority"* (p.496). When the military veteran forms stereotypes, this can create perceptions of mistrust, ignorance of individual differences, and concern of disparate treatment (Stone et al., 2018) in the workplace. Military veterans were used to uniformity, set values, and shared experiences and language during their time in the military (Redmond et al., 2015). Things that can affect the military veteran in the workplace are a lack of established rules, policies, supportive leadership, and uniformity, which they had in their military job.

Understanding what military veterans perceive as civilian job satisfaction will allow us to inform better and educate others on how to treat them fairly, understand their military culture, and trust the military veteran as a reliable employee. As mentioned by Redmond et al. (2015), *"understanding military culture can help those working with service members, veterans, and their families understand this group's unique strengths, skills, and challenges"* (p. 18).

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Problem Statement

The literature lacks studies concentrating on understanding the perceptions of military veterans' job satisfaction once they have a civilian job. There is a need for more research studies that do not focus on mental health, physical health, or transition barriers. As Vogt et al. (2019) mentioned, there is a need to know how organizations meet their military veteran employee's needs once on the job. Liggans et al. (2018) stated that there is a need to understand military veterans' perceptions and their unique attitudes towards their civilian employment. By understanding military veterans' perceptions, the organization's outcome could be beneficial and positive for all. Another weakness is the limited research on military veterans' perceptions on employment stereotyping and discrimination and how these affect their civilian employment perceptions (Stone et al., 2018).

The lack of literature and research studies addressing military veterans' civilian job perception is worrying. According to the U.S. Census, more than 650,000 military personnel left the service between 2000 and 2015 (McEntarfer, 2020). One might be asking, what will these military veterans do after their separation from the military? Most of them will enter the civilian workforce, and the younger military veterans have the most difficulty finding decent-earning civilian employment (McEntarfer, 2020). This is why it is essential to know more about what factors contribute to military veterans' civilian job satisfaction (MacLean et al., 2018). As mentioned by Harrod et al. (2017), understanding *"their struggles with maintaining employment is crucial"* (p. 264.), and more research is needed to understand the factors that allow military veterans to maintain their civilian employment and what skills (perceptions) they used to do so.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the research study relates to Intersectionality theory and

the concepts of understanding and trust. Intersectionality theory relates to the idea that a person's individual characteristics intersect with their daily world experiences. Crenshaw (1989) states that Intersectionality theory is when others treat people as just one thing; they ignore that person's challenges and other parts of their lives. People are more than just their gender/sex, educational background, work skills, military background, combat experience, military discharge type, etc. (Figure 1). According to Crenshaw (1989), discrimination on occasions is when considering only one factor of the person's life and ignoring other factors that are part of the person's life. People sometimes are seen as just one thing and not another, such as military veterans being grouped into a stereotype of all males and with mental health issues.

Crenshaw declared for the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS, 2018) that distinctive characteristics, factors, and facets are needed to understand people from diverse groups with different problems. Military veterans, on occasion, are seen as just military veterans, ignoring other aspects of their lives, *"and the compounded nature of their experience is absorbed into the collective experiences of either group or as too different"* (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 150). Vogt et al. (2019) mentioned that a person can function well in one aspect of their life and still not be satisfied with it, for example, a military veteran being underemployed based on their military job experience and skills. Intersectionality can help understand all aspects of the military veteran's life, especially what happens in the civilian workplace and how the military veteran perceives their job satisfaction with their civilian employment.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) identified that when using the concept of Intersectionality to understand the perceptions of military veterans, their identities and values will intersect with job satisfaction. Intersectionality theory helps to understand how the persons' military veteran status, together with their perceptions of personal characteristics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, culture, etc.), come together with their perceptions of understanding and trust in the workplace. Vanderschuere and Birdsall, 2019, also use Intersectionality to understand how military veterans relate to job satisfaction and their job fit. A good job fit will significantly influence the military veterans' job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Job fit is the concept that the military veterans' personal and educational characteristics match the job they are doing in their civilian employment. The military veterans' unique skills and education match what they expect and want from their civilian job (Spector, 1997).

The concepts of understanding and trust, and the concept of job fit used in the conceptual framework, are informed by the research of Stone et al. (2018), Liggans et al. (2019), and Spector (1997). The concept of understanding relates to how military veterans perceive any stereotypes, prejudice, or discrimination in the workplace, based on their military veteran background status, military discharge type, and combat experience. There is foundational research from which this study will be guided. Harrod et al. (2017) state that there is a need for more research on military veterans who have been able to maintain their employment and what skills they used to keep it. Previous research on military veterans' employment status and job perceptions linked unemployment to discrimination and stereotyping (Stone et al., 2018).

With the research study about military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction, the hope is to understand through military veterans' perspectives how their skills, identity, and prior military experience affect their job satisfaction. The research question *"How do military identity and*

prior military experience intersect with military veterans' perceptions of job fit and satisfaction in their civilian workplace?" allows us to understand military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction and what skills they used to feel understood and perceive trust from coworkers. The concept of trust relates to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination in the workplace. People tend to create stereotypes of things they fear or don't understand, bringing prejudice and discrimination into the workplace. Organizational policies, procedures, and feedback from managers, supervisors, or coworkers play a significant role in the person's job satisfaction and perceptions. Trust is a big concept in the military since the senior ranking officers will show trust in their subordinates to follow their orders and perform the job as instructed (Redmond et al., 2015).

Trust is also related to diversity in the workplace and how management values their employees and their individual differences, *"creating environments where everyone feels valued and respected"* (Liggans et al., 2019). When a person perceives their leaders as trustworthy, they develop trust in the organization and reciprocate with commitment (Liggans et al., 2019, p. 417). A diverse and inclusive work environment will not allow for stereotypes, prejudice, microaggressions, and discrimination. The research question *"How do military veterans' perceptions of trust in the workplace intersect with how they perceive others seeing them?"* could allow us to understand how they perceive trust towards them in the workplace. Perceiving trust from others in the workplace is also related to job satisfaction since the workplace environment will play a part in job satisfaction (Spector, 1997).

A different way to understand the conceptual framework and how Intersectionality theory helps explain it and as a basis for the concepts of understanding and trust is by using macro, meso, and micro levels (Figure 2). Intersectionality theory can help explain how individual identities intersect and how these different identities impact how others see the person, understand, and treat them. It can also help explain how the person sees, understands, and perceives treatment by others. Seeing job satisfaction at the micro, meso, and macro levels will help us understand how the concepts of understanding and trust connect with each other. In what way does the micro-level of the person's identity intersect with the organization's policies, and how do individuals *"become more agentic through their interactions with others"* (van Wijk et al., 2019, p.890). The second system, meso-level, is the connections and interactions the person has with others and their *"understanding each other's perspectives and interest and negotiating share perspectives"* (van Wijk et al., 2019, p.890) in the organization. The macro-level connects and influences these two levels on how organizations guide, discipline, rule, and manage the *"dynamics of the micro and meso cycles"* (van Wijk et al., 2019, p.891.)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
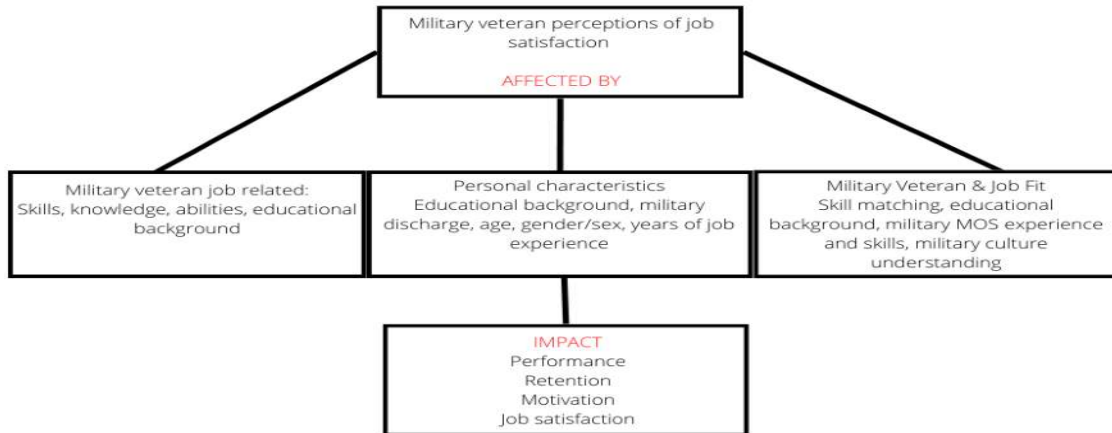
Figure 2: Micro, meso, & Macro levels
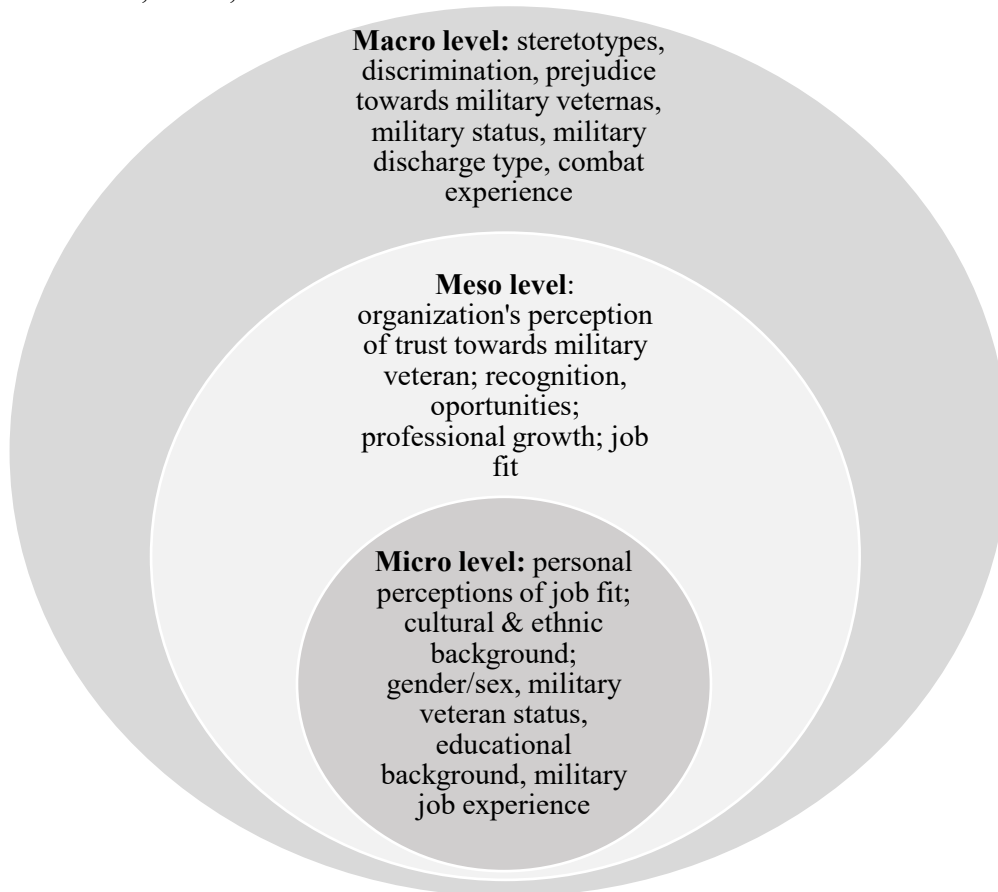
Research Questions

The first research question (RQ) for this study is RQ1: *"How do post 9/11 military veterans enlisted in the active military service perceive job satisfaction in their civilian employment?"* This research question relates to the concepts of understanding and trust, the theory of Intersectionality, and the idea of job fit. Based on this question. Military veterans from the recent conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq are younger than military veterans from other conflicts. We expect their younger age to affect their difficulty adjusting to civilian employment after military service and their dissatisfaction with their jobs.

The second research question that will help us understand military veterans' perceptions of civilian job satisfaction is RQ2: *"How do military veterans perceive their leaders and coworkers understanding their military veteran status?"* We expect military veterans in a civilian job to be less satisfied with their employment when there is a perceived stereotyping, lack of trust in leadership, and lack of diversity and inclusive policies. Military veterans that perceive trust in the organizational leadership, a feeling of belonging in the workplace, and feel welcomed and understood by coworkers will have a more positive job perception. RQ3: *"What factors in the civilian workplace make military veterans trust their leaders and coworkers?"* Based on the Intersectionality theory, we expect that many factors will play a part in military veterans' civilian job satisfaction. These factors will depend on military veterans' job title/role, gender, ethnic background, military discharge type, combat experience, previous military job, military rank, and individual experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature gathered for this research study is divided into the two concepts of understanding and trust with military veterans working in civilian employment after their military service. These concepts are an essential part of positive life perceptions, in the case of this research, the perception of job satisfaction. Stability and satisfaction in the job will allow military veterans to have a healthy cognitive functioning (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2018). Additionally, having a positive perception of life satisfaction will affect the perception of job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Understanding life challenges and work policies, microaggressions, discrimination, workplace culture, and stereotyping can help understand job perception (Stone et al., 2018). Another concept that is important to understand is the perception of trust. Trust in life and in the workplace relates to work cohesion, understanding of life experiences, and cultural and moral values of the military veteran (Liggans et al., 2019).

Employees need to perceive understanding and trust in the workplace, or they could feel unsatisfied, affecting their personal and work life. These two concepts are essential since the attitudes and behaviors of the employees will affect the military veteran employee's perceptions of their job (Liggans et al., 2018). When the organization's leaders have a negative perception of military culture, and there is a lack of trust in the workplace, military veterans' job satisfaction will be affected. Understanding their mission and trust in their orders is significant and vital regarding military workplace values (Redmond et al., 2015). Positive job satisfaction will lower military veterans' difficulty adjusting to civilian life, have no life and work stress, and be satisfied with their finances (MacLean et al., 2018). Lack of understanding of the military veteran culture may lead to discrimination, microaggressions, and stereotyping. Those stereotypes and microaggressions are perceptions others have of military veterans' similarities to

that particular group and ignoring individual differences of the person (Stone et al., 2018).

When the leadership and management of the organization show understanding and trust to their military veteran employees, it shows them that the leadership cares and understands their unique strengths, skills, and challenges (Redmond et al., 2015). When an employer, supervisor, or coworker shows a lack of understanding of military culture, this will affect military veterans' perception of job satisfaction and their perception of the lack of understanding and trust. Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) mentioned that when military veterans perceive a lack of diversity understanding in the workplace, this could create a conflict between themselves and other groups in the organization. Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) explained that *"high perceptions of organizational fairness and diversity management are associated with higher job satisfaction"* (p.125). Another way job satisfaction of military veterans could be affected is when leadership and management in the organization know or perceive employee candidates as military veterans (Stone et al., 2018). When the employers and leadership of the organization understand their employees, they often strive to create fair policies and eliminate microaggressions and discrimination, thus demonstrating an understanding of their diverse and inclusive employee backgrounds, allowing for perceived trust and understanding.

To understand military veterans' backgrounds, Intersectionality theory will help explain how more than two identities collide (Mitchell & Sawyer, 2014). The multidimensions of a person's life experiences should inform the services given to them and the practices and policies of the organization (Mitchell & Sawyer, 2014). A person has many dimensions to their life, different identities, and personal characteristics that intersect. These dimensions, identities, and characteristics can change at any point. Intersectionality can help explain how these external and internal identities connect, and by understanding them, the person can identify their role as

oppressor and oppressed and challenge the status quo (Jennrich & Kowalski-Braun, 2014). Employers need to understand and not assume the identity of their employees as linear; the combination of the military veteran employee cultural backgrounds intersect with other factors, and there is no limit to the employees' background identities and how these intersect (Jennrich & Kowalski-Braun, 2014). This is why it is essential to be aware and understand that the background of military veteran employees will be different with each military person. An authentic and thoughtful leader will challenge their beliefs and prejudices, negotiating their employees' intersectional and multiple identities (Jennrich & Kowalski-Braun, 2014). Taking into consideration how these differences intersect will bring perceived trust and understanding from military veterans in the workplace due to coworkers and those in leadership roles' understanding and trusting who military veterans are as a person, where their different identities intersect. Mitchell and Sawyer (2014) mentioned that a person would create a new identity as different aspects intersect in their life.

Understanding how life identities (age, gender, sex, religion, educational background, etc.) of the military veteran intersect will demonstrate to the military veteran employee that the organization trusts and cares for them. When an employee perceives that they are trusted to make the right decisions and get the job done, it will allow the military veteran employee to perceive that their skills and cultural background are understood. Perception of trust will signal to military veterans that the organization's leadership is interested in them, allowing the military veteran to return it in commitment, productivity, and reduced turnover (Liggans et al., 2019). Perceptions of trust in the workplace must be shared, from military veteran to leadership (and others) and from leadership (and others) to the military veteran. Liggans et al. (2019) mentioned that perceived trust in the workplace signals group cohesion, which is an essential skill in the military. When

military veterans as civilian employees perceive *"the leader with whom they have an exchange relationship as treating them fairly are more likely to develop trust and extend this trust to the organization through transference and reciprocate with commitment and lower levels of turnover intention"* (p. 417). These perceptions of having good leadership and trusting relationships with the organization's leadership will benefit the military veteran and the organization.

Concepts and these in the literature

Two essential concepts when having a positive and friendly relationship with coworkers, supervisors, or managers are the concepts of "understanding and trust." The workplace environment and the employee's personality are essential to job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). According to Spector (1997), military veterans' locus of control has a significant impact on whether military veterans perceive job satisfaction in a positive or negative way. Also, military veterans' negative affectivity (Spector, 1997) plays a part in perceiving trust and strong emotions in the workplace.

The concepts of understanding and trust encompass what is essential in the workplace to have job satisfaction. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines understanding as comprehension, agreement, friendliness, cordial relationships, and sympathy (Merriam-Webster, 2021). All these words are needed to describe success and feeling of comfort in the workplace; it encompasses the thought of fitting in the job and feeling satisfied. Trust is important and needed for any relationship to succeed, whether the relationship is personal or professional. Trust in the workplace is related to having confidence in the employee that they are capable of doing their job the right way. Trust is the perception of vulnerability based on positive expectations and positive rewards that come with other people's intentions and behaviors towards military

veterans and others (Liggans et al., 2019).

Other themes in the literature related to understanding and trust are related to diversity, human resources, transition, reintegration, discrimination, mental health, and acclimation (Figure 3). The majority of the articles, twelve, mentioned or addressed job perception, job fit, and job satisfaction. Another topic mentioned in the literature is culture and acclimation, ten articles. The least mentioned topics are diversity, human resources, and the hiring process. Several authors mentioned at least two topics in the same research article (Harrod et al., 2017; Kukla, Bonfils, et al., 2015; Kukla, Rattray, et al., 2015; Liggans et al., 2018).

All these themes intersect; people have different dimensions and life experiences that identify who they are and set them apart from others. Job satisfaction means different things to people based on their personal challenges, life experiences, and needs. And different factors play a part in what job satisfaction is for an individual person. According to Hombrados-Mendieta and Cosano-Rivas (2011), interpersonal relationships in the workplace can become a source of stress*;* having good perceived relationships, effective communication, and good support will allow for job satisfaction and less negative perceptions. Job satisfaction is essential for quality of life and for workplace functional behaviors. Many factors intersect in the perception of job satisfaction, just as personal characteristics, work conditions, work incentives, and interpersonal relationships (Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011).

Military veterans face unique challenges and needs when entering the civilian workforce, which is essential to consider. According to MacLean et al. (2018), the characteristics of the civilian job, the organization, and the worker's personal characteristics will play a part in job satisfaction. Military veterans will face some challenges in the civilian workplace. These challenges come from their military experiences, education, and training and how they relate to

civilian employment tasks, skills, and knowledge (MacLean et al., 2018). In a research study conducted with Canadian military veterans, the researchers found that officers are primarily satisfied with their civilian employment than other lower rank military veterans (MacLean et al., 2018). In this research, the researchers do not explain the specific challenges. The literature determined that the challenges are related to skill matching, degree of knowledge and education, military training, and matching civilian and military job skills.

The challenges are also related to workplace culture, organizational structure, and leadership (Redmond et al., 2015). As mentioned by Liggans et al. (2018), when the perceptions of the military veteran in the civilian workplace are understood, it will be beneficial for the military veterans and for the organization, and a diverse and inclusive workplace will be present. When removing these obstacles in the civilian workplace and the perceptions of job satisfaction are known and understood, the military veteran will be able to participate and contribute to the organization. According to the literature, job satisfaction relates to a few factors. Some of these factors are adjustments in the workplace (MacLean et al., 2018). Having good benefits, pay, and promotion (Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011). Having an exciting job, job security, a good job environment, good pay, less stress in the workplace, and having job fit (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction also relates to: a diverse and inclusive workplace where there is a good relationship between human resources, leadership, and commitment (Liggans et al., 2019); good management, working conditions, and workgroup (Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011); and the exchange of what is expected (wanted) from the employees and what receive from the organization's leadership (Tao & Campbell, 2019).

Figure 3: Literature themes
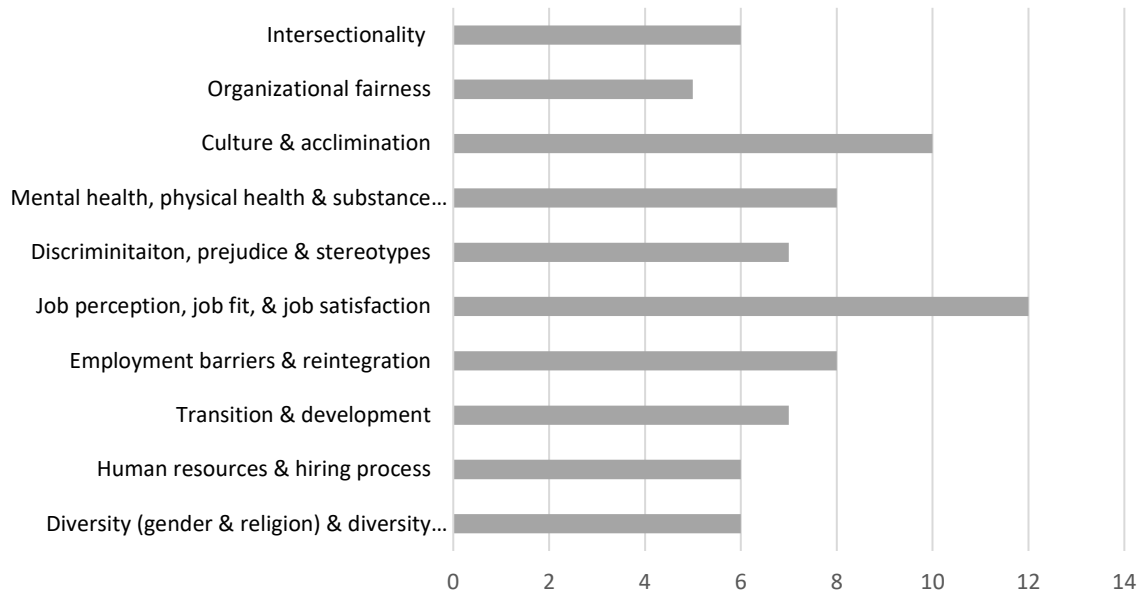
Understanding

The concept of understanding relates to how others, who are not military veterans, approach, understand and see the military culture. From the military veteran's viewpoint, the perception of understanding relates to how the military veterans perceive others seeing, approaching, and understanding their differences. To understand military veterans, we must remember that their differences intersect with many life factors. One of the factors that intersect is the organizational military culture which is different from the civilian organizational culture. These differences are related to the person and the organization as a whole. Personality factors include the military veterans' personal characteristics that set them apart from others, such as ethnic background, religious background, socioeconomics, family composition, etc. Organizational factors that differ from the military and civilian workplace are related to

organizational culture and leadership structure. The military veteran's perceptions of how others see them can affect their success and job satisfaction. During the hiring process, a manager with concerns about military veterans will allow this perception to affect the military veteran's chances of employment. The basics for these concerns are a lack of understanding related to stereotypes (Stone et al., 2018).

Understanding the perceptions of the military veterans related to their military culture and how other personality traits intersect will allow the organization's leadership to understand how to assist the military veterans in a professional and just way. A diverse and inclusive organization will consider military veterans' individual characteristics, their military veteran status, and their value when creating new policies and practices (Liggans et al., 2018). To understand the military veteran's culture and unique characteristics, the organization must practice diversity management, and the military veteran has to perceive this positively. To feel understood, the military veteran must perceive specific diversity and inclusiveness factors in the workplace. These factors are *"(1) understanding cultural differences, (2) recognizing the importance of diversity, (3) preventing discrimination against disadvantaged groups, (4) encouraging cultural interactions across gender and race (i.e., women and minorities), and (5) enhancing cultural development and leadership practices in the organization"* (Kim & Park, 2017, p. 180).

Some aspects that can make the military veteran have a negative perception of their civilian job are: a lack of understanding of military culture, failing to recognize the military veteran's diversity, discrimination in the civilian workplace, and lack of inclusiveness. These can make the military veteran feel dissatisfied with their civilian job. As Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013) mentioned, military veterans' culture, their combat experiences, and their military traditions intersect with the military veteran's work, community, and personal life. The military

veteran's perceptions of everyday life connections with others affect their satisfaction with life.

Another thing that affects civilian job satisfaction in the military veteran is discrimination, stereotypes, and microaggressions in the workplace. Stone et al. (2018) mention that the differential treatment military veterans receive when looking for employment and when employed affects the military veteran's success in the workplace. The lack of understanding from hiring managers about military veterans' cultural differences and job skills allows the hiring managers to stereotype the prospective military veteran employees. The military veteran's perceptions of how others see and treat them also played a part in their hiring and employment success. Stone et al. (2018) mentioned that when hiring managers stereotype future candidates, it causes them to make faster decisions, serve a purpose, and make quick decisions when hiring. By not understanding the (potential) employee's cultural background, the hiring manager misses the opportunity to hire possible leaders, dependable, ethical, and team player employees (Stone et al., 2018).

Some themes related to the concept of understanding that repeats in the literature related to understanding military veterans' perceptions or experiences in the workplace are military veterans' corporate laws, job development, stereotyping, discrimination, microaggressions, veteran culture, and acclimation. McNichols and Anderson (2020) explained that military veterans have hiring preferences that could be seen negatively by other people in minority groups. There are anti-discrimination laws and government initiatives that allow the military veterans to have that hiring preference; this does not mean that the hiring manager will have personal prejudices and thoughts that will affect the military veteran's perceptions of the job. The hiring managers have the right to ask the military veterans when applying and interviewing for a civilian job if they served in the military and what type of discharge they have. When asking this,

it can bridge or damage the understanding of the military culture. Educating the civilian employer about military culture and how to support military veterans in the workplace could lower or eliminate their prejudice and stereotyping.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) state that diversity management occurs when the military veteran feels understood and trusts the workplace; managers, supervisors, and coworkers must be knowledgeable about diversity issues. Organizations must include *"military veteran identity alongside other important demographic factors predicting workplace outcomes"* (p. 118).

Trust

In the literature, the concept of trust is not well mentioned when addressing military veterans and their civilian workplace perceptions. Only a few articles mentioned trust as an essential concept for job satisfaction for military veterans. Of the articles analyzed for this research, only Liggans et al. (2019) cite trust as part of job satisfaction for veterans (This trust intersects with diversity and inclusion in the organization, bringing commitment from the military veteran. Trust is an important concept for the military veteran since, in the military, trust is essential for cohesion and mission success. Trust is also an important part of the military organizational culture since the senior leadership has to show trust to the lower ranks in completing their orders right (Redmond et al., 2015). Stone et al. (2018) mention trustworthiness as a reason to hire military veterans, and Hassan (2012) mentions trust in management as a critical component of fair treatment in the workplace.

When it comes to trust, military veterans, as civilian employees, have to trust the organization's leadership the same way they trusted their leadership in the military. This trust has to be reciprocated from the leadership to the military veteran as a trusted employee. As

mentioned by Liggans et al. (2019), trust has to be present in the organization for the military veteran as an employee to contribute to the organization. Trust will also allow for group cohesion between leadership, supervisors, managers, and coworkers in the workplace. This trust relates to how committed the organization is to its employees. Liggans et al. (2019) mention that employees who perceive trust in the organization will most likely return that trust with their commitment to the organization.

Intersectionality

The concept of Intersectionality, which Crenshaw founded in 1989, was addressed by five authors in the literature. Intersectionality relates to the idea that a person is more than one thing or idea; in this case, a person is more than just a military veteran. The person could be a military veteran; a male/female/LGBTQ; a Christian, Jewish, or Muslim; a mother, a father, a brother, or a sister. That person is more than their mental and physical health diagnosis or substance use history. The military veteran in the organization is more than a stereotype; that person is a professional and a person that is willing to work and be part of the organization. When interviewed by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS, 2018), Crenshaw; declared that we should consider many factors and understand that people have different lines, dimensions, shapes, life experiences, and group affiliations.

Intersectionality, when used to understand gender and religion as Tariq and Syed (2016) did in their research study, could be used as a way to understand different social divisions and how they interact with each other. Tariq and Syed (2016) point out that while women of minority ethnic groups manage to achieve high management positions in their organizations, they still face challenges due to race, ethnic, and cultural background. When adding the status of gender, religion, or group affiliation to the stereotypes and microaggressions from management and

coworkers, the military veteran will go through an intersection of personal characteristics that will affect their work environment and job satisfaction.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) utilized Intersectionality theory and diversity management to understand the job satisfaction of military veterans in the workplace. Diversity management for Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) is trainings, mentorship, organizational culture, accountability, organizational values, and organizational structure. Intersectionality has become a way to understand *"how marginalized people and groups, with more than one identity and status, can be marginalized in multiple ways"* (Meade, 2020, p. 48). For Meade (2020), the identity of a military veteran and being a woman intersect while in the military, bringing oppression and discrimination. Another way the military veteran employees' identity as military veterans can intersect with other characteristics is with their gender and sex. These factors could marginalize them for their identification as women, LGBTQ, Jewish, etc., and military veterans. Intersectionality theory allows us to understand all the dimensions of the person and how these and their military veteran status affect their civilian job satisfaction.

Other theories mentioned in the literature

Shepherd et al. (2020) stated that there is a need for more research and theories that help explain the transition of military veterans from the military to civilian life that does not relate to mental health, substance use, or disability. In their research, Shepherd et al. (2020) utilize the Compensatory Control theory to explain the military veterans' perceptions of the military work structure and the civilian work flexibility. This relates to the structure present in the military and the *"lack of structure"* in the civilian employments the military veterans face. This is another dimension that intersects with the military veterans' civilian job satisfaction, not only the person identifying as a military veteran but the difficulties with their health and the civilian employment

structure affecting their needs to seek medical assistance.

Another theory Shepherd et al. (2020) use to explain the transition difficulties, and job satisfaction of military veterans is the Theory of Dyadic Morality. According to the authors, this theory of Dyadic Morality explains military veterans as moral agents that also *"lack emotion."* Shepherd et al. (2020) explained that civilian hiring managers find it difficult to make personal connections with military veteran employees because they perceive them as lacking social skills. This relates to the concepts of understanding and trust, as stereotyping, microaggressions, and discrimination affect the military veteran's job satisfaction and perception of trust. These factors intersect to affect the military veteran's job satisfaction in the civilian workplace, affecting their perceptions of how others understand them, trust them, and treat them fairly. The most used theory in the literature related to job satisfaction, employment transition, and military veterans is the Social Identity Theory (Liggans et al., 2018, 2019; Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019). Military veterans have a set of unique values, ingroup image, and self-values and perceptions that will affect their decisions in the civilian world. Social Identity Theory explains this ingroup and self-identification of the military veterans. Social identity will allow military veterans to feel like they belong to the ingroup of the organization or the outgroup of military veterans. According to Liggans et al. (2018), *"Understanding the perceptions and attitudes unique to this diverse group can be beneficial for maintaining strong, inclusive workplaces"* (p. 145). Military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction in the civilian workplace are unique. These perceptions differ from their civilian coworkers and how these perceptions affect their work outcomes and job satisfaction.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) used both Intersectionality theory and Social Identity theory to explain job satisfaction of military veterans. Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) state

that military veterans based their perceptions of job satisfaction on the concepts of ingroup and outgroup. Diversity management factors are equal employment opportunities, training, affirmative action, etc., and factors associated with social identity are age, cultural background, gender, etc. Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) state that *"perceptions of fair and effective diversity management are associated with higher job satisfaction among veteran employees"* (p. 116). Intersectionality theory would allow us to understand how all the factors that affect job satisfaction connect and what factors stand out the most.

Two other theories used by Keeling et al. (2018) and Liggans et al. (2019) are Latent Deprivation Theory and Social Exchange theory. These two theories do not allow us to explain the many factors that affect the military veteran's perception of job satisfaction. According to Keeling et al. (2018), Latent Deprivation theory only explains the importance of structure in the workplace, social interactions, having common goals in the workplace, and the status of financial compensation of the military veterans as civilian employees. Keeling et al. (2018) based their research on organizational, societal, and personal factors. The authors use the military veteran's military discharge type, lack of civilian transition support, and future employer perceptions as personal factors affecting job satisfaction. Keeling et al. (2018) used these to connect the personal factors (characteristics) to the military veteran's preparation for civilian employment, the civilian-military cultural clash and dissonance, and the support from the community. Keeling et al. (2018) do not account for the military veteran's workplace perception of trust and understanding of their military cultural differences. Liggans et al. (2019) explained in their research study that a person will identify with a particular group when that group gives them a sense of self-esteem and belonging. The military veterans will identify with the group that gives them a stronger sense of trust and offers them understanding and fair treatment. Considering

different identities and cultural differences in the workplace will allow the human resources department to create a diverse and inclusive environment where employees feel trusted and show commitment.

Like any other social group with a distinct cultural background, the military veterans will create unique social ingroups with which they will identify. This group will give them a sense of self and belonging. Tariq and Syed (2016) and Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) explained that people identifying with a particular group will show that they have developed certain beliefs based on that particular group's shared experiences. Women and LGBTQ people already have a separate set of discrimination, microaggressions, and stereotype characteristics different from men. When being a military veteran is added to their identity, it brings a different and new set of challenges. In a research study done by Hirudayaraj and Clay (2019), they researched how being a woman and a military veteran intersect in the workplace. The authors wanted to know how gender and veteran status influence the person's experience in their civilian workplace. According to Hirudayaraj and Clay (2019), when the identity of women and military veteran intersect, the women feel less respected as a veteran and have more negative employment experiences. Since Intersectionality is the intersection of many identities shaping a person's experiences, being a military veteran cannot be seen just as a military veteran. Same when it comes to job satisfaction in the workplace, satisfaction in the workplace encompasses many factors, not just policies. When creating policies, management must keep their employees' diversity, inclusion, and differences in mind. Stereotyping, microaggressions, and discrimination are ways of assuming that all the people that identify as part of a particular group are the same and have the same life experiences. When creating new policies in the workplace, management has to focus on the employees' differences and not on the similarities.

Job Perception

When it comes to perception, the first thing to come to mind is the person's opinions and thoughts; how the person thinks and sees a situation. Job perception is the thoughts and opinions about the person's job and how the person thinks or sees their job environment. Job satisfaction is the positive perceptions the person has towards their job regarding pay, promotions, management, work conditions, etc. (Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011).

Employment is essential to maintain a certain socioeconomic level and survive in life, and employment gives meaning to people, creates connections, and gives purpose to life. If the person's perception of their job is unsatisfactory, many factors in their life will be affected. When it comes to job satisfaction, many factors are involved, such as pay rate, stress, workload, role characteristics, work schedule, and skills. In other words, job satisfaction relates to job fit, which is when the characteristics of the job match the characteristics of the person (Spector, 1997, Ebook). Topics not well researched are job satisfaction and military veterans, and there is not a lot of literature addressing the concept of job satisfaction and military veterans in the civilian workplace.

A Canadian research study conducted by MacLean et al. (2018) stated that military veterans' satisfaction with their civilian work is associated with their adjustment to civilian life. There is not much research on what contributes to job satisfaction in the military veteran once in a civilian employment. According to MacLean et al. (2018), work satisfaction for the military veteran is related to their educational experience, military training, and the civilian job tasks being similar to their military job (job fit). Other authors also point out the gap in the research literature related to what factors contribute to work satisfaction, struggles, and longevity among military veterans in the civilian workplace (Harrod et al., 2017; Kukla, Bonfils, et al., 2015;

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Kukla, Rattray, et al., 2015; MacLean et al., 2018). Most job satisfaction literature includes mental health (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anxiety) and physical health. It also includes skills match, personal motivation, and the military veterans' support system (Kukla, Bonfils, et al., 2015; Kukla, Rattray, et al., 2015).

Another factor affecting military veterans' job satisfaction is trust in leadership, organizational inclusion, and the organization's human resources practices. According to Liggans et al. (2019), human resources must engage in four practices in order for the military veterans to be satisfied in their civilian employment and show commitment to the organization. These four practices are a diverse selection of employees, performing an appraisal, having fair compensation, and offering training and development to its employees. These practices will tell the military veteran employee that the organization values and cares for them, raising their job satisfaction and commitment. Job satisfaction for military veterans has many concepts as part of the satisfaction with civilian work. Military culture is different from the civilian culture, and adjusting to civilian employment for the military veteran could be a complex and lengthy process.

According to Shepherd et al. (2020), some factors that affect job satisfaction for the military veteran are their trauma experiences (combat, sexual trauma, etc.); personal and socialization characteristics; stigma and stereotypes (self and from others); and discrimination based on their military status. All these factors affect civilian job satisfaction for the military veteran and can also influence their perceptions of fairness, trust, and understanding. Shepherd et al. (2020) stated that how much structure the military veteran perceives in their civilian workplace will predict their productiveness and feelings of belonging in the workplace. How military veterans manage and face these perceptions of who they are will shape their job

satisfaction.

In a research study done about job satisfaction in the federal government by Tao and Campbell (2019), the authors argue that job role clarity is a significant factor in job satisfaction for the military veteran. For Tao and Campbell (2019), job satisfaction is the result of a reasonable balance between what the military veteran wants and what the military veteran receives in the workplace. What military veterans want in their civilian workplace is role clarity of what they should do, what the job expects of them, and the skills they have to match the job. These role clarity factors intersect to bring a positive perception of job satisfaction from the military veteran. Job satisfaction can mean different things for different people, and many things play a part in job satisfaction. Other factors that affect job satisfaction in military veterans are their mental health, the feeling of demotion from their military job, and the inability to relate to their civilian coworkers (Harrod et al., 2017). Harrod et al. (2017) stated that the feelings of demotion from the military job to the civilian job feels like their professional skills are underutilized. The inability of the military veteran to relate to their civilian coworkers relates to stereotypes and microaggressions others create, showing a lack of respect for their military service, differences in work ethics between the military veteran and civilian coworkers, and overall life differences and experiences. Harrod et al. (2017) stated that it is vital to understand the challenges and difficulties the military veterans face in their civilian employment, and it is also essential to *"understand their struggles with maintaining employment"* (p. 264).

Together with being a military veteran, the person has a particular national origin and ethnicity, primary language, race, disability, gender, religion, etc. For this reason, the organization has to account for diversity and be inclusive with its employees. Military veterans must feel like they belong, are valued, and fit in the workplace (Liggans et al., 2018, p. 140).

Discrimination and stereotyping based on the military veterans' background will give them the perception that they are not understood, treated fairly, and trusted by their managers, supervisors, and coworkers. According to Stone et al. (2018), stereotyping the military veteran is seeing them all as equals and more similar in characteristics than what they actually are. It is a form of ignoring the person's differences and creating a group stereotype, allowing for faster decisions to be made, maintaining a status quo, or compromising.

When military veterans have negative perceptions of their civilian workplace, they will not be satisfied with their job. As Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013) stated, *"military culture, combat, and traditions are inextricably entwined with community, work, and personal life" (*p. 436). A military veteran employee will still be a military veteran no matter what job they do in the civilian world. Their overall wellness intersects with the military veteran's personal life, health, civilian employment, and personal life purpose. Military veterans expect their civilian workplace to be similar to their military workplace, where leaders are ethical and responsible. When they do not encounter this in their civilian employment, military veterans might feel misunderstood and will not trust the organization's leadership. On occasions, military veterans have difficulty reintegrating into their civilian workplace for many reasons (e.g., combat experience, trauma, physical/mental health). If the military veteran perceives that they are seen as what Kay and Gray (2019) call agentic, it can affect their job satisfaction and make them feel like outcasts.

Many factors prevent the military veteran from having a positive and welcoming perception of their civilian workplace and feeling satisfied with their employment. Following Shepherd et al. (2020) idea of the social environment, when thinking about military veterans in the workplace, factors such as culture, personal life, trauma, combat experience, age, gender, educational background, family life, etc., must be taken into consideration (Figure 1). There has to be a balance between what the military veteran wants/expects in the workplace and what they receive from their managers, coworkers, or supervisors. Other factors that affect job satisfaction for military veterans are role clarity (Tao & Campbell, 2019), workplace structure and a feeling of belonging (Shepherd et al., 2020), diversity management (Kim & Park, 2017; Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019) and understanding their individual personality characteristics and how these intersect. It is necessary to remember that every employee in the organization has individual challenges and life experiences that intersect. These personal characteristics and challenges will affect the way the person sees and perceives their work environment and will affect their job perception. The military veteran's micro, mezzo, and macro (Figure 2) life experiences will intersect as humans that are part of a group, organization, society, and country.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The population sample included nine military veteran subjects. Their ages were between 18 and 55 years old. The median age for Post 9/11 military veterans is 37 years old, and the median age for military veterans in 2018 was 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2020). The participants were military veterans from any of the United States military branches, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force. The participants must have served in the military for at least one year before discharge or separation. Another criterion to participate was that the military veterans must be working in civilian employment for at least six months, either full-time or part-time, after their release from the military service.

Instrumentation

A demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) was given to the participants in order to gather personal characteristics such as age, sex/gender, years of military service, type of military discharge, the branch of service, military rank, previous military job (MOS-Military Occupational Specialty), current civilian employment and position, and educational background/degree. After completion of the demographic questionnaire, individual interviews were conducted with the participants. The interview questions (Appendix B) are based on the workplace's concepts of trust and understanding. It is hoped that the questions will inform the research on the military veteran's perceptions of job satisfaction. The interview questions were based on the literature gathered for the research; most of the questions are based on gaps found in the literature and questions that have not been answered in the literature related to military veterans' job satisfaction.

The questions were developed to understand what type of military veteran has been hired and works for a civilian organization. McNichols and Anderson (2020) mention that when a military veteran has been hired, what are the characteristics the hiring employer is looking for in the military veteran, and how much information the employer is inquiring about the military veteran's record and history. McNichols and Anderson (2020) say these questions must be answered. Another question that needs to be answered is what characteristics hiring managers are looking for, what questions hiring managers ask during the hiring process, and how these affect military veterans' perceptions. Questions like these can be answered by asking military veterans how inclusive they perceive their organization to be, whether they share similar values with the organization and coworkers, and whether or not the military veteran disclosed their military background to the organization's leadership. The interview questions were developed to understand this and other aspects of job satisfaction from the military veteran's point of view.

The interview questions were developed to identify what Liggans et al. (2018) described as a need to understand the perceptions of this particular group, their unique characteristics, and how they could benefit the workplace. Questions such as what perceptions military veterans have of their workplace and how these perceptions affect their job satisfaction will be answered by asking them specific questions. Some of the questions that are going to be asked during the interview process relate to things such as: what things military veterans have heard their coworkers or leadership say about military veterans; what is allowing them to keep their current job; do they perceive being trusted in the organization; and if they perceive any barriers before, during, and after being hired.

There is a gap in the literature regarding the perceived stereotype and prejudice toward military veterans in the workplace (Stone et al., 2018). This perception of stereotyping and

prejudice towards military veterans could be understood by asking military veterans some of the questions developed for the research interview, and the goal is to understand how stereotyping and prejudice affect their job satisfaction. Stone et al. (2018) mention that there is limited research in understanding military veterans' employment perceptions related to discrimination and stereotypes and how these affect their employment. The questions developed will allow us to understand the military veteran's perception of coworkers' treatment of them and what the veteran has heard others say in the workplace about the military or military veterans.

The questions developed for this research can assist the literature with the problem mentioned by Hirudayaraj and Clay (2019), that there is a gap in the literature regarding accessing and understanding military veterans' experiences in the civilian workplaces. As Keeling et al. (2018) mentioned, there is not much known about the perceptions of military veteran employees' performances, experiences in the workplace, turnover, and retention. MacLean et al. (2018) also mentioned that there is not much literature about what contributes to military veterans' work satisfaction. With the questions developed for this research study, it is hoped to understand the perceptions of the military veterans' performance, experiences, turnover, and retention in the workplace.

With these questions, it is hoped to allow hiring managers, recruiters, and organizational leaders to form and develop a framework that will help them in successfully hiring military veterans, engage them in productive work, and retain them in the workplace (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013). The questions for the individual interviews were developed following the literature, what is missing, and the gaps. Some of the questions developed follow the gaps mentioned by Shepherd et al. (2020) needed to understand the environmental factors that affect military veterans' employment issues. Some of these gaps are how military veterans deal with

being stereotyped, how this affects them in the workplace, what abilities they use to feel they belong, what biases leaders have, and how veterans face the issues of belonging.

Reliability and Validity

The interview questions created for this research study were developed by the researcher based on the gaps found in the literature. The interview questions instrument is trustworthy due to the questions and method of the research being applicable to other topics and themes. The research topic was developed with the literature review, allowing the interview questions to be developed. This methodology is reliable, and the research study results had internal and external reliability. The reliability of this research study is based on the method chosen, qualitative research based on Intersectionality theory, and the concepts of understanding and trust. The Intersectionality theory and the concepts of understanding and trust were chosen because Intersectionality theory will allow us to understand what other factors in the military veterans' life affect their perception of understanding and trust in the workplace.

This theory and concepts could be applied to other topics, such as LGBTQ, Muslims, women, and any other group of people that perceive misunderstanding and untrust in the workplace. The research topic for this study could give different results, and it could be analyzed with different concepts. Military Veterans come from many diverse backgrounds, culturally, ethnically, religious, socioeconomic, educational, etc., and these differences will give a different results to the perception of job satisfaction. The internal validity is based on this research representing a real issue military veterans face in the civilian workplace, and it is a shared problem other minority groups might face in their jobs.

Procedure

The participants must be military veterans between the ages of 18 and 55, have served in
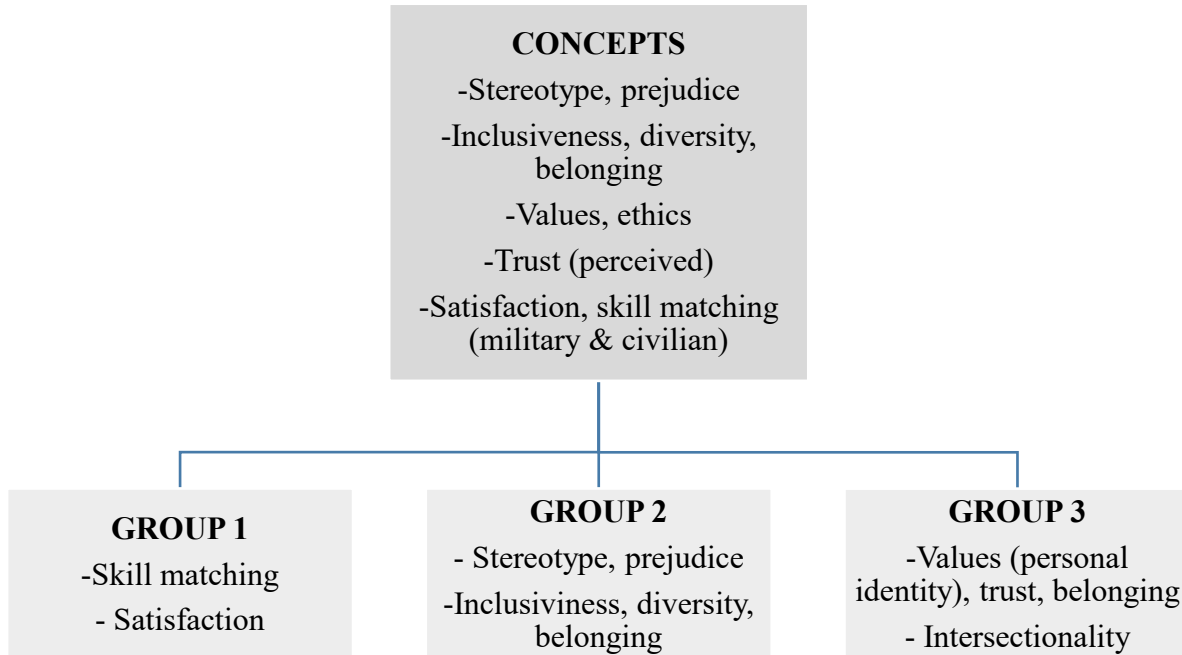
any of the military branches, and have a civilian employment at the time of the interview. The participant's sample was obtained from a random sampling process and snowball effect. This sampling process is to allow and reflect different demographic characteristics of the military veteran community. The participants were asked to complete an initial demographic and personal characteristics survey before the individual interviews. The demographic survey and interviews were completely voluntary and in confidentiality. The participants were emailed the demographic survey and consent, which they emailed back to the researcher before the phone interview was conducted. Participants were allowed to use a nickname that they would like to be addressed by, and the name of their workplace was not asked; this kept their confidentiality and privacy.

The researcher did not identify any participants or organization by name in the findings. In the end, all the participants were given a number from one to nine. The participants and researcher sign a consent (Appendix C) at the end of the interview, reassuring them that their participation in the research study was voluntary and will be kept confidential. Completing the demographic questionnaire and the phone interview process took approximately 20 to 40 minutes in length. The personal demographic survey questions were developed to classify the participants. Military veterans will be able to be identified by gender/sex, age, educational background, years served in the military, the military branch of service, military job (MOS), military rank, military deployment history, current civilian employment position, years of work in the current position. There are twenty-one interview questions that the researcher developed to understand the military veteran's perceptions of job satisfaction. These questions are open-ended questions based on literature reviews and gaps found in the literature.

To understand the participants' personal cognitive perceptions of job satisfaction, the researcher interviewed the participants individually. The interviews allowed the researcher to gather data and themes to understand what job satisfaction means for the military veteran. To understand job satisfaction, the researcher divided the interview data into topics. The interview questions fall into six categories (1) stereotype/prejudice; (2) inclusiveness/diversity/belonging; (3) values; (4) satisfaction; (5) skill matching (between military and civilian employment); and (6) perceived trust. These six categories are subdivided into three groups, (1) Stereotype/prejudice and Inclusiveness/diversion/belonging; (2) Values and Trust; and (3) Job satisfaction and Skill matching (military and civilian job). Some of the questions repeat themselves between the groups due to the question being able to give an answer to any category and group.

Figure 4: Data division

CONCEPTS

-Stereotype, prejudice

-Inclusiveness, diversity, belonging

-Values, ethics

-Trust (perceived)

-Satisfaction, skill matching (military & civilian)

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
-Skill matching	- Stereotype, prejudice	-Values (personal identity), trust, belonging
- Satisfaction	-Inclusiviness, diversity, belonging	- Intersectionality

Data Analysis

Based on the research questions developed for this study, a qualitative deductive analysis was conducted to identify themes in the responses. The data was transcribed and coded according to the responses, and then the commonalities were compiled into a table. Finally, the themes and data were compared and analyzed to look for recurring themes. Individual interviews were conducted with the participants to examine the connection between military veterans and job satisfaction. These interviews were individual with the military veteran participant after they filled out the personal demographic questionnaire. To understand the military veteran's perceptions of job satisfaction, the interview data was divided into six categories (Figure 4):

stereotype/prejudice, inclusiveness/diversity/feeling of belonging, values, satisfaction, and skill matching (military and civilian), and perceived trust. These categories or concepts were subdivided into three groups to understand military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction. The three groups were created based on the similarities of the concepts, group 1 relates to RQ 1: satisfaction and skill matching, group 2 relates to RQ 2: stereotypes/prejudice and inclusiveness/diversity/feeling of belonging, and group 3 relate to RQ 3: values, perceived trust, and intersectionality (Figure4). To explore research question number one, questions related to job satisfaction and job skill matching were asked to the participants. The questions were developed based on the literature.

According to Spector (1997), the most important things to have job satisfaction are good benefits, an exciting job, satisfaction with coworkers, the nature of the work, supervision, and job security. These are the things the researcher hoped to find out during the interview with the participants. Liggans et al. (2019) explained that commitment and trust are essential and must be considered to maximize the satisfaction of military veterans in the workplace. The RQ1 is how post 9/11 military veterans enlisted in the active military service perceive job satisfaction in their civilian employment. could give factors that affect satisfaction and how they relate to skill matching. According to MacLean et al. (2018), performing the same tasks and utilizing the same knowledge and skills used in the military are connected to civilian work satisfaction in military veterans. With this question, the researcher expected that military veterans from the recent conflicts of Afghanistan and Iraq, who are younger than military veterans from other conflicts, will have more difficulty adjusting to civilian employment and be more unsatisfied with their jobs.

To explore RQ2 two, the researcher developed questions to explore stereotyping,

prejudice, inclusiveness, diversity, and belonging. According to McNichols and Anderson (2020), there is nothing wrong with asking recruits about their military experiences and military discharge. Understanding military veterans' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior in the workplace, which is unique to military veterans, could allow them and be beneficial in maintaining strong, diverse, and inclusive workplaces (Liggans et al., 2018). With the research questions of How do military veterans perceive their leaders and coworkers understanding their military veteran status? it was hoped to understand military veterans' perceptions towards stereotypes, prejudice, diversity, and feeling of belonging. It was expected that military veterans in a civilian job will be less satisfied with their employment if there is perceived stereotyping, lack of trust in leadership, and lack of diversity and inclusive policies in the organization.

To explore the RQ number three questions were developed by the researcher that allowed us to understand what other factors in the military veteran's life affect their job satisfaction. Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) stated that military veterans might develop a more powerful identity if they perceive that their racial/ethnic identity (e.g., Latino, Asian, Mexican, Chinese, etc.) is lower than the military veteran identity. The military veteran's gender/sex identity could also play a part since women military veterans already do not feel respected and valued as military veterans (Hirudayaraj & Clay, 2019). These factors could affect their perception of trust and belonging in the workplace and feelings of being unwelcome and misunderstood, affecting the military veteran's perception of job satisfaction. The RQ of What factors in the civilian workplace makes military veterans trust their leaders and coworkers? could also help understand what other factors affected job satisfaction for military veterans. It was hoped that using Intersectionality theory help in understanding what other factors play a part in military veterans' civilian job satisfaction. These factors were expected to be related to job title and role,

educational background, skill matching, military discharge type, combat experience, previous

military job, and military rank.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the findings of this research study will be discussed. The participants' answers were transcribed and analyzed for each research question to find themes. There were nine participants, and the answers discussed here are the ones with a connection to the research study. All the questions were asked in the same order to the participants. The questions were divided by topic for a more straightforward analysis and coding of themes. Codes were then grouped by questions allowing for themes to emerge. The research questions are listed in Appendix B as they were asked to the participants during the interview process.

This qualitative study explored three research questions.

The first question was, how do post 9/11 military veterans enlisted in the active military service perceive job satisfaction in their civilian employment? The participants discussed topics such as military friendly, inclusiveness, role clarity, skills, college degree, and ethics. The code for military-friendly was "inclusiveness." The code for acclimation to the workplace was "college." The codes for similarities between military and civilian employment were having "office skills and uniformity." The codes for skill similarities between military and civilian employment were teamwork, leadership, and communication; the code for understanding their civilian chain of command was role clarity; the code for trust was "political," and the code for similarities between military and civilian values was "ethics."

The second question was how do military veterans perceive their leaders and coworkers understanding their military veteran status? The participants discussed topics such as tax break, professionalism, "political," and military veteran status. The codes for disclosure of military background were resume, benefits, and tax break; the code for valued personal characteristics was professionalism; the codes for feeling as part of the organization were enough and

"political." The codes for commitment and satisfaction were political and resignation; the codes for thoughts of the perception of leaving employment were lack of support and benefits. The code for the perception of differential treatment was military veteran status; the codes for perceived unfair treatment were their medical background and military veteran status.

The third question was what factors in the civilian workplace make military veterans trust their leaders and coworkers? Topics discussed by the participants were military veteran status, cultural diversity, forgetting and learning skills, and prejudice/stereotypes. The codes for perceived barriers in the workplace were military veteran status and new skills; the codes for the organization respecting diversity were culturally diverse; the codes for the perception of trust were "open door" and "kiss ass." The codes for personal qualities being valued were forgetting professional skills and "enough;" the codes for the perception of challenges in the workplace were prejudice/stereotype, "political," learning new skills; the codes for spending time with coworkers was socializing.

This research aimed to explore the military veterans' perceptions of civilian job satisfaction. This chapter shows the data obtained from the participants' demographic questionnaire (Appendix A) and the qualitative interviews. The interview questions were asked to participants expecting a personal answer from them and their cognitive perceptions. The researcher did not direct or give answers to the participants; instead, participants responded to the questions based on their experiences and perceptions.

Participants Demographics

A total of nine participants were interviewed for this qualitative research study. Of the nine participants in the research interviews, seven identified as males, and two identified as females (Table 1). The average age was 35, most in the range of 29 to 39 years old at the time of
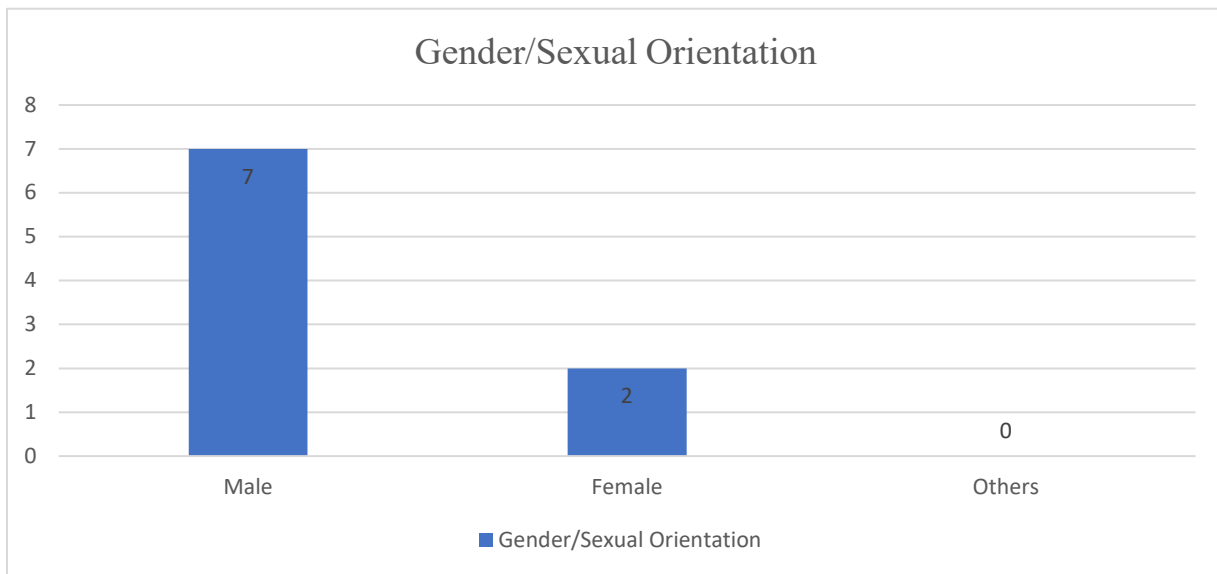
the interview (Table 2). The majority of the participants, seven, had completed their bachelor's degree at the time of the interview (Table 3). Five of the seven participants mentioned going to college after their military separation/discharge and receiving a degree before getting their civilian employment. Most participants were in the military service for one to five years; only one participant was in the military for more than 18 years before discharge/separation (Table 4). The military branch with the most participants was the Army, with six (Table 5). Only one participant expressed that they joined the Navy, were discharged, and then joined the Army. This participant was counted as part of the Army group since his last branch of service was the Army; this was the last military branch that they were from last discharged/separated.

The participants' Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was varied before discharge/separation from the military. All nine participants had different jobs with different specialties, but seven of the participants had what military veterans call Grunt jobs. Based on the researcher's personal experience and knowledge of the military culture, Grunt jobs are jobs in the field or jobs closely related to battle. Three participants had Personnel other than Grunt (POG) jobs or office/administrative jobs; these jobs might not require the participant to be deployed or be in a combat zone. The Grunt jobs are Field artillery, Calvary Scout, Patriot Missile Technician, Fire Infantry, Cargo Specialist, and Rifleman. The POG's jobs are linguistics, logistics, and Air Man (a person that works in an aircraft). Of the five participants who stated that they went to college after their military service, four had Grunt jobs in the military. Only two participants stated that they did not deploy to a combat zone during their military service; they were the Patriot Missile Technician in the Army for three years, and the participant who was a Linguist in the Air Force for five years.

Most participants had a rank of E4 by discharge/separation time from the military. A rank of E4 in the Army is Corporal/Specialist, in the Air Force is Senior Airman, Marines is Corporal, and Navy is a Petty Officer (Table 6). Only one participant had a lower rank of E3 in the Navy, Seaman Apprentice, and one with the higher rank of E8 in the Army, Master Sergeant. No participants with officer ranks were interviewed for this research. The participants' years of civilian employment at the time of the interview were also varied. One person had less than one year at their civilian job, between 3 to 4 months, at the time of the interview, but this participant had a previous civilian employment. Two participants with the longest time in their civilian employment (at the time of interview) were seven and nine years, respectively, and both were law enforcers.

Figure 5: Gender/sexual orientation

Figure 6: Ages of the participants

Ages
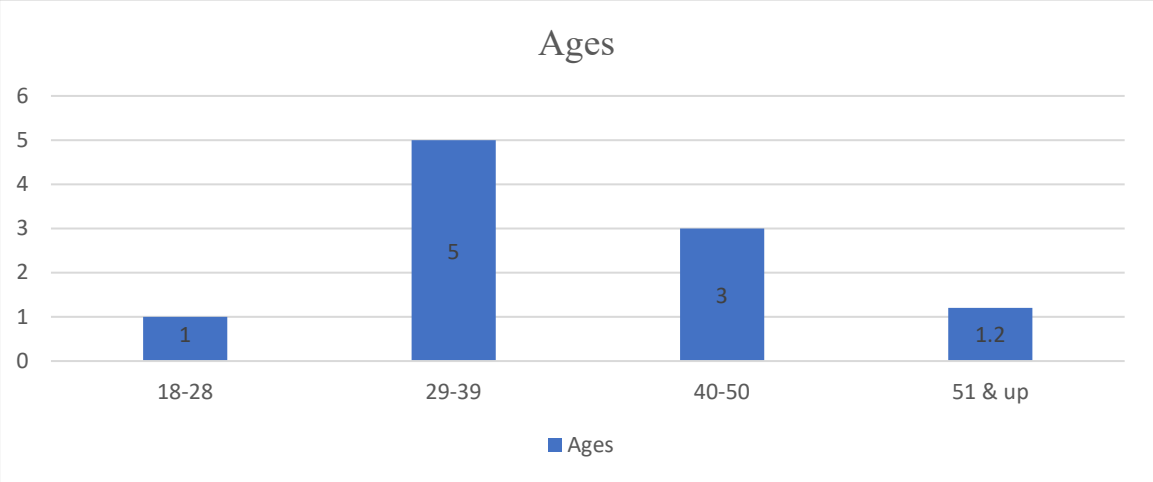
Figure 7: Educational background

Educational Background
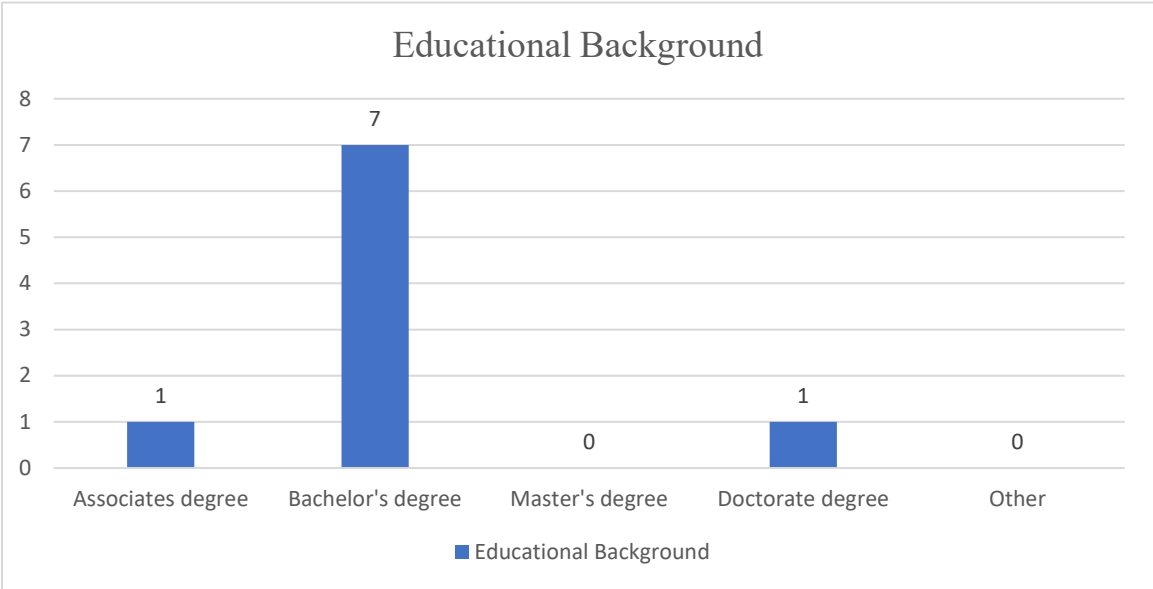
Figure 8: Years of service in the military
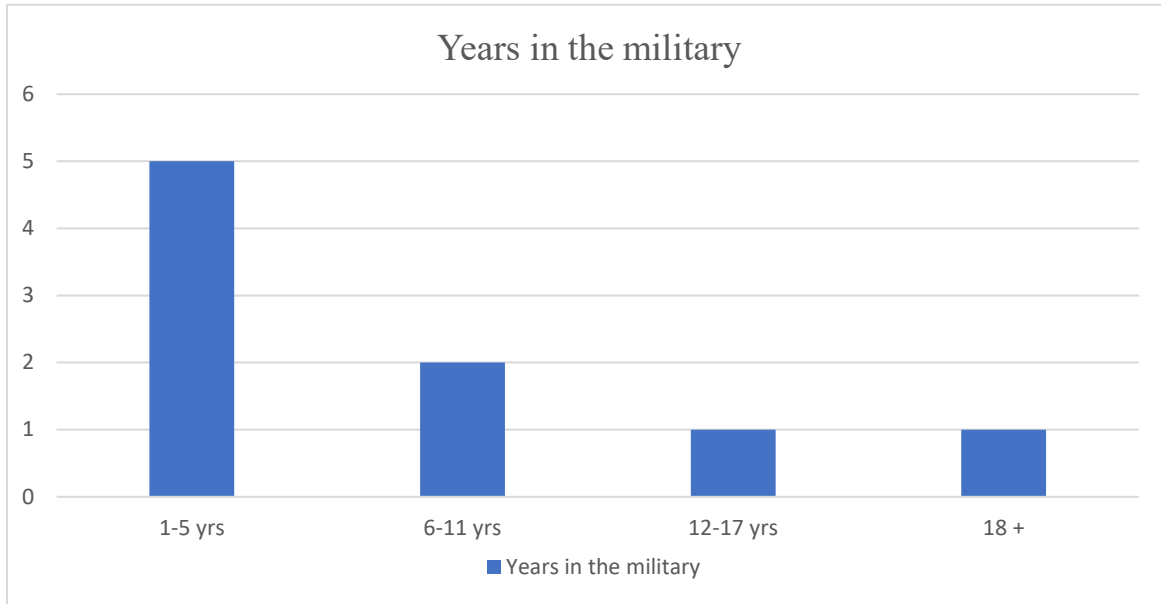
Figure 9: Military branch
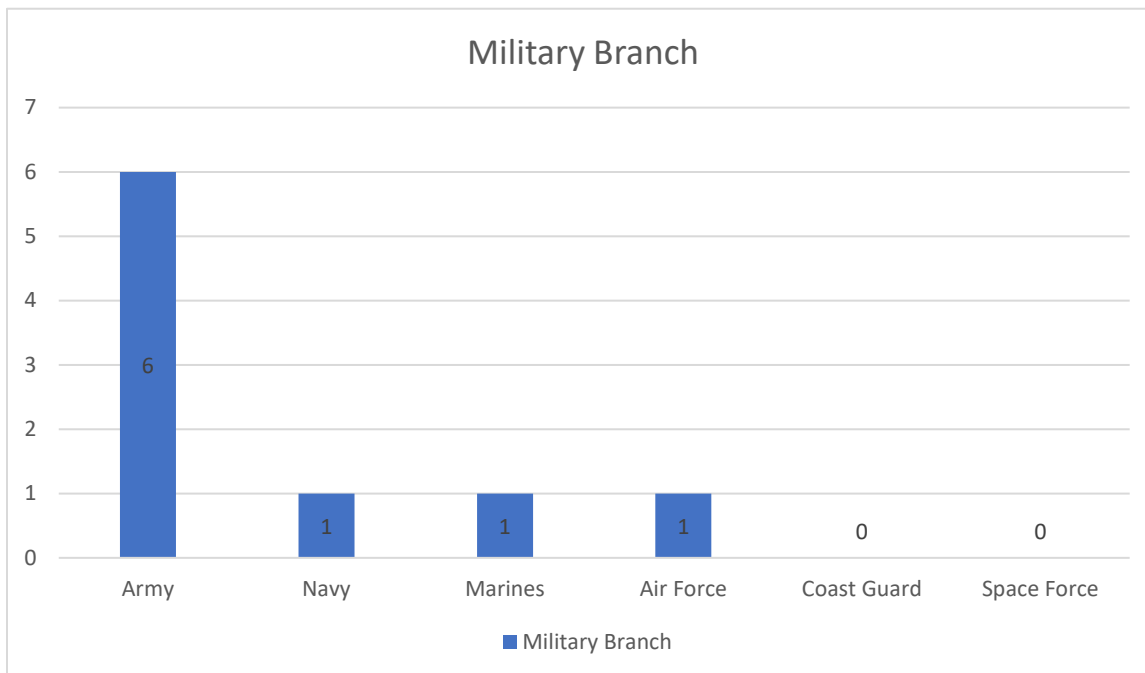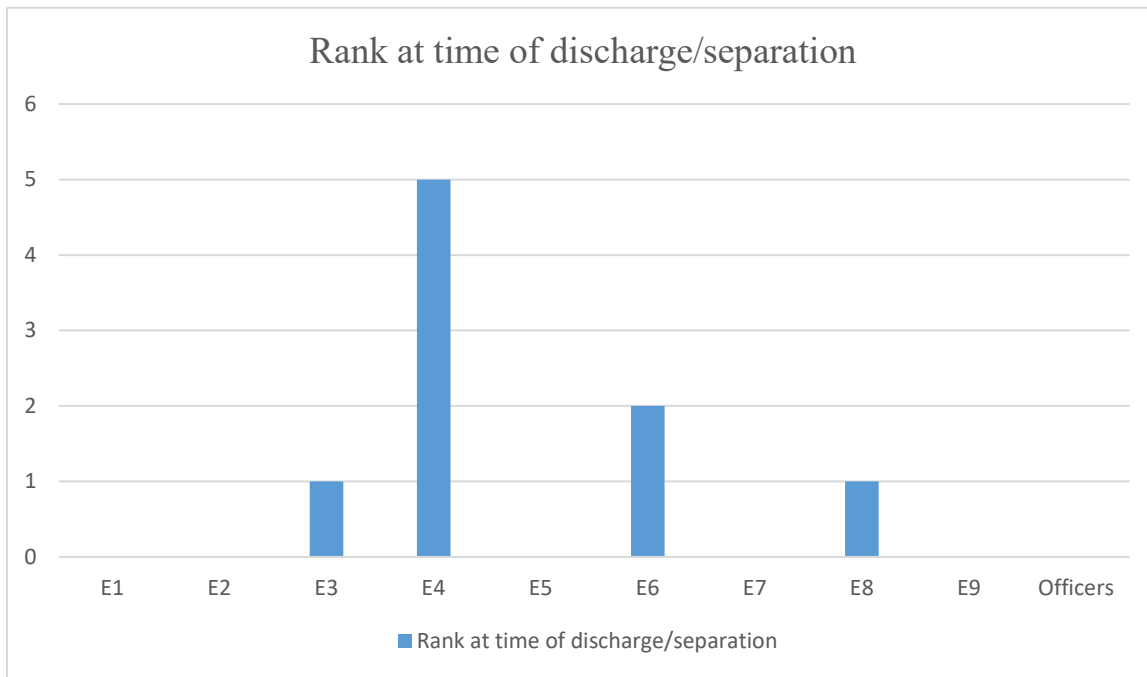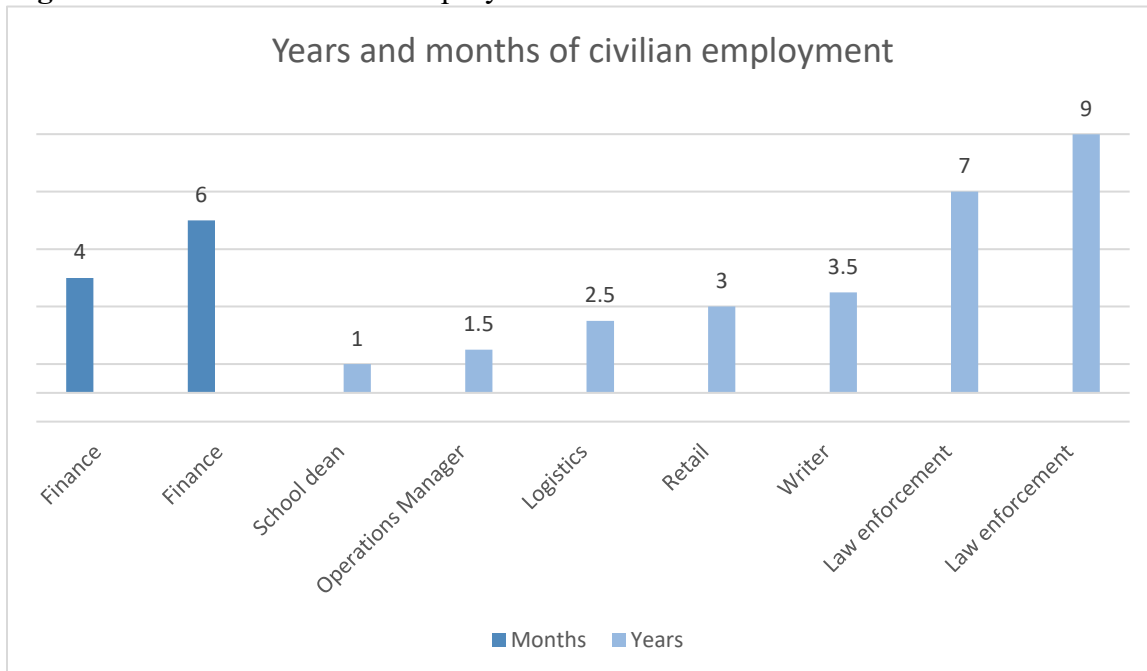
Figure 10: Rank at time of discharge

Figure 11: Years of civilian employment

Interpretation of interview data and discussion of findings

Research question one

Research question one is how do military veterans, who were enlisted in the active military service in the post 9/11 era, perceive job satisfaction in their civilian employment? This research question explores the perceptions of job satisfaction of working-age military veterans after their military service. The answers/data to this question will be summarized in group one, satisfaction, and skill matching of figure 4 in chapter three. According to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), military veterans have a higher chance of expressing turnover than non-veterans. The seven interview questions and the answers given by the participants are summarized here. The themes for this RQ1 were categorized based on the group one category (Figure 4).

1.   Do you perceive your workplace to be inclusive towards military veterans as being *"military friendly"?*

For this interview question, participants did not express any specific perceptions of inclusiveness in the workplace. Even though this was an open-ended question and participants were not given examples or guided on what to answer, the answers were short. For this research question, participants discussed themes mainly were yes and no answers.

Military Friendly. According to Kirchner et al. (2021), there is no comprehensive and accepted definition for *"military friendly,"* and some organizations might use this phrase as a marketing tool. A military-friendly organization can be one that supports and values its military veteran employees. But it also could be an organization that has its own military veteran perceptions and lack of understanding about military veteran's transition challenges. Of all nine participants interviewed for this research, only three answered that they do not perceive their civilian workplace as inclusive towards military veterans or *"military friendly."* Five participants

expressed that they perceive the organization as inclusive and *"military friendly."* For this research question, participants mostly answered yes or no, with the majority stating that they perceived their civilian employment as inclusive towards military veterans. Understanding that *"military friendly"* is a broad term with many definitions and meanings could explain why the participants could not describe what makes their employment military friendly.

Inclusiveness. As mentioned by Liggans et al. (2018), the attitudes and behaviors in the workplace will affect the perceptions of the military veteran employee. When the military veteran's perceptions are understood in the workplace as a unique behavior that could be beneficial to the workplace, a more diverse and inclusive workplace is created. The participant identified as number seven stated, *"Right now, I work for myself as a freelance writer. For some of my clients, they do choose to work with me because of my experiences in the military."* Only one participant, number one, expressed that their civilian workplace is, and it is not, inclusive towards military veterans or perceives their workplace as *"military friendly."* As participant number one stated, *"Yes. They [organization] tried to be, but they are not really. They hired veterans, but they don't care if you are a veteran.*

2.   How long did it take you to get acclimated (adjusted) to your civilian employment? Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different. Even though this was an open-ended question, and participants were not given examples or guided on what to answer, the answers were short. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as not long (to get acclimated), college, veteran job assistance program, and self-employment.

Not long. Stone et al. (2018) stated that civilian organizational managers expect the military veteran, when hired, to have some knowledge of civilian workplace norms and habits, and their military habits be forgotten. The acclimation process is where the person has to adjust

to new things and learn new skills, which might take different times for different military veterans. Five of the nine participants stated that it did not take them long to acclimate to their civilian employment. Two participants expressed that they were still getting adjusted. Participant number one stated, "*Not long. I went to school after the military. The VA helped me in finding employment. I used one of their programs, and they assisted me in finding a job.*" The participant identified as number four stated, *"I don't think I got fully acclimated. Not even after college. Not even now."* This participant was in the military for four years and had a bachelor's degree. Participant number five stated, *"I'm still getting adjusted. Two and a half years after discharge."* Participant number six stated, *"To a certain extent, a few months. But realistically, never."*

College. According to Keeling et al. (2018), for some military veterans in the civilian workplace, it feels like starting from the beginning, with low pay, entry-level jobs, lack of college/university degrees, or transferring their professional skills and experiences. Another challenge, according to Keeling et al. (2018), is that organizations that promote themselves to be military-friendly require college degrees from the military veteran. Requiring a college degree for a civilian job can make the military veteran perceive that they are incapable and *"lacked civilian work experience"* (p. 66). Participant number eight did not take long to get acclimated to the civilian workplace; he stated, *"I went to school after the military."* Participant nine did not take long to get acclimated; they said, *"I was out of the military for a while before joining law enforcement. I went to college for a bit. The parallels were already there [civilian employment], and other veterans made it comfortable."*

3.   How similar is your current employment to your military job?

        Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different, and a

central topic could not be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as their current employment being similar or not similar, in charge of people, or the job motivation style differences. Most of the participants (five of the nine) expressed that their civilian employment is similar or similar enough to their military job. Only four participants expressed that their current civilian employment is not similar to their military job.

Similarities and differences. According to Dexter (2020), there are a few factors that affect the military veteran in their workplace. These factors are the differences between civilian and military leadership, occupational specialties, benefits, and onboarding. For the participants interviewed for this research, the similarities and differences between civilian and military jobs were more varied. Participant number one stated that the only similarity between their civilian and military job is *"I do paperwork in both."* Participant number three stated, *"Some similarities, in charge of punishment for the kids, discipline, and punishment. Everyone [staff] did their own thing."* The similarities for participants identified as number nine are related to his job in law enforcement; he stated, *"Pretty similar. With the formations, units, precinct. There is uniformity, a sense of camaraderie."* For the participant identified as number four, the similarities are *"Similarity, in charge of people, difference how we motivate the subordinates. People have different ways of thinking; Marines were about teamwork, there were ways of motivating someone, punishments. Civilian people did not care about the team, can't even yell at them. You can't make them do anything."*

4.   What personal professional skills do you utilize in the workplace that are similar to your military professional skills?

The answers were varied and different regarding the participants' professional skills for this question; a specific theme could not be identified. Due to the questions being open-ended,

the answers were varied and different from every participant. For this research question, participants gave their own personal and unique perceptions. The themes gathered from this question were teamwork, leadership, ethic, professionalism, patience, discipline, adjusting to things changing on short notice, public speaking, loyalty, communication, and first aid.

Davis and Minnis (2017) mention that in the military, the person will learn employment technical proficiency in their assigned occupation; they will also learn teamwork, planning, decision making, leadership, and communication. Keeling et al. (2018) state that translating and transferring skills from the military to the civilian workplace can have some difficulties for the military veteran regarding position suitability. The participants expressed skills such as teamwork, public speaking, and leadership.

Teamwork. Participant number one stated that the professional skill they still have from the military is *"Teamwork, that is pretty much all of it."* The participant identified as number eight stated, *"Working with people of different backgrounds. Like in the military, I have workers from all walks of life."*

Public Speaking. For participant number four, the skills they transferred from the military were *"Teaching a class, public speaking."*

Leadership. Participant number five expressed leadership as a professional skills similarity. They stated, *"Technical skills, the logistics in the military I learned in the Army translate to the job now, the leadership skills [got a promotion], organizational skills, work ethics, get the job done and get the job done right the first time."*

5. How well do you understand the chain of command in your workplace?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different, and a central topic could not be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes

such as whether they understand it well and whether it is clear or not. Seven of the nine participants interviewed stated that they understand the chain of command in their civilian workplace. According to Harold et al. (2016), when the military veteran perceives that the organization is fair, it provides a signal of value towards the employee and that the relationship between staff and leadership is a safe one. Fairness, according to Harold et al. (2016), relates to the procedures of the organization and the interpersonal relationships. People are also more attracted and comfortable with organizations and leadership that are familiar to them.

Clarity. One participant answered that it is not clear, and one participant answered that they only have to answer to his clients. This participant, identified as number seven, they are a freelance writer, *"In my current role, the chain of command is very simple. I only answered to my clients and adjust my product to what they need while also having the ability to give them my input from a different perspective."* Participant number three stated, *"It is clear. There was a training of what to do with students."* Participant number five expressed that their civilian chain of command is unclear, *"Is kind of [clear], I get it, but it is not clear. There seems to be so many different lines; in the military is horizontal, here [civilian employment] is vertical, but it seems like there are all those horizontal lines. Who the fuck I'm supposed to report to, my supervisor seems to have two supervisors. It is very confusing. We have a manager in California and one in Florida and the government. Too many chiefs."* For participant number nine, who is in law enforcement, their civilian workplace chain of command is clear. They stated, *"I do. Like in the military, we have to go to another officer [police] with more experience to ask a question before we go to our supervisor/sergeant."*

6.   How much do you trust your organization's leadership?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different, and a central topic could not be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as not much, a decent amount, and enough when it comes to them perceiving and having trust in the organization's leadership.

According to Liggans et al. (2019), *"to maximize the contribution from military veterans, both commitment and trust – two important components of military culture – must be considered"* (p. 415) in the organization. Trust relates to group cohesion, diversity, inclusiveness, and morale. According to Liggans et al. (2019), trust in leadership is connected to organizational inclusion.

Political. Most participants expressed that they do not trust their civilian workplace leadership. One of the participants described it as *"political"* and another participant expressed that they trust their leadership *"enough."* Participant number nine, who works in law enforcement, stated, *"Enough. It is very political. There is favoritism."*

Enough trust. Participant number one stated, *"Not much, but they are okay."* Participant number two stated, *"A decent amount, enough."* Participant number four stated, *"I didn't, and I saw them do things against the company's SOBs."*

7.   What values in your civilian workplace are similar or different from your military values?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research, question participants discuss themes such as respect, integrity, diversity, inclusive, efficiency, ethical, disorganization, no common goal, and having nothing in common. Only two participants pointed out the difference in values between their civilian workplace and military values, and these were money, no common goal, and disorganization.

According to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), military veterans have immutable and mutable traits. The mutable traits extend beyond characteristics such as education, beliefs, and ethics, and the immutable traits are the ones not capable of change. According to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), military service is rooted in requiring the person to move from their immutable attributes to mutable traits that will influence their self-concept and personal values.

Ethics. The participant that did not find any difference was participant number two; they stated, *"I find my current job much more ethical than in the military. What I do involves a team, but everyone on the civilian side is much more competent than people I worked with in the military."* Participant number five expressed that their civilian workplace is *"Similar, the company pushes being ethical, doing the right things, they are diverse and inclusive. Completely against discrimination. What they lack is expectations; they let people get away with too much; in the military, you would be in a lot of shit if you behave the way some people do. As long as they get paid, they don't give a shit."*

Similarities. Participant number three did not express any similarities in personal values with the civilian workplace, and they stated, *"None, nothing, Everyone was on their own."* For participant number nine, the values between military and civilian workplace are similar, *"They are the same, there is loyalty, a sense of duty, respect, and it is a selfless service job."*

Efficiency. Participant three was similar to participant number one, who expressed that their workplace is *"disorganized, nobody knows what to do, everybody does whatever they think is right."* For participant number four, their civilian workplace is *"A lot different, civilian it comes down to money; there is no real common goal. Marines, we have a common goal, and everyone understood that. There was no room for individualism."* Participant number six expressed that their civilian workplace emphasized *"efficiency"* in a different way from the

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military. They stated, *"The civilian workplace emphasizes efficiency to sell as much product as possible. The military also emphasized efficiency but for different reasons."*

Table 1: RQ1 Themes

Questions	Themes
Question 1: Do you perceive your workplace to be inclusive towards military veterans as being *"military friendly"?*	Military friendly and Inclusiveness
Question 2: How long did it take you to get acclimated (adjusted) to your civilian employment?	Not long, college
Question 3: How similar is your current employment to your military job?	Similar, not similar, in charge of people, type of employees motivation
Question 4: What personal professional skills do you utilize in the workplace that are similar to your military professional skills?	Teamwork, communication, public speaking, leadership, ethics, discipline, patience, first aide, loyalty
Question 5: How well do you understand the chain of command in your workplace?	Clarity
Question 6: How much do you trust your organization's leadership?	Political, enough trust
Question 7: What values in your civilian workplace are similar or different from your military values?	Respect, integrity, diversity, inclusiveness, efficiency, ethical, disorganization, efficiency, no common goals, similarities

Research question two

Research question two is how military veterans perceive their leaders and coworkers understanding their military veteran status. McNichols and Anderson (2020) expressed that during the hiring process, two questions are raised. These questions are what type of military veteran the employer is looking for and why the military veteran was hired are raised.

Antidiscrimination laws and government initiatives to hire military veterans exist, but how much do non-military employers understand military veterans' background is still a question.

The data from these questions will be divided into two categories as described in group two of figure four (chapter three), stereotypes/prejudice and inclusiveness/diversity/belonging. There are seven interview questions for RQ2, and the answers given by the participants are summarized here. The themes for this RQ2 were group based on the group one categories.

1.   Did you disclose your military veteran background in your workplace?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, participants discuss themes such as disclosing their military background in their resume, disclosing it for the company's tax break, not disclosing it initially, and for employee benefits.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) mentioned in their research study that a military veteran will *"develop a group identity potentially more powerful than a racial identity if they perceived their racial identity a lower status than their veteran identity"* (p. 118). Military veterans should feel that they are more than a tax break for the organization; as mentioned by Liggans et al. (2018), they bring a unique set of values, experiences, and perspectives to the workplace. As Stone et al. (2018) mentioned, there are also illegal employment discrimination laws, where policies, disparate treatment, and stereotypes can affect applicants.

Resume. All participants stated that they did disclose their military veteran status in their civilian workplace. Participant number three stated, *"Yes, in the resume. [in the] Experience, knowledge, education [section]. I was offered a job that paid more. I was not for the money."* Participant number six stated, *"Not initially, but the management figured it out pretty quickly based on my addressing them as sir or ma'am."*

Organization's tax break. Participant number four stated that they did it because of benefits for the organization, such as tax breaks; *"Yes. Because there was a tax break. Benefit for the company. Coworkers knew."*

Benefits. One participant, number seven, stated that they did it for job promotional purposes. *"On my CV, I list my military service that I send to all my prospective clients."* Participant number nine, who works for law enforcement, stated, *"Yes. There are benefits if you are a veteran, like two extra days of vacation, veterans day, and memorial day off. And there are three promotion points for when you take the sergeant test."*

2. How much do you feel your coworkers value your personal characteristics?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as either feeling and perceiving being valued in the workplace or not feeling and perceiving being valued. Some of the themes were the military veteran perceiving they are seen as different in a positive way, taking advantage of them, or not impacting their decision to stay in the job. Seven of the nine participants stated that they perceive their personal characteristics are valued in the workplace.

As mentioned in question seven of RQ1, military veterans have immutable and mutable traits. These traits include their personal and professional values, and some of these values are not capable of change and require the person to move from their immutable attributes to mutable traits that will influence their self-concept and personal values.

Professionalism. Participant number two stated, *"I think they appreciate it, but I didn't get the job because I'm a veteran. It doesn't change how they treat me."* Participant number five stated that *"They [organization] do because they see I'm different and I'm all about business, and*

I come to work and not mess around." Participant number eight did not perceive any differential treatment due to their personal characteristics. They stated, *"I think they do; I don't feel prejudice or stereotyped."* The two participants who answered they do not perceive their personal characteristics as valued were in the Army for 15 years and two years. One participant is 41 years old with a doctorate degree, and the other is 24 years old with an associate degree. Participant number three, with the doctoral degree, stated, *"They [staff] didn't. There is the military guy, all the comments, lot of prejudice and stereotype comments."* The participant with the associate degree, number six, stated: *"They [staff] didn't really value it all, expect that they knew they could get me to do a lot of the tougher tasks because I wouldn't say no. So in some ways, they could take advantage of me."* Participant seven perceived that their military values have no impact; they stated, *"Because I work alone, I don't think this applies, but when it comes to my clients, I think it doesn't impact their decision very much."*

3.   Do you consider yourself part of the organizational culture?

      Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. Participants answered yes or no for this research question and discussed themes such as enough or the workplace being political. The majority of the participants, five of them, expressed that they do not consider themselves part of the organizational culture. Three participants stated that they do, and one participant stated that they consider themselves part of the organizational culture "*enough.*"

      A way to include staff in the organization's culture and make them feel like they belong is what Liggans et al. (2018) mention as having an inclusive organization. Inclusion eliminates obstacles that prevent staff from participating and contributing to the organization. Inclusion is the degree to which the employee feels accepted and perceives being esteemed in the workplace.

Inclusion is the *"feeling of belonging, of fitting in, as well as of being valued for their unique characteristics"* (p. 140).

Political. Two participants, number four and number nine, described the organizational culture as *"politics."* Participant number three stated, *"No. They never took that into account."* Participant number four stated, *"I try to enforce a standard in the company; it was hard. A lot of politics, shitty things people did that I didn't care for."* Participant six expressed, *"No. I don't do politics to get ahead, and I don't beg for promotions or anything."*

Other themes. Participant number seven, who works as a freelancer, stated, *"No, and I think that has been one of the positives for me post-military. In my new role, I am able to relax the rigid structure of the military while maintaining a professional standard."* Participant number eight expressed only that his civilian employment is *"enough,"* similar to their previous military organizational culture.

4.   How committed and satisfied are you with your current workplace?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, the participants discuss themes such as not changing employment, liking the job, being committed or not committed, high satisfaction or low commitment; having committed; or quitting.

Liggans et al. (2019) stated that the human resource practices of selection, performance appraisal, compensation, and training and development would signal to the employee the organization is interested. This perception of interest towards the employee will lead to commitment, productivity, and reduced turnover.

Satisfaction and Commitment. The participants' answers to this question were based on their perceptions of job satisfaction and the benefits received. Participant number one stated, *"I*

like this job, I just recently started, so I'm not thinking of changing now.” Participant number two stated, *“Satisfaction is high, commitment is medium to low.”* Participant number three expressed being committed 100 percent, *“I was committed 100% another [job] pay more. I didn't care about the pay, the coworker's treatment, and the general manager's treatment. They make you feel less than them because of the military background.”* Participant number seven, who works as a freelance, stated, *“Completely. After years of many civilian jobs that weren't the right fit, I have finally found something that provides financially, allows me to work around my schedule, and isn't repetitive.”*

Resigning. Participant number six expressed, *“I'm committed as long as I'm there, but I'm ready to leave whenever. I'm not really satisfied. I feel like they do take advantage of me because of the way I am.”* For participant nine, the coworkers' treatment made them want to leave their work. Participant number nine stated, *“I feel pretty much committed, but not very. The culture is very different, and it's a lot more political than the military.”*

5.   Have you ever thought of leaving your current employment? If you have, why?

Due to the open-ended questions, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme could not be identified. For this research, question participants discuss different and unique themes such as having thoughts of leaving their employment. Some themes the participants gave were thoughts of leaving, contract employment, lack of support, returning to school or the Army, and not thinking of leaving due to benefits and being challenged professionally.

Only three of the participants expressed that they have thought of leaving their current employment. Two participants expressed occasional thoughts of leaving, saying *"sometimes"* they had the thoughts of quitting and expressing *"so far is okay."* For most participants, the decision to leave their employment was related to benefits, bad leadership/management, and seeking a professional change.

Liggans et al. (2019) relate employee commitment to human resources practices and the employee's perceptions of the Human Resource Department. Liggans et al. (2019) utilize Social Exchange theory and Social Identity theory to explain the impact and importance of giving, reciprocity, and group identification. When people feel they are offered something of value, they will reciprocate with something of value, such as employee benefits and commitment. Group identification provides self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Career change. Only one participant, number eight, expressed thoughts of returning to the Army, and another expressed thoughts of returning to school. Participant six expressed, *"Yes, I've thought about leaving to return to school."*

Benefits. Participant number two stated that they had thought of leaving their current civilian job; they stated*, "Oh yeah, definitely. I get paid pretty well doing what I do now, and I'm challenged, but if I left and get a new job, I'd probably get paid more doing a little bit less."* Participant five stated that they have not considered leaving their current employment, "Not because I'm challenged professionally or intellectually, but the paid/benefits are nice and *convenient [location]."*

Lack of support. Participant number four was planning to quit their employment due to a family emergency, *"and my boss had the gut to say, 'can you wait?' I took a week off, and they kept calling with issues when I was on vacation."* Participant number seven stated that they have

not thought of leaving their current civilian employment, but "*Not this job, but I had over a dozen jobs in the ten-year span post-military that I hated. There were tons of reasons, but most of it was poor management/leadership structure.*"

Contract job. For participant number three, their civilian employment was "*contract was on a yearly basis. I was going to continue; they hired military veterans because of tax breaks.*"

6.   Have you noticed differential treatment towards veterans in your workplace?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as coworkers not believing the person is a military veteran, being the only vet at the job, or having perceptions of being treated differently in the workplace.

Similar to question number five on RQ2, group identification is important for a positive perception of organizational treatment. Diversity and inclusion in the workplace also relate to perceptions of fair treatment in the workplace. Liggans et al. (2019) mention the Social Exchange theory as a way to explain the perception of an exchange relationship. When the employee percepts fair treatment from the leadership, the employee will develop trust and reciprocate with commitment and longevity.

No differential treatment. Three participants said they had not perceived any differential treatment at their workplace due to their military veteran status. Participant number one stated that their coworkers, "*They don't believe I'm a veteran. There is surprise when I tell them, or I will be notified last minute of an email sent to veterans because someone realizes, and they forward it to me.*" Participant number four stated that they did not see any differential treatment toward them as a military veteran in the workplace, but "*people saw that the military*

gave me good work ethics and saw something to promote. I was on time, motivated, I had a work ethic." Participant number nine, who is in law enforcement, stated, *"Not really. We make jokes between ourselves, veterans. We call each other names, and it is okay because we are used to it; it is our culture."*

Military Veteran Status. Only one participant, number three, expressed that they saw differential treatment in the workplace. The differential treatment came because of their military veteran status, not having a degree in education, and being younger. This participant also expressed experiencing stereotypes in comments from their coworkers. Participant number three stated that they were the only veteran in the workplace, which was a family business, and all their coworkers were teachers, *"Only veteran, teachers by trade, family business managerial. [participant was] Third in charge, I did not have an education background, and [I] was younger in age."* Participant number six stated that being the only veteran in the workplace opens the door for management to *"quite often, I'm used as the last emergency. If they can't get anyone to perform a certain task, they'll ask me because they know I'll do it."*

7.   Have you ever felt or perceived being treated unfairly based on your veteran status in the workplace?

For this interview question, participants did not express any specific perceptions of unfair treatment in the workplace based on their military status. Even though this was an open-ended questions and due to participants not being given examples or being guided on what to answer, the answers were short. For this research question, participants only gave yes or no answers. The majority of the participants, seven, answered that they did not perceive any unfair treatment based on their military veterans status in the workplace. These participants could not point out

the reasons for their perceptions. Two participants perceived unfair workplace treatment due to their medical background.

Medical background. Harold et al. (2016) use the Fairness Heuristics theory to explain fairness in the workplace. Harold et al. (2016) explain that when the person perceives positive fairness towards them, it signals that the organization can be trusted, and it is safe to create a relationship. This fairness perceptions come from outcomes, procedures, and workplace relationships. Participant number four stated that they did not perceive unfair treatment based on their military veteran status but perceived differential treatment due to their medical background. They stated, *"Not on my military status, because of medical background."* Participants number one, two, five, seven, eight, and nine expressed no perception of differential treatment and could not give an example.

Military veteran status. Harold et al. (2016) stated that when unfair treatment is perceived, it leads to a decline in job offers, resentment, and concern from the employee. Unfair treatment during the recruitment period gives the prospective employee the perception of poor treatment in the workplace. Participant number six stated that they perceived differential treatment *"All the time. Just as an example, if they [management] need someone to go to a different store to pick something up, they will send me because 'the soldier doesn't mind walking."* Only two participants, six and four, expressed differential treatment related to their medical background, which is related to their military injuries.

Table 2: RQ2 Themes

Questions	Themes
RQ1: Did you disclose your military veteran background in your workplace?	Resume, organization's tax break, employee benefits
RQ2: How much do you feel your coworkers value your personal characteristics?	Professionalism
RQ3: Do you consider yourself part of the organizational culture?	Enough, political
RQ4: How committed and satisfied are you with your current workplace?	satisfaction, commitment, political, resignation
RQ5: Have you ever thought of leaving your current employment? If you have, why?	Lack of support, career change, benefits, contract job
RQ6: Have you noticed differential treatment towards veterans in your workplace?	Military veteran status, no differential treatment
RQ7: Have you ever felt or perceived being treated unfairly based on your veteran status in the workplace?	Medical background, military veteran status

Research question three

Research question three is what factors in the civilian workplace make military veterans trust their leaders and coworkers? Hassan (2012) relates fair treatment in the workplace as a way to improve and have trust in management. Liggans et al. (2019) relate "trust" in the workplace to diversity and inclusion. Together they bring commitment from the military veteran to the organization. Liggans et al. (2019) found in their research study that *"favorable perceptions of organizational inclusion have a strong positive influence on the trust in leadership held by employees"* (p. 429).

The data for this research question will be divided into two factors for group three, values, perceived trust, and intersectionality (figure four in chapter three). There are seven

interview questions for research question number two. The seven interview questions and the answers given by the participants are summarized here. The themes for this RQ2 were grouped based on the group one categories.

1.   Did you perceive any barriers when getting hired, during the interview, or after being hired?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, themes include no call back from the company, the company wanting someone more grounded, and relearning how to communicate. Most participants expressed that they did not perceive any barriers at the time of hiring, during the interview process, or after.

Barriers mentioned by the participants during this research study were varied. According to Keeling et al. (2018), skills transferability is a barrier military veterans face when seeking employment. Other barriers are mental and physical health, organizational and societal barriers such as the military veterans' perception of starting over in the civilian workplace, and personal barriers such as camaraderie in the workplace and cultural dissonance.

No barriers. Participant number two expressed that they did not perceive any barriers, *"No, not for this job. It hasn't happened in my experience."* In total, five of the nine participants expressed that they did not perceive any barriers at the time of the interview, hiring, and after being hired.

No callback. One participant, number three, had a different experience. They stated, *"Couple of interviews before this job, they [interviewer] will say call you back and never ball back."*

Military veteran background. Participant number five expressed perceived barriers due to their military veteran background. They stated, *"The only thing I was concerned about was because I have a military veteran background; maybe they wanted someone more rounded, with a civilian and military background."* One participant, number six, did not disclose their military veteran background during the hiring process. They stated, *"I thought it would be wise to hide that I was a veteran until after I was hired."*

Skills. Participant number seven expressed that a barrier they perceived is related to communication. The participant stated, *"One of the biggest was learning how to communicate with civilian bosses and coworkers. Many times I was seen as being too direct."*

2.   Do you feel your organization respects diversity and inclusion?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. Participants discussed themes such as a multicultural workplace and being the only military veteran in the workplace. All nine participants stated that they perceived their organization as diverse and inclusive towards military veterans and others. None of the participants expressed any barriers or prejudices towards diversity and inclusion.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) stated that diversity management includes having a culturally diverse workplace, among other things such as training, structure, and shared values. Diversity management will bring *"different outcomes among employees, which makes program success difficult to measure"* (Vanderschuere & Birdsall, 2019, p. 119). One thing to remember is that, according to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), diversity management will only increase job satisfaction for minorities in the workplace and not all employees.

Cultural diversity. Participant number three stated, *"They [organization] did that [be diverse], we had students that were LGBTS and different cultural backgrounds. Owners were*

from Pakistan." Participant number six stated, *"They have hired an enormous amount of African Americans and homosexuals. About 50 percent of the staff are homosexuals, so I think they are pretty big with that [diversity]. I'm the only veteran."* The participant who works as a freelance, number seven, stated, "*I work with and for a diverse client base, and I try to be inclusive of everyone."*

3.   How would you describe your perception of trust in your workplace?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. Participants discussed themes such as having an "open door" policy, "kiss-ass" coworkers, and trust for this research question. The majority of the participants answered that they do trust their coworkers and leadership in the workplace. Contradicting some participants who use the word *"politics or political"* to describe their workplace policies and behaviors. As mentioned in question number six of RQ2, according to Liggans et al. (2019), commitment and trust need to be present in the workplace to maximize employee contributions.

"Open door" policy. Only participant two expressed trust towards their supervisor. They stated, *"The chief compliance offer workers like five feet away from me, so anytime there's any sort of legal or ethical question I have, she's more than happy to let me know what I should or should not do."*

"Kiss ass" (political). Participant three described their workplace as *"Honestly, cutthroat business and kiss ass."*

Trust. Participant five said, *"We have very good people [coworkers], and we have people that I would not trust them with many assignments. It is just because of who they are; the others are pretty solid."* Participant number six expressed untrust with management and leadership. They stated, *"The management doesn't really trust lower employees at all. In fact,*

there's so much precaution preventing us from stealing and robbing from them." Participant number eight expressed, *"I trust them; the place is very political, though."*

4.   Do you feel the organization values your skills, experiences, and qualities?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. Participants discussed themes such as yes or no, forgetting their skills, and being valued enough. The majority of the participants, six, expressed that the organization values their skills, experiences, and qualities. One of the participants stated that their skills, experiences, and qualities are valued enough, and another stated that the school's children valued their skills, experiences, and qualities, but the staff did not. Only two participants answered no to this question; they did not give a reason for their perception of not being valued in the organization.

Tao and Campbell (2019) stated that a person's experience in a particular sector would affect their perception of workplace attributes when they enter a new and different sector. Also, Tao and Campbell (2019) expressed that the person's military training is *"non-trivial and long-lasting, engendering deeply ingrained transformations of 'self-image and identity'"*(p. 4).

Valued. Participant number three expressed mixed perceptions towards their skills, experiences, and qualities being valued in the organization they stated, *"Children did, staff no. They [children] called me coach; kids talk about the military and show interest. Staff was not happy when recruiters came to the school."*

Skills. Participant six stated, *"No, not at all. I would even call it the opposite. They want me to forget my past skills and experiences."* Participant eight expressed that their skills, experiences, and qualities are *"valued enough"* at his workplace. The participant who works as a freelance stated, *"I think my clients value my perspective and work. I have a certain level of skill*

as a writer, but I think one of my strongest talents is being able to listen and discern what my

client is truly looking for."

5.   Have you perceived any challenges in your workplace?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as no, knowing what employer wants/needs, prejudice and stereotypes, political and favoritism, learning new things, and adapting. The majority of the participants mentioned some typed of challenges they have faced in the workplace. Only three participants stated that they did not experience or perceive any challenges in the workplace.

Blank (2019) stated that a difficulty human resource personnel finds is the struggle in relating to and understating the military veterans' professional talents. According to Spector (1997), other challenges that affect the employee's job satisfaction are the coworker's attitudes, the physical environment in the workplace, supervision, pay rate, and promotion opportunities.

Needs. Participant three expressed that their challenge was supervisors not giving them a proper lunch break. *"They didn't let me eat lunch and sent me to watch the kids during lunch break."*

Politics or favoritism. For participant number four, the challenge was politics, favoritism, and lack of communication. They stated, *"In the Marines, there was no politics, in civilian [workplace] there was favoritism, no open discussions, communication, in the Marines when there is an issue we talked about it."*

Learning new skills. For participant number five, the challenge was *"Learning the new terminology, acronyms, the rules, the way they do things, adapting to a whole new experience. People would talk, and I would take maybe like 20 percent of what they said. No onboarding,*

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one-hour orientation from HR administrative shit, and shadow a person, and go figure it out." Participant seven stated that their challenge was interpersonal skills, *"My biggest challenges post-military work has been interpersonal skills with my civilian colleagues. They don't understand the shorthand veterans have. It can come off gruff, indelicate, and in some cases, rude. While never realizing I was being offensive."*

Prejudice or stereotyping. For participant number six, the challenge was related to physical challenges due to their medical and physical illness background. They stated, *"Some of the physical tasks are very tough for me because I have a really bad back. Yet, they are not really interested in my back pain."*

6.   Do you identify more as part of the organization's ingroup or the military veteran's outgroup, if there is one?

This question was not based on the participants' perceptions; this question was created to understand the participants' group association and identity in the workplace. Even though this was an open-ended question, participants were expected to answer whether they saw themselves as part of the outgroup (military veterans) or the ingroup (civilian coworkers). For this research question, the majority of the participants answered outgroup.

Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) stated that the military veteran identity is an example of the person developing a set of beliefs based on a common experience, and this categorization can create a *"us"* and *"them"* mentality. Liggans et al. (2018) also mention Social Identity Theory as a group membership identity, and this group membership is important to developing self-concept and a sense of belonging. Another thing that affects group cohesion is what Kranke et al. (2019) mention as differentness and sameness. The concept of differentness explains having different attributes from the general population, and sameness is sharing experiences,

qualities, and attributes with others.

Outgroup. Out of the nine participants, eight identified first as part of the outgroup of military veterans, and only one participant identified as part of the ingroup. Participants identified as part of the outgroup were participants one and three to nine. Participant number one was in the Air Force for five years and had a bachelor's degree. Participant number three stated, *"Military veterans, I was the outsider. They made it clear that I was the outsider."* Participant number six stated, *"I definitely identify as a veteran, first and foremost, about being a member of the organization."* Participant seven, who works as a freelancer, stated, *"In the companies that had other veterans working there, I always tended to become closer with that sub-group than any other coworker."*

Ingroup. Participant two, who was in the Navy for two years and had a bachelor's degree, stated, *"A part of the organization."*

7.   Do you spend time with your coworkers outside of work?

Due to the questions being open-ended, the answers were varied and different; a specific theme was not able to be identified. For this research question, participants discussed themes such as no, going out for drinks, watching MMA fights, not being invited, or sometimes going out.

This question was created to understand the self-identification of the military veteran; if they still identify with the ingroup or outgroup and if they still spend time with outsiders of their group. As mentioned by Liggans et al. (2018), diversity inclusion includes how much the military veteran accepts others as an insider to their group. The military veteran spending time with coworkers can signal how diverse and inclusive the organization is.

Socializing. All participants stated that they do not spend time outside of work with their coworkers. Some of them stated "sometimes," "now and then," or "not at all." The reasons for this were because they were not invited, didn't have anything in common, or as participant number nine stated, *"No, I'm a family man now."* Participant two stated, *"Every now and then, we'll go get a drink or something like that."* Participant three stated, *"I wasn't invited, they went to parties and dinner, and I wasn't invited. When I raised the concern, they gave me tickets to Halloween Night."* Participant number six is the participant who spends time outside work with nonmilitary veteran coworkers. They stated, *"I used to bet a lot of money on MMA fights, and for some of the bigger money bets, a group of coworkers would come to my house to watch the fight. Other than that, not really."*

Table 3: RQ3 Themes

Questions	Themes
RQ1: Did you perceive any barriers when getting hired, during the interview, or after being hired?	No callback, military veteran status, new skills, no barriers
RQ2: Do you feel your organization respects diversity and inclusion?	Cultural diversity
RQ3: How would you describe your perception of trust in your workplace?	"Open door," "kiss ass" (political), trust
RQ4: Do you feel the organization values your skills, experiences, and qualities?	Valued, forget skills, enough
RQ5: Have you perceived any challenges in your workplace?	Clear needs, prejudice or stereotype, political and favoritism, learning new skills
RQ6: Do you identify more as part of the organization's ingroup or the military veteran's outgroup, if there is one?	Outgroup
RQ7: Do you spend time with your coworkers outside of work?	Socializing

Chapter 5: Discussion

This dissertation research study aims to draw attention to the effects of decision-making in the workplace. As mentioned by Stone et al. (2018), when decisions are made fast, stereotypes are created. These stereotypes will affect the perceptions of the future military veteran employee in their workplace. The military veteran's perceptions will affect their productivity and relationships in the organization. Because employment is connected to the persons' life outside of work, their perceptions of the workplace will also impact their personal lives and finances. The military veteran's overall professional wellness intersects with the military veteran's personal life, health, and personal life's purpose.

The main research question for this dissertation research study is how do military identity and prior military experience intersect with military veterans' perceptions of job fit and satisfaction in their civilian workplace? This research question was divided into three questions to allow us to understand the military veteran's perceptions of workplace job satisfaction and what factors influence this. RQ1 is how do post 9/11 military veterans enlisted in the active military service perceive job satisfaction in their civilian employment?; RQ2 is how do military veterans perceive their leaders and coworkers understanding their military veteran status?; and RQ3 is what factors in the civilian workplace make military veterans trust their leaders and coworkers?

The methodology for this research was based on a sample of nine military veterans from the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force branches between the ages of 18 and 55. The participants filled out a demographic questionnaire and identified as males or females with different military MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) job backgrounds. After the demographic questionnaire, an interview with 21 questions was conducted over the phone with

the participants. The research questions were developed this way because there is a need in the literature to understand the military veterans' perceptions and how these perceptions affect them in the civilian workplace. Shepherd et al. (2020) stated that there is a need to understand the environmental and personal factors that affect military veterans' civilian employment. How they deal with being stereotyped and prejudiced, and how these and other factors affect them in the workplace. Also, what abilities and skills they use to feel they belong and how the military veterans face the issues of belonging and being valued in the workplace. The researcher developed the interview questions based on the literature gaps and literature review to understand the military veteran's perceptions of job satisfaction and what other factors are part of job satisfaction.

Research findings

The findings for this research study are based mostly on male participants' views and opinions since they were the majority of the participants. All the participants had a graduate degree, with the majority having less than five years of service in the military. The results are based on participants ages 29 to 39, with a rank of E4, and being Army veterans.

Purpose of research

This research study aimed to understand what factors affect the perception of job satisfaction in military veterans with civilian employment. For this research, three questions were created based on the literature and the importance of the topic. The RQ1 was how do post 9/11 military veterans enlisted in the active military service perceive job satisfaction in their civilian employment? This question was expected to help understand the military veterans' difficulties in adjusting to civilian employment after their military service and their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their civilian jobs. According to Hirudayaraj and Clay (2019), assessing and

understanding the military veterans' perceptions and experiences in the civilian workplace is important. Not only for the human resources department to retain employees and have higher employee satisfaction but also for the military veterans' overall well-being in the workplace and personal life.

The military veterans' job satisfaction will be affected by job-related, personal characteristics, and job fit, which will impact their performance, retention, motivation, and satisfaction. Many factors play a part in understanding the military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction in their civilian workplace. The micro, meso, and macro levels that are a part of the military veterans' life intersect. Most participants expressed being satisfied with their civilian employment and not taking them long to get acclimated to civilian employment. However, most of the participants expressed having thoughts of leaving their job. The only factors mentioned by the majority of the participants were the factors of differential treatment and perceptions of untrust in the workplace. This tells us that other factors might intersect and affect job satisfaction that were not mentioned in the interview.

Factors, data analysis, and results for RQ1

The factors and data gathered for RQ1 are summarized in group number one of satisfaction and skill matching. During the interview process, the answers to RQ1 were varied. Most participants perceive their employment to be inclusive towards military veterans, making them feel satisfied with their employment. The three participants that expressed perceptions of their employment not being inclusive towards military veterans also expressed having no satisfaction with their current employment.

The data analysis suggests that the perception of inclusiveness toward military veterans is connected and relates to job satisfaction. The research gap on what factors contribute to work

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satisfaction struggles and longevity among military veterans in the civilian workplace must be researched exclusively (Harrod et al., 2017; Kukla, Bonfils, et al., 2015; Kukla, Rattray, et al., 2015; MacLean et al., 2018). More attention must be paid to the military veterans' job experience. When it comes to skills matching and job fit, most of the participants, six of the nine, expressed that their current employment is not similar to their previous military job. Only one participant, number four, stated that it is similar because they are in charge of people but different because the motivation of subordinates in the civilian employment is different from the military. This participant was counted as not having a similar civilian employment as his previous military employment. This participant stated his civilian employment is *"very different"* from his job in the Marines. This could be connected to what Shepherd et al. (2020) mentioned: that the military culture is ruled by professional *"values, norms, and practices,"* which might be missing at this participant's civilian workplace. For participant number four, the norms and values are the missing link; they stated, *"People have different ways of thinking, Marines were about teamwork…civilian people do not care about the team."*

Five participants who did not have a similar civilian employment to their military employment expressed satisfaction with their civilian employment. The other three participants expressed that their civilian employment is similar to their military employment, and all three expressed satisfaction with their civilian employment. All nine participants gave different answers for their previous military job skills matching their current civilian employment. The participants that expressed satisfaction with their civilian employment and similarities between civilian and military jobs expressed different skills matching both employments. Some of the skills were first aid knowledge, teamwork, and as participant number five stated, "*technical skills, the logistics in the military I learned in the Army translate to the job now. The leadership*

skills (got a promotion), organizational skills, work ethics and get the job done and the job done right the first time."

For the participants who expressed no similarities between military and civilian employment and were also satisfied, the skills matching was also varied and different. The skills mentioned were discipline, adjustment to things changing, communication, working with people of different backgrounds, professionalism, loyalty, and patience. Only one participant, number three, who has a civilian employment not similar to his military job and is committed to the job, did not mention any professional skills they learned in the military that they used in their civilian job. Participant seven, with similar military and civilian jobs, is satisfied with his employment and stated that the professional skills they utilize in the workplace are similar. They stated, *"without a doubt, the military helped me with discipline, punctuality, and adjusting to things changing on short notice."* This participant's statement reflects what Gonzalez and Simpson (2020) expressed: military veterans come from a job environment where teamwork, persistence, leadership, meaningful work, dedication, and a sense of duty are part of their job environment. They keep these values in their civilian workplace.

The data analysis suggests that being satisfied with their civilian employment does not relate to skills matching. The majority of the participants, six of the nine, expressed that it did not took long for them to get adjusted to their civilian life. Only three participants stated that it took them long to get adjusted to civilian life. Participant number six stated, *"To a certain extent, a few months. But realistically, never."* Of these six participants, four expressed not having a similar civilian employment to their military job and being satisfied with their civilian job. Getting acclimated to civilian life might play a factor in job satisfaction. Participant number four stated, *"I don't think I got fully acclimated. Not even after college. Not even now."*

These results suggest that other factors might play a part in military veterans' civilian job satisfaction. These factors might be as unique as the military veterans' perceptions, needs, and expectations. Shepherd et al. (2020) mentioned that the workplace challenges the military veterans face will affect their job satisfaction. These challenges are a clash between civilian workplace culture and military workplace culture. According to the data from this research study, military veterans' job satisfaction with their civilian employment is not related to difficulty adjusting to civilian life. According to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), military veterans in the civilian work environment have lower job satisfaction due to organizational fairness and diversity management perceptions. Organizational fairness and job satisfaction will be discussed in RQ2. It has been determined that job satisfaction does not relate to civilian life reintegration but to military and civilian job similarities or job fit.

Research, data analysis, and results for RQ2

RQ2 is how military veterans perceive their leaders and coworkers understanding their military veteran status. It was expected that military veterans in a civilian job would be less satisfied with their employment when there is a perceived stereotyping, lack of trust in leadership, and lack of diversity and inclusive policies in the organization. Understanding military veterans as an employee are important for the success of the organization and the employees; it ensures retention.

Jennrich and Kowalski-Braun (2014) mentioned that employers need to understand and not assume the identity of their employees, the combination of the military veteran employee cultural backgrounds intersect with other factors, and there is no limit to the employees' background identities and how these intersect. Human resource employees need to keep in mind that the micro-level (personal perceptions and characteristics) of the employee intersects with the

meso (workplace performance, perceptions, and satisfaction) and macro levels (stereotypes and prejudice) of the employee's life. As shown in the conceptual framework, the military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction will be affected by the veterans' skills, personal characteristics, and job fit; these in part will impact the military veteran's performance, retention, motivation, and job satisfaction.

For this question, the data gathered will be divided, as mentioned in group two, under the factors of stereotypes, prejudice, inclusiveness, diversity, and feelings of belonging. It is hoped that these factors help explain how they affect the military veterans' job satisfaction in their civilian workplace. Redmond et al. (2015) stated that when stereotypes are created, the military veteran will perceive mistrust due to their differences being ignored. All participants stated that they disclosed that they are military veterans in their civilian employment. The disclosure was for different reasons; in the resume, for organizational tax purposes, or for employee benefits, as participant number nine mentioned, *"Yes. There are benefits if you are a veteran. Like two extra days of vacation, Veterans Day and Memorial Day off, there are three promotion points for when you take the sergeant test."* This participant has civilian employment similar to his military job, and he is satisfied with his civilian job.

According to Stone et al. (2018), a way job satisfaction of the military veteran is affected is when the leadership and management in the organization know or perceive them as military veterans. In this case, the organization's leadership considered the military veteran's background and offered employment benefits that allowed the military veteran employee to be satisfied with their employment. The educational background did not play a role in the military veterans' perceptions of job satisfaction, or their characteristics being valued in the workplace. Seven

participants had a bachelor's degree, and six expressed perceptions of their professional skills being valued in the workplace.

The data analysis stated that most of the participants, seven of the nine, perceived that their civilian workplace coworkers do value the military veterans' characteristics and who they are as a person. Only two participants stated that their coworkers do not value them as military veterans. Participant five, who perceived their coworkers value their characteristics, stated, "*They do because they see I'm different and I'm all about business, and I come to work and do not mess around.*" This participant had a similar civilian employment to their military job. This statement differs from participant three, whose perception of coworkers is that they did not value their characteristics; "*They didn't. There is the military guy, all the comments, lot of prejudice and stereotype comments.*" This participant, number three, did not have military-civilian job similarities, but he did express being committed to the job. When understanding the employee's military veteran background, differential treatment does not intersect. The majority of the participants, five, stated that they do not perceive any differential treatment. Opposite to what Shepherd et al. (2020) stated, being a military veteran will affect the person's social daily life functioning, attempts to succeed, and adjust to their jobs.

Six participants expressed that it did not take them long to adjust to their civilian employment. According to this, being treated as any other employee and with fairness in the workplace helps lower the time it gets the military veteran to adjust and acclimate to their civilian job. Participant number four expressed that they did not perceive any differential treatment in the workplace, "*people saw that the military gave me good work ethics and saw something to promote. I was on time, motivated, and I had a work ethic.*" Participant six, who had civilian employment different from their military job and was committed to it, expressed that

they perceived differential treatment. This participant stated, "*I'm the only veteran employee, and quite often, I'm used as the last emergency. If they can't get anyone to perform a certain task, they'll ask me because they know I'll do it.*" This participant was counted as one who did not take long to get acclimated since they stated, *"To a certain extent, a few months, but realistically, never."*

When it comes to the perceptions of being treated unfairly due to their military background, seven participants stated that they do not perceive unfair treatment in the workplace due to their military veteran status. Participant number seven, who does not have a job similar to his military job and is satisfied with his civilian employment, expressed some differential treatment but was not treated unfairly. For this participant, differential treatment is based on whether clients are looking for someone with a military veteran background. In contrast, others don't, but this does not affect his perception of unfair treatment by his clients. Stone et al. (2018) stated that understanding the life challenges and work policies, microaggressions, discrimination, workplace culture, and stereotyping that happens in the workplace can help understand the employees' job perception. Understanding life challenges supports participant number six's statement, who expressed perceiving unfair treatment. They stated, *" the time. They won't ask me, despite having bad knees, a back, etc. They'll just tell me."*

The data analysis suggests that perceived differential and unfair treatment (lack of understanding) do not affect job satisfaction. Since job satisfaction for the participants was high and differential and unfair treatment were low. This finding is interesting because most participants are satisfied with their job, do not consider themselves part of the organization, perceive no differential treatment, and perceive no unfair treatment. They also did not perceive any stereotyping or prejudice and perceived the workplace as diverse. The answers were varied

and, on some occasions, contradictory. Still, it helped the researcher understand that the military veteran being satisfied with their employment does not necessarily mean they are committed to the job. This data analysis could also suggest that other personal factors might affect job satisfaction for military veterans. These demonstrate that military veterans with civilian employment are less satisfied with their jobs when they perceive stereotyping and lack of understanding. The findings align with what Stone et al. (2018) stated, which is that a lack of understanding of the military veteran culture might lead to discrimination, or in this case, differential treatment, but not to stereotyping or unfair treatment. Those stereotypes and microaggressions are perceptions others have of military veterans' similarities to that particular group and ignoring individual differences of the person.

Research, data analysis, and results for RQ3

RQ3: What factors in the civilian workplace make military veterans trust their leaders and coworkers? It was hypothesized that based on the Intersectionality theory; it would be expected that many factors will play a part in military veterans' civilian job satisfaction. For this question, the data gathered will be divided, as mentioned in group 3, under the factors of identity, perception of belonging, and intersectionality. These factors will depend on military veterans' job title/role, gender, ethnic background, military discharge type, combat experience, previous military job, military rank, and individual experiences. Trust in the workplace confides that the employee will do the job they were hired to do with all their characteristics and distinct personal and professional background. Liggans et al. (2019) mentioned that the perception of trust would signal to the military veteran that the organization's leadership is interested in them, allowing them to reciprocate in commitment, productivity, and reduced turnover.

Regarding the perception of trust, the data analysis identified that the majority, six participants, perceive trust in their workplace. The same number of participants said they perceived their professional skills, experiences, and qualities as valued in the workplace. Liggans et al. (2019) mentioned that the perception of trust in the workplace is important since it relates to work cohesion, understanding of life experiences, and the military veteran's different cultural and moral values. Participant number three is an example of a participant who did not perceive trust from their workplace leadership. This participant stated that his perception of trust in his workplace was *"cutthroat business. Kiss ass."* And as Liggans et al. (2019) stated, when military veteran perceives their leadership as treating them unfairly, they will not develop trust reciprocating in turnover and lack of commitment.

Participant number three expressed thoughts of leaving their employment, expressing that their employment was yearly; *"I was going to continue. They hired military veterans because of tax breaks."* Participant number three did not perceive trust in the workplace. Still, he expressed satisfaction with the job, perceived differential and unfair treatment, and a negative perception of his characteristics being valued by coworkers.

Different factors were mentioned for the participants who expressed trusting their workplace leadership. They expressed trust but also expressed things such as *"they are okay,"* *"a decent amount, enough,"* *"enough. It's very political, there is favoritism,"* and *"I trust them enough."* It could be concluded that trusting leadership in the workplace might be connected to other factors and personal characteristics of the military veteran. Eight participants identified as part of the outgroup, military veterans, and only one participant expressed that they first identified as part of the ingroup or part of the organization. Mitchell and Sawyer (2014) stated: that a person's identity would change as the person interacts with other aspects of life; as other

aspects intersect in the person's life, a new identity will be created. This participant was in the Navy for only two years; they expressed satisfaction with their civilian employment and spending time outside work with their coworkers. This participant has created a new identity as part of the workplace. Mitchell and Sawyer (2014) stated that the majority of the participants who identify first as part of the outgroup, as military veterans even when other aspects of their lives intersect, were not affirmed in this study. In this case, it could be concluded that other factors play a part in the military person's life to identify with the outgroup or ingroup.

Regarding other factors that intersect with job satisfaction, only one participant expressed her gender as a factor that affects her in the workplace. In this case, gender was the coworker's perception of her military veteran status. This participant expressed gender was a factor in feeling excluded in the workplace. Participant number one stated that in their workplace, due to her female gender, her coworkers "*don't believe I'm a veteran. There is surprise when I tell them, or I will be notified last minute of an email to veterans because someone realizes, and they forward it to me.*" No other veteran mentioned their sex/gender, ethnic background, religion, or any other personal characteristic as a factor for job satisfaction. For participant number one, she expressed being satisfied with her job, not taking long to adjust to a civilian job, perceiving that their coworkers valued her characteristics, and not being treated differently or unfairly.

The question of what personal characteristics, other than military veteran status, were not openly asked the participants. It was hoped that if any other factors were part of job satisfaction for the military veterans, they would independently mention them during the interview process. During the interview process, the researcher's perception was that what affects the military veteran participants' job satisfaction with their civilian employment is related to their personalities and their micro, meso, and macro-level connections. According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction relates to employment benefits, having an interesting job, employment security, and being satisfied with coworkers and supervisors. According to the data gathered, all participants mentioned some similar factors. The participants mentioned intersecting factors such as a "political" organization, acceptance of military veteran status, competence, disorganization, ethics, no common goals, and pay and benefits (Figure 5).

Data analysis

The data gathered suggests that all participants perceived their civilian workplace to respect diversity and inclusion regarding stereotyping, prejudice, and diversity in the workplace. Only one participant, number three, expressed perceptions of stereotypes and prejudice in their workplace. This participant stated, *"They did that (respect diversity and inclusion). We had students that were LGBTS and from different cultural backgrounds. Owners were from Pakistan."* Participant number three also expressed that their identity as military veterans made it clear that they were the outsider. This participant also expressed, *"I wasn't invited, they went to parties and dinner, and I wasn't invited. When I raised the concern, they give me a ticket to Halloween Night."* This statement relates to their perceptions of stereotypes and prejudice in their workplace.

Figure 12: Other factors
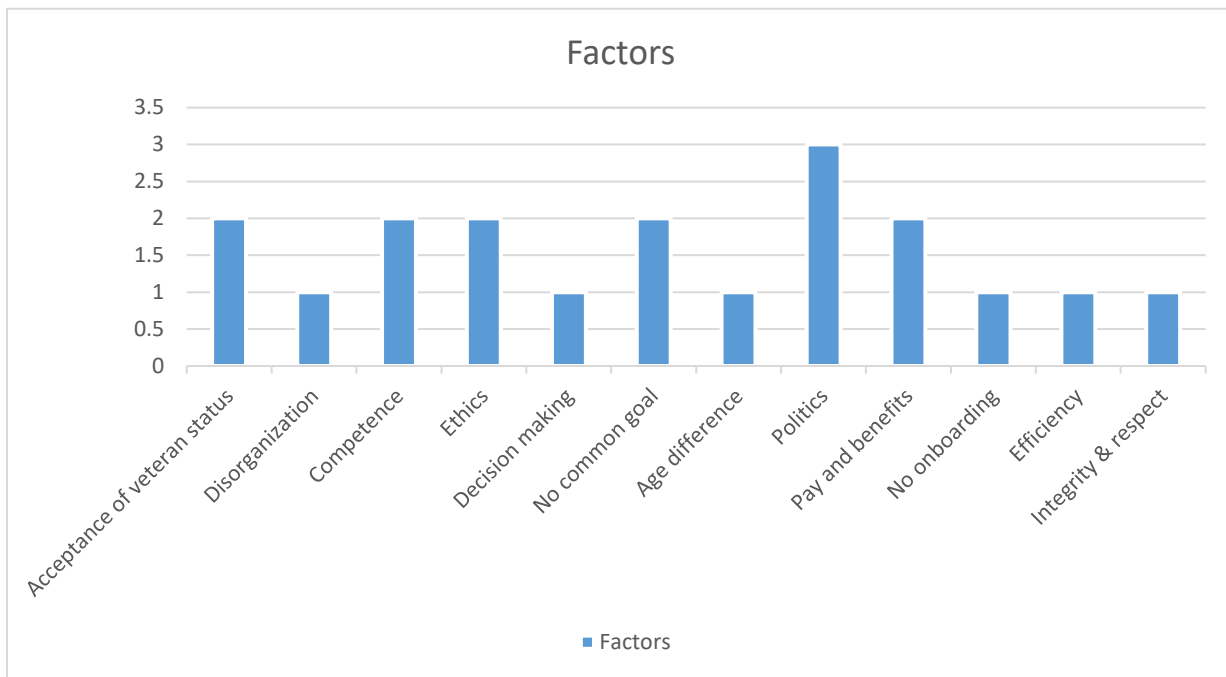
It could be argued from the data that all the factors mentioned in figure five intersect each other to affect the perceptions of job satisfaction for the military veteran. In the micro-level aspect of the military veteran, perceptions and personal characteristics connect and intersect to affect the meso level. The meso level aspects of the organization's trust, job fit, and opportunities, other than being connected and intersecting with the personal perceptions of the military veterans, connect with the macro level. This macro level is the society's stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice people create that affect the military veterans' job satisfaction and perceptions of the job.

Contribution

The data gathered (Appendix D) can contribute to the human resources and other departments in the workplace to understand and identify what factors need to be changed or improved in the organization. The data suggests that the perception of civilian job satisfaction is

as varied as the military veterans' unique perceptions. According to Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), high job satisfaction is connected to high perceptions of organizational fairness. For this research, high satisfaction in the job relates to fair treatment.

The data (Appendix D) also suggests what Stone et al. (2018) state, that in cognitively demanding workplaces, people rely on stereotypes, as expressed by participant number four's experience. In the case of participant number four and his experience with stereotypes and prejudice in the workplace, they were not satisfied with their job. Still, they did not perceive any differential or unfair treatment. Even though satisfaction with their civilian job was high, the thoughts of leaving their job were also high. For this research, varied factors are part of the reason why military veterans leave their employment.

In comparison with the Canadian study done by MacLean et al. (2018), where the majority of the participants expressed that their previous military job skills helped them with their civilian employment, in this research study, the majority of the participants, six, had different jobs from their military jobs. As expressed by participant number one, the professional skills that are similar to the military and civilian job are *"Teamwork, that is pretty much all of it,"* and for participant number three was none, *"it was one-on-one interactions."* For the MacLean et al. (2018) research, more than half of the participants expressed that their civilian job tasks were the same as their military job, which, according to the data gathered for this research study, was the opposite since six participants out of nine had different jobs from their military jobs.

Only three participants expressed similarities with their military and civilian jobs. These participants were number five, who worked at the time of the interview in administration, and participants eight and nine, who work in law enforcement. In the Canadian study, the factors that

affected job satisfaction had no work stress, performing the same tasks, utilizing the same skills, easy adjustment to civilian life, and satisfaction with finances. The data gathered (Appendix D) for this research study offered different factors such as pay and benefits, no onboarding process, the workplace being *"political,"* having no common goals, and acceptance of military veteran status. The data gathered demonstrates that many factors intersect and affect military veterans' civilian job satisfaction. These factors are depended on the military veterans' individual experiences and personal characteristics.

Table 4: Participant Summary

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	38	29	41	35	42	24	34	35	40
Ed. Degree	BA	BA	DR	BA	BA	AS	BA	BA	BA
Yrs. of service	5	2	15	4	22	2	3	10	10
Branch	AF	Navy	Army	Marines	Army	Army	Army	Army	Army
Military rank	E4	E3	E6	E4	E8	E4	E4	E6	E4
Deployment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Military Job	Linguist	Air Man	Cargo Specialist	Infantry	Logistics	Cav Scout	Patriot Missile Tech	Field Artillery	Mortar
Civilian Job	Finance	Finance	School Dean	Operations Manager	Logistics	Retail	Writer	Law enforcement	Law Enforcement
Job satisfaction	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjustment	Not Long	Not long	Not Long	Not Long	Long	Not long	Long	Not long	Not long
Personal characteristics valued	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Differential treatment	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Unfair treatment	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Part of org. culture	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Perception of trust	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prof. skills valued	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outgroup	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spend time with civilian coworkers outside work	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

Limitations

This research study was conducted by recruiting military veterans who are acquaintances of the researcher and following a snowball effect of recruiting other military veterans. The sample of participants was not demographic representative of military veterans since the sample was small, only nine participants were interviewed, and only two identified as females. All participants had civilian employment, and only one was self-employed as a freelance writer. The research data applies to military veterans who have civilian employment after their military service discharge or separation. The results of this research study do not apply to all military veterans in the United States since the participants in this study were from the north and southeast states of the United States.

The interviews with the participants were completed via phone, allowing the participants to have some kind of anonymity and freedom to talk. The participants in this study were not guided or given examples of expected answers during the interview process. For this reason, the answers the participants answered were short and lacked descriptions; it was expected that the participants would be sincere and express their first thoughts and opinions. This research study only focused on the military veterans' perceptions of a particular situation in the workplace, allowing for their personal opinions and views to be expressed. The researcher knows that personal perceptions and opinions are difficult to assess, acknowledge, and consider in the workplace.

Implications

The implications of this research study for human resource managers are to gain awareness of military veterans in the workplace and to increase job satisfaction and retention.

This research study also implies creating policies for hiring military veterans due to the ethical and personal values they bring from their military job experiences.

This research study contributes to the literature by providing a small sample of what military veterans expect in the workplace and informing nonmilitary human resource managers and leaders that stereotyping and prejudice towards military veterans are based on wrongful ideas and assumptions. As Stone et al. (2018) mentioned, military veterans tend to be seen differently from nonmilitary employees based on their group membership. Organizations should work on policies to reduce or eliminate workplace employment barriers for military veterans.

Future Research

It is hoped that future research attempts to replicate this study with a more diverse demographics of military veterans. Considering Intersectionality theory to understand the various aspects and factors that play a part in the military veterans' lives and how these affect their job satisfaction. Future research could also concentrate on one topic of perceived diversity, stereotype, trust, or values and how any of these affect the military veteran in the workplace. Similar research could also be performed in quantitative research, where particular attention is paid to a job satisfaction factor and how the military veteran perceives this based on the intersectionality of other characteristics and micro, meso, and macro levels intersect. As Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019) mentioned, the person's military veterans identity and other personal demographic characteristics will interact and affect their perceptions of job satisfaction.

Conclusions

Not enough literature and research have been done to understand the military veterans' perceptions of the civilian workplace once they are out of the military service. According to Hylton (2021), for the U.S. Department of Labor, around 5.6 percent of military veterans are a

part of the civilian workforce. This number could grow or lower, and the results are in the hands

of those in the leadership positions and human resources departments. According to the data

gathered for this research study, the number of participants who thought of quitting and leaving

their employment was high. Six out of nine expressed thoughts of leaving their job, compared

with eight participants who expressed satisfaction with their employment. It is argued from these

results that other personal characteristics and factors play a part in job satisfaction for military

veterans. Veterans come with ethical qualities embedded in their professional life that affect their

perceptions of job satisfaction based on whether they perceived them in their civilian workplace

or not. They also bring prior knowledge and skills that affect their job satisfaction when they

perceive a lack of trust and value in the civilian workplace.

Human resource managers and leaders in the civilian workplace must remember that many

factors will affect their employees, affecting their job satisfaction and perceptions of treatment.

When you add the factor of military veteran status, it adds an extra layer of important personal

characteristics to be recognized, respected and considered when hiring and working with military

veterans. People practice different ways of discrimination and prejudice on occasions without

realizing it, and these unfounded beliefs will serve some purpose that directly or indirectly will

affect the military veteran. Human resource managers and leaders should remember that

stereotyping and prejudice are a way of ignoring differences and unique characteristics in a

person. Diversity in the workplace strengthens the organization's competitiveness and allows for

equal employment opportunities.

Intersectionality theory will allow for what Meade (2020) and Tariq and Syed (2016)

stated, which is that understanding the person's various characteristics, identities, and

experiences in some ways can open the door for marginalization, prejudice, and stereotype based

on those characteristics, identities, and experiences. This research study hopes to allow human resource managers and leadership to avoid this and allow us to recognize the many factors that intersect in the lives of military veterans.

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Appendix A

Demographic questionnaire

These questions are designed to obtain demographic information. Please answer the questions with a detailed response in the line provided.

Nickname _____

1- Gender/sex_____

2- Age _____

3- Educational degree/s (choose the most recent Degree you have completed/graduated from)

o Professional certification_____

o Associates degree _____

o Bachelor's degree _____

o Master's degree _____

o Doctorate degree _____

o Other _____

4- How many years did you serve in the military? _____

5- What branch did you serve?

o Army _____

o Navy _____

o Marines _____

o Air Force _____

o Space Force _____

o Coast Guard_____

6- What was your MOS (Military Occupational Specialty)? Please specify the last MOS you had

before discharge/separation from the military

_____

7- What was your rank at time of discharge/separation from the military? _____

8- Were you deployed to a combat zone?

o Yes _____

o No _____

9- What is your current civilian employment position/job and title?

_____

10- For how long have you been working at your current employment, and what industry do you

work for? _____

Appendix B

Interview Questions

      Research question number 1

1. Do you perceive your workplace to be inclusive towards military veterans as being "military friendly"?

2. How long did it take you to get acclimated (adjusted) to your civilian employment?

3. How similar is your current employment to your military job?

4. What personal professional skills do you utilize in the workplace that are similar to your military professional skills?

5. How well do you understand the chain of command in your workplace?

6. How much do you trust your organization's leadership?

7. What values in your civilian workplace are similar or different from your military values?

      Research question number 2

1. Did you disclose your military veteran background in your workplace?

2. How much do you feel your coworkers value your personal characteristics?

3. Do you consider yourself part of the organizational culture?

4. How committed and satisfied are you with your current workplace?

5. Have you ever thought of leaving your current employment? If you have, why?

6. Have you noticed differential treatment towards veterans in your workplace?

7. Have you ever felt or perceived being treated unfairly based on your veteran status in the workplace?

Research question number 3

1. Did you perceive any barriers when getting hired, during the interview, or after being hired?

2. Do you feel your organization respects diversity and inclusion?

3. How would you describe your perception of trust in your workplace?

4. Do you feel the organization values your skills, experiences, and qualities?

5. Have you perceived any challenges in your workplace?

6. Do you identify more as part of the organization's ingroup or the military veteran's outgroup, if there is one?

7. Do you spend time with your coworkers outside of work?

Appendix C

Confidentiality agreement

I _____ (researcher's name) agree to keep all of the

information gathered for this research confidential and private.

- It is agreed to keep all information shared confidential and not discuss it with anyone other than

   the researcher and educational dissertation committee.

- Keep all information gathered from the phone interviews and questionnaire secure.

- No personally identifiable information will be gathered and shared publicly.

I understand my information will be kept private and confidential, and I voluntarily

agreed to participate in this research about military veteran job satisfaction.

_____   _____
Nickname   Date

_____   _____
 Researcher   Date