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Perspectives of Human Resource Personnel and Employees Hired as Military Veterans on Veterans' Hiring Processes

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Abstract

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MPhil, Walden University, 2019

MA, Monroe College, 2016

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Self-Design

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Abstract

Finding employment after transitioning out of the military is a formidable challenge faced by many veterans. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of human resource personnel (HRP) and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. The processes investigated in this case study included hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications. The target population comprised 16 participants, who were employees hired as military veterans and HRP of private organizations that had hired veterans at a rate of 25% or more. The conceptual framework of the study was person–organization fit theory. Data were collected from interviews with participants and then coded to identify the themes of veteran hiring process, assessment procedure, challenges for recruiters, challenges for veterans, commitment to hire veterans, contributing factors in firm selection, skill set translation, and transitioning phase. The social implications of this study revolve around veterans' employment challenges. The findings may provide HRP with opportunities to become more aware of hiring processes used successfully by other private organizations that hire veterans at a rate of 25% or more. As such, the study may stimulate positive social change by increasing the employment of veterans in private organizations.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator and savior, for his divine blessing throughout my doctoral journey. God has been the source of my strength and has blessed me with intelligence and perseverance. Also, I dedicate this work to my loving son, Jayden Johnson. You have made me stronger, better, and more fulfilled than I could have ever imagined. I hope the sacrifices you have endured for me to pursue this dream will be repaid to you with many opportunities for joy and success in your future. I love you, son.

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There are many who helped me on this journey. First, I wish to thank my dissertation committee. Without their guidance, I would not have made it. Dr. Barclay, my chair, went above and beyond to help me to reach my goal. Her words of encouragement and motivational speeches and quotes were invaluable. I would like to express my most profound appreciation to my committee member, Dr. Quarterman, and the URR, Dr. Hoon. Their insight and knowledge into the subject matter steered me through this research. I extend special thanks to my first committee chair, Dr. Mitchell. She provided me with the tools to choose the right direction and complete my dissertation.

To my parents and my son, Jayden, you put up with my being distracted and missing many events. I am forever grateful for your patience and understanding. I hope to have time now to reconnect with each of you. Finally, to Calvin, you kept me motivated and helped me through the dark times. Without your belief that I could complete this study, I never would have made it. It is time to celebrate because you earned this degree by staying right beside me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The military is one of the largest publicly funded organizations in the United States. Service members are employed to protect the United States against foreign or domestic threats and maintain U.S. national defense. The military offers more than 200 career fields. Although some service members choose to work in military-specific occupations such as those of infantry soldiers or fighter pilots, many service members work in professions similar to those in the private sector (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2020). The military offers service members educational and on-the-job training with equipment to develop and enhance technical and leadership skills. When veterans transition from the military to civilian life, they bring with them many skills that should make them attractive to private organizations; however, despite their skill sets and knowledge, many veterans face employment challenges (Stone & Stone, 2015).

Veterans continue to find it challenging to gain recognition in the civilian workforce of their military training, experience, and skills (Wright, 2015). Private employers have been hesitant to hire veterans because of the stereotypes associated with them, especially those who have served in such countries as Iraq and Afghanistan (Goldfarb, 2015). Gaining employment is one of the biggest challenges facing military veterans transitioning from active military service to civilian life (Corri et al., 2015; Gross, 2017; Minnis, 2017; Redmond et al., 2015). For every veteran who is hired in the private sector, another one struggles to find employment. Job searches can last an average of 22 weeks (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [DVA], 2015). In addition, veterans

who gain employment earn approximately 3% lower median earnings than civilian workers with similar demographics (U.S. DVA, 2015).

Veterans receive extensive training throughout their service careers that can make a significant contribution to their experiences and specialized skill sets; as such, they can be a source of talent for private organizations (Davis & Minnis, 2017). Although private organizations have become more diverse, some human resource personnel (HRP) still harbor misconceptions about veterans' skills. Some HRP in private organizations often fail to recognize that the military has skillful, knowledgeable, and productive employees and organizational decision makers. HRP perceptions of military culture often lead to veterans being considered unfit for vacant positions (Stone & Stone, 2015). The unfamiliarity of HRP with military service affects their ability to acknowledge veterans' military experience (Carter et al., 2017) and smooth the transition to civilian employment.

According to Stone and Stone (2015), HRP have little knowledge of the skills that military veterans bring from their military service and fail to acknowledge that veterans are a valuable resource for private organizations. These misunderstandings have contributed to HRP not implementing effective hiring processes to bring more veterans into the civilian workforce, thus contributing to veterans' inability to locate and secure employment after transitioning from the military. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans employment rate of 25% or more.

In Chapter 1, I explain the background, problem statement, and purpose of the study. I also explain the conceptual framework, concepts, and theory used to frame the study; nature of the study; and research question (RQ). The chapter also includes definitions of operational terms; assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study; and the significance of the study to practice and social change.

Background of the Study

Veterans are viewed as a minority group in the United States. After serving 90 days of active duty, service members earn the right to be called veterans. Regardless of separation, event, or duration of service, all service members eventually transition back to civilian life (Grimell, 2017). In 2018, it was estimated that 2.3 million military service members had separated from the U.S. military since September 11, 2011, with millions more expected to be added to these numbers by the end of 2020 (Vogt et al., 2018). While on active duty, military service members make great sacrifices. Although they deserve dignified treatment and respect once they have completed their military service, many military veterans find it frustrating to make a living because they experience civilian unemployment for lengthy periods (U.S. DVA, 2015).

The transition from military life to civilian life and employment has been described as challenging, complex, problematic, stressful, and ambiguous (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Bennett et al., 2015; Binks & Cambridge, 2018). In 2014, 10.5% of male veterans in the age range of 17 to 34 years were living in poverty, as were 7.4% in the age range of 35 to 54 years and 9.5% in the age range of 55 to 64 years (U.S. DVA, 2016). The U.S. DVA (2016) also found that more female veterans than male veterans

were living in poverty: 13.1% in the age range of 17 to 34 years, 8% in the age range of 35 to 54 years, and 10.2% in the age range of 55 to 64 years. Between 2017 and 2018, 5.4% of veterans experienced homelessness, with 23,300 living on the street (U.S. DVA, 2019). Compared to nonveterans in similar demographics, veterans have been found to be earning 3% lower median earnings (U.S. DVA, 2015).

As veterans transition from the military to the civilian workforce, finding employment remains a significant issue for them. The U.S. federal government has shown unwavering support to veterans by strategically providing the best chance for them to be successful after transitioning from the military. To increase veterans' employment opportunities, the U.S. Congress passed legislation offering incentives to private organizations to enhance their hiring rates of veterans (The White House, n.d.).

Lawmakers have recognized the need to implement programs to help veterans find employment in the civilian sector (Hall et al., 2014; Obama, 2016; Perez, 2015). For instance, in 2011, President Obama established and deployed a task force to assess and redesign the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD, n.d.) Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to address the unemployment faced by veterans after transitioning from the military (Faurer et al., 2014). TAP was implemented to help veterans to transition smoothly into civilian life and employment; however, veterans' high unemployment rate in the civilian sector has prompted questions and concerns about the program's effectiveness (Faurer et al., 2014). Lawmakers also have implemented programs such as tax incentives to make the employment of veterans more attractive to private organizations.

Veterans may have excellent supervisory and management skills because the military requires leaders to undergo leadership training. Veterans may have remarkable and distinctive skills and experiences, yet their skill sets remain mostly unknown by some HRP, who often view military experience and skills as foreign knowledge. Some HRP are less able to evaluate veterans' skills and knowledge, so they find it challenging to integrate veterans into the civilian employment sector successfully.

According to Davis and Minnis (2017), Minnis (2017), and Stone and Stone (2015), the perception of HRP that veterans are unfit for civilian positions, along with their lack of knowledge of military culture, military occupations, and veterans' skills, has diminished the ability of HRP to assess accurately the skills, training, and knowledge that veterans may bring to the civilian workforce. The aforementioned researchers also stated that HRP misconceptions of veterans negatively impact their ability to construct, adapt, and implement effective and workable processes to hire veterans, reducing veterans' opportunities to fill vacant positions.

Problem Statement

Approximately 5 million military service members are likely to transition from the military to the civilian workforce by the end of 2020 (Burnett-Zeigler et al., 2011; Stern, 2017). Veterans currently experience an unemployment rate of 3.8% (U.S. Department of Labor [DoL], 2020), a percentage that over the last decade has remained on average higher than the country's unemployment rate of 3.5% (BLS, 2020). The general problem is that many veterans encounter difficulties obtaining employment after transitioning from the military to civilian life (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Keeling et al.,

2015). Minnis (2014) and Tanner (2014) asserted that some HRP in the private sector have failed to capitalize on the opportunity to hire veterans with desirable character traits and knowledge that would be beneficial to their organizations.

The specific problem is that some HRP in private organizations find the process of hiring veterans immensely challenging (Carter et al., 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015; U.S. DVA, 2019a). The skills of veterans are still mostly unknown by decision makers in some private organizations, including HRP (Minnis, 2017). Harrell and Berglass (2012), as well as Stone and Stone (2015), argued that because of unfamiliarity with military service and culture, HRP in some private organizations tend to perceive veterans as unfit and unqualified to fill vacant positions. Because of civilians' general lack of knowledge about the military and the skill sets obtained by veterans, some HRP may be unable to evaluate, translate, and integrate veterans' skills into civilian organizations effectively (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Minnis, 2017). Davis and Minnis (2017) and Goldfarb (2015) asserted that these misunderstandings and negative perceptions of veterans' skills are some of the driving forces impacting veterans' ability to gain employment after transitioning from the military to civilian life.

According to Davis and Minnis (2017), Keeling et al. (2019), and Stone and Stone (2015), there has been limited research on employment and hiring processes affecting veterans. This ongoing social issue requires constructive recommendations to produce real solutions. Research is also needed to assess veterans already in the workplace. These veterans are a valuable source of information because they can speak about hiring processes from personal experience. The lack of research on potential solutions to

increase veterans' employment rates in private organizations has resulted in a gap in the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. The processes investigated in this case study included hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications. Private organizations with a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more were considered as having a high veteran employment rate. Employees hired as military veterans and HRP employed by the selected private organizations were the target population. HRP in the selected private organizations identified the hiring processes, including strategies, practices, and approaches that they had adopted and implemented over the years, contributing to the organizations' high veteran employment rate. Employed veterans shared their experience with the selected organizations' veteran hiring processes. Additional sources, including the selected private organizations' career sites and job postings, were reviewed to explore and analyze the hiring processes relevant to military veterans. The findings may provide insight into the effectiveness of these hiring processes to the selected organizations and how they contributed to a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more.

Research Question

The study was guided by one research question: What are the perspectives of HRP and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more?

Conceptual Framework

The concepts that drove the conceptual research framework were veterans' employment and the hiring processes of private organizations. Finding employment in private organizations is one of the most significant challenges for veterans because the skills that they acquired in the military are unknown to most HRP in the civilian sector (Minnis, 2017). Most military positions have corresponding positions in the civilian workforce, but despite skills and knowledge that should be useful after service transition, veterans encounter challenges in finding employment in the private sector (Minnis, 2017). The misunderstandings and misperceptions of HRP toward veterans' skills and military culture have contributed to challenges encountered by veterans when seeking employment and have impacted veterans' employment opportunities, including some private organizations' hiring processes (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Veterans have been viewed as being unqualified to fill civilian organizations' vacant positions (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

Two of the most critical elements in the development of effective hiring processes are identifying the perception of personnel fit and assessing applicants' skills (Cable & Judge, 1995). The most applicable theory to provide this qualitative study with an understanding of the identified concepts of veterans' employment and the hiring

processes was person–organization (P-O) fit theory. Developed by Schneider in 1987, the P-O fit theory has evolved in the field of management and has transitioned into HRP hiring processes. Teimouri et al. (2015) stated that the degree of congruence between organizations and employees, particularly in terms of behaviors and characteristics, can affect the workforce. According to Krisof (1996), one of the best outcomes of P-O fit theory is being able to identify the needs of organizations and what potential employees have to offer.

Proponents of P-O fit theory explain that the match between organizations and employee traits such as values and beliefs is so pervasive that it has an effect on HRP hiring processes and practices (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Chatman, 1991; Judge & Bretz, 1992). Researchers have suggested that the theory be used to assess the congruity among potential applicants and HRP hiring decisions (Chatman, 1989; Westerman & Cyr, 2004). To gain an in-depth understanding of and to better assess the norms relevant to organizations' hiring processes, applicants' attraction to organizations, and organizations' intent to hire, researchers have suggested that HRP use P-O fit theory as a hiring strategy (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Organizational decision makers generally use the interview process to assess applicants' overall fit for the organization.

P-O fit theory was used in the current study as a potential lens to identify the hiring processes used by HRP in finding a viable fit with veterans in their organizations and improving veterans' employment rate. Aligning P-O fit theory and the concepts of veterans' employment and the hiring process of veterans could give HRP a more in-depth understanding of how veterans fit into their organizations. It could also give HRP a

clearer understanding of the value of veterans' skills to organizations, thereby increasing veterans' employment rates and enhancing hiring processes.

Nature of the Study

I conducted a qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study. Researchers conduct qualitative studies to understand why individuals think and behave in particular ways (Barnham, 2015). Unlike quantitative studies that examine the relationships between or among independent and independent variables, qualitative research emphasizes the experiences and perspectives of the participants relevant to specific situations or occurrences (Kaczynski et al., 2014). According to Yin (2009), those who conduct qualitative case study research aim to obtain in-depth understanding of the behaviors of individuals or groups.

I considered phenomenological, ethnographic, and grounded theory approaches for this study, but I chose not to use them because the study's emphasis was not understanding the participants' lived experiences. Yin (2014) explained that researchers use a case study approach when investigating how individuals, groups, or organizations respond to social problems. In this study, I used a case study design to explore the hiring processes relevant to military veterans used by HRP in private organizations with veterans' employment rates of 25% or more. A qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was used to address the research problem to identify veteran hiring processes used by three private organizations with a high veteran employment rate. Understanding how HRP in private organizations have successfully hired veterans at a rate of 25% or more required a qualitative, exploratory, multiple case study design. Case study allows

researchers to connect their studies to the RQs and findings and to investigate convergence and divergence between cases (Yin, 2017).

The target population consisted of military veteran employees and HRP in private organizations that had hired veterans at a rate of 25% or more. Gog (2015) and Yin (2018) stated that a case study requires multiple sources of data to produce enough data for analysis. To gather valuable insight and information, I collected data from primary and secondary sources, including external documents, to improve the validity of the results and capture the participants' perspectives (Gog, 2015; Yin, 2018). The primary data were collected from 16 participants, namely HRP and veterans employed by the selected private organizations. I asked open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A) of the selected HRP and veterans presently employed by the organizations about their experiences, knowledge, and hiring processes. HRP and employed veterans from the selected organizations were selected through a voluntary process using LinkedIn.

I analyzed the responses to the open-ended interview questions and reviewed secondary sources to arrive at my findings. An analysis plan guided the collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation of the data. All interviews were recorded to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions and subsequent analysis.

I used NVivo to organize and transcribe the collected data accurately, and I coded the data manually to identify and organize the data to improve the reliability of the results. I used NVivo to obtain an array of categories and themes from the data collected during the interview process. The use of the software helped to add credibility to the study. I also used NVivo to automatically generate data. The primary purpose of this

decision was to add credibility to the study by introducing an unbiased method of generating themes from the data.

Operational Definitions

Hiring process: Hiring strategies are formal plans of action used by organizations to hire skilled candidates to fill vacant positions (Kutsmode, 2015). The term *hiring process* in this case study refers to hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications.

Military culture: Military culture is a hierarchical structure with clear rules for and expectations of service members so that their needs align with the needs of the military (Pease et al., 2016). The uniqueness of the military culture affects the transition of service members to the civilian workforce.

Person–organization (P-O) fit theory: P-O fit theory may be used to examine the phenomenon of hiring people for organizations (Chatman, 1989).

Separation: Separation refers to termination of duty for military members after fulfilling their service contracts or when military members are forced to leave the military because of injuries or a reduction of force initiative before being eligible for retirement (Moore et al., 2013; Worthen et al., 2012).

Transferable skills: These skills and abilities, including leadership and technical expertise, are acquired by veterans while serving in the military and can be used in the civilian workforce after transition (McKay, 2017).

Transition: Transition is the process or period of changing from one state or condition to another. In this study, the term *transition* referred to veterans leaving the military to enter civilian employment (Schlossberg, 1981).

Unemployed: Unemployed people are actively seeking employment and are available to fill vacant positions (BLS, 2019).

Veterans: Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defined a veteran as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable (Bradbard & Schmeling, n.d.; Szymendera, 2016; U.S. DVA, 2019b). For the purposes of this study, veterans were service members who had transitioned from the military into civilian life.

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements considered to be true without factual evidence. Assumptions are out of the control of researchers and are linked to the selected methodologies (Wolgemuth et al., 2017). Researchers identify and address inherent assumptions to avoid or eliminate any misrepresentations or misunderstandings that could affect their results.

The study had several assumptions. I assumed that the selected HRP participants had hired skilled veterans to fill part-time and full-time positions with the selected organizations or other private organizations. I assumed that the HRP participants would provide valuable insights into the processes of hiring veterans as well as the policies implemented by their organizations. I assumed that an adequate number of HRP would be recruited for this study and had hired veterans successfully. I assumed that the recruited

HRP and employed veterans would provide honest, unbiased, and truthful responses to the interview questions. I assumed that the selected organizations were committed to hiring skilled veterans and that HRP were provided with annual training on ways to hire veterans successfully. I also assumed that I could recruit enough participants to reach data saturation.

<div align="center">**Scope and Delimitations**</div>

The scope of this study involved exploring the effectiveness of the hiring processes relevant to military veterans used by HRP in private organizations with a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. Study scope limits researchers' exploration, gathering, and analysis of data (Mirza et al., 2013). Veteran hiring processes were explored to illustrate how some private organizations had hired veterans because of their effective hiring processes, thus reducing the economic and unemployment challenges faced by veterans. The study was limited to private organizations with a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. In this study, the target population comprised veterans and HRP employed by private organizations with a high veterans' employment rate, who were assumed to be knowledgeable of and to have experience with hiring processes that were effective in hiring veterans.

Yin (2014) stated that delimitations help researchers to define the boundaries of their studies and limit their scope. Delimitations can be identified as chosen research problems, implying that researchers could have addressed other topics that they subsequently rejected. The first delimitation of the study was that among HRP, only those with 5 years of experience who had hired veterans were eligible to join the study.

Veterans employed by the selected organizations were also eligible to be in the study. HRP participants were needed to provide insight into the effectiveness of the hiring practices of their private organizations regarding the employment of veterans. Employees hired as military veterans of the selected private organizations provided insight into their experience with the hiring processes. In addition, the study was limited to participants who voluntarily signed the required consent form.

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

The limitations of a study are inherent weaknesses that can affect the outcomes (Rubin & Rubin, 201). Limitations have been described as potential weaknesses or shortfalls in studies that are out of the researchers' control. Studies are susceptible to limitations that exist because of constraints such as bias toward a research design or a methodology that may influence the findings (Noble & Smith, 2015).

The first limitation was the uncertainty of obtaining honest and accurate interview responses from the participants. The volunteer participants might have provided biased views rather than facts regarding the hiring processes used in their organizations to employ veterans. To address this limitation, I informed the participants of the study's aim and purpose, and I assured them that there were no right or wrong answers to the interview questions.

Second, being an army veteran myself, I could have introduced my personal experience and bias concerning employment challenges encountered by veterans. My subjectivity and bias could have threatened the validity of the study. To eliminate any bias that could have affected the results, after collecting and transcribing the interview

responses, I sent the participants copies of their respective interview transcriptions for review to ensure that their responses had been transcribed accurately and had not been misrepresented.

Significance of the Study

As veterans transition from military service to civilian life, one of the social problems that they may encounter is the inability to find gainful employment (Corri et al., 2015; Gross, 2017; Redmond et al., 2015; Wright, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more.

Minnis (2017) argued that more research is needed on veteran hiring processes to understand how HRP can more efficaciously assess the skills acquired by veterans while they were in the military. There has been little research on the effectiveness of the hiring process in bringing more veterans into the civilian workforce (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Keeling et al., 2019; Stone & Stone, 2015). In conducting this study, I sought to fill the gap in the research literature by enhancing the knowledge of HRP and organizations in the private sector regarding their hiring processes relevant to employing veterans to improve their own hiring processes, practices, and procedures.

Significance to Theory and Practice

The military provides opportunities in many occupations similar to those in the civilian workforce, including law, medicine, accounting, and logistics, yet veterans encounter challenges in finding employment after transitioning from the military into

civilian life (Beauchesne & O'Hair, 2013; Minnis, 2017). The BLS (2018) reported that 370,000 veterans were unemployed and that 4% were between the ages of 18 and 24 years, 59% were between the ages of 25 and 54 years, and 37% were 55 years of age and older. Beauchesne and O'Hair (2013) asserted that after transitioning to civilian life, veterans encounter economic uncertainty in their efforts to find employment. This uncertainty may be the result of the lack of tools and strategies by HRP in private organizations that would help them to hire veterans. I identified and analyzed the selected private organizations' processes for hiring veterans so that other organizations and HRP might be able to use the information to implement similar processes and hire more veterans.

Significance to Social Change

Exploring the hiring processes used successfully by HRP in the selected private organizations with veterans' employment rates of 25% or more may help other private organizations to increase their own employment rates for veterans by identifying effective hiring processes. The study may also potentially stimulate positive social change by reducing veterans' current unemployment rates and increasing the economic benefits of disposable incomes (Coffey et al., 2014). The study could help bring awareness and understanding to HRP about the skills that veterans bring to organizations' operational portfolios. The research could also help lift some veterans out of poverty and homelessness, and positively impact the economy through veteran employment. In addition, veterans gain a vast number of skills while serving in the military, including leadership and team-building skills, and they learn how to work in a culturally diverse

environment, all of which can positively affect society when veterans bring their unique attributes to the civilian workplace (McDerrmott & Panagopoulos, 2015).

Summary and Transition

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. The processes investigated in this case study included hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications. Private organizations with veterans' employment rates of 25% or more were considered as having high veterans' employment rates. Employees hired as military veterans and HRP employed by the selected private organizations were the target population. Yin (2014) explained that researchers adopt a case study approach when investigating how individuals, groups, or organizations respond to social problems.

Veterans, after service transition, often encounter challenges in locating employment because some HRP in the private sector have failed to capitalize on the opportunity to hire veterans who have desirable character traits, knowledge, and skill sets that would be beneficial to their organizations (Minnis, 2017; Tanner, 2014). Harrell and Berglass (2012) stated that HRP misconceptions of veterans' skills and military culture often result in veterans being viewed as unqualified to fill vacant positions in private organizations. Through this study, I sought to determine the effectiveness of the hiring processes adapted and implemented by private organizations with a high employment rate of veterans of 25% or more. Identifying the hiring processes of HRP in private organizations might be useful to other veterans struggling to find employment, as well as

to private organizations whose leaders find it challenging to hire veterans because of their

ineffective hiring processes and unfamiliarity with veterans' skills and the military

culture.

Presented in Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on the research topic. I provide

information on what transitioning military members can offer to civilian organizations,

employers' perceptions of veterans, tax incentives given private organizations to hire

veterans, and veterans' rates of poverty and unemployment. I also explain the conceptual

framework, along with P-O fit theory and its importance to the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Finding employment is one of the most critical issues facing veterans who are transitioning from military service into civilian society (Buzzetta et al., 2017). According to the DoL (2017), during the first 15 months of exiting the military, transitioning veterans entering the civilian workforce are faced with a disproportionate risk of unemployment. The problem is that some veterans and HRP in private organizations find hiring processes for veterans immensely challenging (Carter et al., 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015; U.S. DVA, 2019a). The skills of veterans are still mostly unknown by decision makers in some private organizations, including HRP (Minnis, 2017). Maury et al. (2014) stated that understanding the military and recognizing how veterans' skills can serve the interests of private organizations is a difficult hurdle for some HRP. Nonprofit organizations (NPOs), businesses, and government agencies have implemented many career developments workshops and resources to assist military veterans in transitioning to civilian society from the military. However, veterans still struggle to find employment despite these ongoing efforts because organizations often lack tools such as effective hiring processes to employ veterans.

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. In this section, I review current and past literature on enlisted separation and retirement from the military, military culture, veterans' unemployment, veterans' poverty, what transitioning military members offer to civilian organizations, aligning organizations with veterans and

transitioning military skills and experience, employers' perception of veterans, and government roles in helping veterans find employment.

The concepts that drove the development of the conceptual framework for this research were veteran employment and hiring strategies, and the theory most applicable to the study's identified concepts was P-O fit theory. To ensure a high level of authenticity and accuracy, the conceptual framework was strengthened by known facts. The overall discussion provided a short description, based on the perspective through which data were gathered and systematically presented after analysis.

Literature Review Strategy

Peer-reviewed journals and articles were obtained from Walden University's online library databases: ProQuest, SAGE Journal, Science Direct, Business Source Complete, and Military and Government Collection. Additional data were obtained from Google Scholar, other university libraries, and authoritative websites. Documents from various federal government agencies, including the BLS, DoL, DoD, and DVA, along with scholarly books, added pertinent information to the literature review. To retrieve information for the literature review, I used the following search terms: *veterans' unemployment, transitioning veterans seeking employment, military culture, military occupations, veterans' transferable skills, veterans' poverty, veterans' hiring incentives, DoD TAP*, and *person–organization fit theory*.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Schneider's P-O fit theory, which served as a lens for exploring the concepts of veteran employment and hiring

strategies. Although most military positions have corresponding positions in the civilian workforce, some HRP fail to bridge and translate military skills to civilian contexts because they lack knowledge of the military, its culture, and veterans' occupations. The inability of some HRP to fully grasp veterans' skills and experience contributes significantly to veterans being viewed as unfit to fill vacant positions (Davis & Minnis, 2017; R. A. Miles, 2014; Minnis, 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015). Some veterans entered the military with only a high school diploma and have little to no knowledge of civilian employment while transitioning to civilian life (Buzzetta et al., 2017). HRP may be biased against filling vacant positions with veterans because they believe that most veterans' only job experience may be the military and that veterans lack civilian employment skill sets (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015).

Veterans encounter an array of challenges after transitioning to civilian life. Most military jobs have parallels to civilian jobs, including those of lawyers, doctors, accountants, logisticians, nurses, and many others, yet veterans encounter employment challenges after service transition. Brown and Routon (2016) found that approximately 91% of military jobs have a civilian counterpart, excluding combat specialties and unspecified jobs. The authors also revealed that veterans with organizational leadership experience and skills in a parallel civilian job have serious issues finding employment because HRP struggle to assist veterans in the transference of their skills and experience gained in the army to a civilian cultural setting (Davis & Minnis, 2017; R. A. Miles, 2014; Minnis, 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015).

Davis and Minnis (2017) examined the employment difficulties that veterans face and stated that although the American workforce has become diverse, there is still a vast gap between the military and civilian organizations, creating a lack of understanding and misperception of veterans, their skill set, and their experience. Despite veterans having transferable skills that are needed in vacant positions in civilian organizations, they are often overlooked due to apprehensions by employers and HRP that are driven by their predetermined attitudes and beliefs about veterans. Keeling et al. (2019) explored the employment challenges faced by veterans. The goal of their study was to locate and establish best practices to assist veterans in their search and sustainment of employment after transitioning from the military. Keeling et al.'s findings revealed that some veterans were not adequately prepared for the civilian workforce and that some veterans felt that the skills and experience that they acquired in the military were not transferable to civilian careers.

According to Davis and Minnis (2017), some civilians, including HRP, often interpret military veterans' skills and experiences as combat-only skills. This perception is misleading and unfortunate. Civilian personnel have been exposed to too little information about the technical capabilities and daily jobs of members of the U.S. military because of the small population of Americans who have served in these positions and the increased security of information about military work (Davis & Minnis, 2017). The literature also suggests that veterans encounter employment challenges because of the stigma associated with the military-to-civilian cultural divide and differences, which often leads to civilians' negative preconceptions of the military and veterans (Ward,

2020). Davis and Minnis stated that veterans are stigmatized as being inflexible and unable to adapt to civilian employment. Maclean and Kleykamp (2014) reported that many employers are hesitant to employ veterans because of their preconceived notion that veterans are mentally unstable and unfit for civilian employment.

The military culture and the skills that veterans possess can be confusing to civilians who are unfamiliar with its structure and dynamics. Training is needed in civilian organizations to achieve better military intellectual competencies, which include being able to effectively translate veterans' skills, bridging the gap between military and civilian cultures, and successfully constructing and implementing workable veterans' hiring strategies (Redmond et al., 2015). Researchers have discovered that communication barriers, unfamiliarity with veterans' transferable skills, and the military culture appear to be among the main reasons veterans struggle to gain in the civilian workforce. This could stem from civilian employers' misconceptions and lack of knowledge about veterans, which negatively affect veterans' employability in the civilian economy (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Minnis, 2017; Stern, 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015).

Person–Organization Fit Theory

The theory that was deemed the most applicable to assist in building that study identified concepts, veteran employment, and hiring strategies was the P-O fit theory. P-O fit theory, according to Cable and Edwards (2004), stipulates that matching the characteristics and behaviors of any employee and the organization will unequivocally result in the employee being a significantly better fit for the organization, as well as in greater job satisfaction for the employee. During the hiring process, HRP understanding

of the P-O fit theory goes beyond skills translation; it involves matching applicants'

knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) with the organization and assessing how applicants

fit the organization (Firfiray & Mayo, 2016). Additionally, relying on P-O fit theory

allows HRP to distinguish qualified applicants by determining their fit with the values or

congruence of personality with the organization. HRP perception of organizational fit is

often skewed by their inaccurate view of P-O fit, thus impairing their judgment during

the hiring process. Improving organizational fit measurement is critical for HRP to

achieve the successful outcome posited within P-O fit theory (Westerman & Cyr, 2004).

When HRP carefully analyze the needs, values, and interests of an employee and their

correlation with an organization, it is likely that there will be a suitable employee–

organization fit (Abraham et al., 2015).

P-O fit theory refers to the compatibility between employees and their

organizations (Kristof, 1996). P-O fit has been used to determine the compatibility of

employees with organizations' beliefs (O'Reilly et al., 1991) or even their similarities in

goals (Kristof, 1996; Vancouver et al., 1994). The fulfillment of employees' needs by the

organization can affect the degree of P-O fit. The goal of applying P-O fit theory is to

hire applicants who fit the organization. Its recommended that HRP use the theory in

pursuit of optimal hiring goals, which includes assessing the practical theory and how to

identify applicants' organizational fitness and skill alignment during the hiring process

(Firfiray & Mayo, 2016).

P-O fit theory addresses the phenomenon of hiring people for organizations

(Chatman, 1989). To be specific, proponents of the theory approach the hiring selection

process by going beyond applicants' KSA, taking a more comprehensive approach to hiring applicants (Kristof, 1996). HRP use the theory to determine how well applicants' skills and personalities fit with an organization's values. However, HRP perceptions of P-O fit are often inaccurate, so skilled applicants are sometimes refused employment. HR hiring officials often view veterans as not fitting into their organizations (Firfiray & Mayo, 2016).

HRP must utilize applicant fit measurement when hiring to maximize the accuracy of their P-O fit assessments in order to promote the best possible outcome. Researchers such as Kuruppuge and Gregar (2018) and Little and Miller (2007) have provided clarity in relation to the use of P-O fit theory for exploring the consonance of hiring strategies in relation to seeking the best and most viable fit to the organization when hiring applicants. Building this research on the framework of P-O fit theory allowed me to learn about the strategies used to hire skilled veterans by HRP in a private organization with a 25% or greater rate of veteran employment.

Organizations and HRP have been concerned with attracting and hiring the right types of skilled and qualified applicants (Rynes & Barber, 1990; Schneider, 1987). Many scholars have acknowledged the role that employment inducements play in the hiring process (Little & Miller, 2007; Rynes & Barber, 1990; Schneider, 1987). P-O fit reflects the perceived compatibility between individuals and their work organizations (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996). P-O fit theory captures the best hiring strategies used to hire skilled veterans. P-O fit theory was well suited to this inquiry into effective strategies implemented and utilized by HRP to hire veterans. I focused on how best to access HRP

perspectives, knowledge, experience, tools, and methods that contributed to the selected organization's high veteran employment rate. The development of the ongoing social problem (veterans' unemployment and poverty), purpose, and research questions were aligned and flowed naturally with the underlying theory and conceptual framework, as the focus remained on effective hiring strategies used to employ skilled veterans. This study contributes findings to the extant body of literature on effective strategies used to hire veterans.

P-O fit theory focuses on measuring compatibility where standards and efficacy of organizations and applicants are concerned (Chatman, 1989). Kristof (1996) noted that compatibility between employees and organizations (P-O fit) happens when each party provides something that the other needs or when the parties have shared characteristics. Kristoff remarked that satisfactory outcomes reflect that the needs of employees and organizations are being met. P-O fit theory suggests that employees' characteristics are highly likely to converge with the patterns and behaviors of their organization. It is highly likely that an employee's attitude may alter the level of similarity between the organization and the employee (Teimouri et al., 2015). The overall views of employees are then affected by the distinction and degree of consonance between the conduct and characteristics of both the employee and the organization (Abraham et al., 2015; Teimouri et al., 2015). Achieving P-O fit congruence may require organizations to adjust their hiring strategies to ensure that employees have qualities that align with the organizational culture and values.

Cable and Edwards (2004) stated that P-O fit theory implies that matching the behaviors and characteristics of employees and organizations will lead to more compatibility between the parties, with the result being an overall beneficial fit for organizations and higher job satisfaction for employees. P-O fit theory is a unique vantage point to explore the balance within organizations' hiring strategies between the effort to discover the prime fit for a veteran to an organization and the effort to find the prime fit of an organization to a veteran. Employees' behaviors and characteristics become the deciding factor by HRP to determine employees' fit with the organization. Employees' P-O fit is also heavily dependent on similarities in behavioral patterns between organizational decision makers and employees.

Molaei et al. (2014) asserted that applicants will decide to seek employment with organizations if their values and attitudes match those of the hiring organizations. Applicants may view an organization in terms of its overall attractiveness and the connection that they might feel toward the positions being offered. These factors may affect the attitudes of applicants during the hiring process (Jutras & Mathieu, 2016).

One of the main concerns of veterans transitioning from the military is not knowing how civilian organizations will use their skills and how well they will be able to fit in as civilian employees (Thompson & Jetly, 2014). The structure of the military has apparent differences to that of civilian organizations. Although P-O fit does occur in most organizations, HRP are often charged with verifying that prospective employees will bring sustainable contributions to organizations (Sousa & Porto, 2015). The responsibility lies with HRP and employees to ensure congruence between processes in the military and

those in the civilian world that will facilitate the transition of veterans' skills to transferable skills in the civilian workforce (Vellenga, 2014).

The military, by design, has apparent organizational differences to what exists in the civilian workplace. HRP are encouraged to validate, within the context of their organizations, the sustainability of prospective employees (Sousa & Porto, 2015). Finding the congruence and similarities between military and corporate processes is the responsibility of both the employer and employee. This will help to determine how well a veteran's military portfolio translates into the civilian world of work (Vellenga, 2014). Through this research, I sought to identify how P-O fit theory was used in selected private organizations' veteran hiring processes and how beneficial the theory was in finding a great organizational fit.

Literature Review

The goal of the literature review was to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem, provide an overview of the framework of the study, and explain the descriptive analysis. In this section, I review current and past literature related to the present study. To better address the research question, I review similar studies and literature to support the research problem.

Enlisted Separation and Retirement From the Military

Veterans either retire or separate from the military. Service members are eligible to retire after completing 20 years or more of active duty. Unlike employees of private organizations and civilian federal employees, service members do not make monthly contributions toward their retirement; instead, retirement pay is earned after completing

20 years or more and begins immediately after transitioning from the military

(Strangways & Rubin, 2012). Medical retirement benefits also are given to service

members who can no longer continue to serve in the military because of medical issues.

Service separation can be either voluntary or involuntary, and several

administrative categories are used to identify service separation: honorable, general (less

than honorable), and dishonorable (Powers, 2016). Powers (2016) stated that when

veterans have met the expected standards of conduct and performance of their respective

service branches, they receive an honorable discharge. A general discharge is given if the

veterans display lousy conduct that is not bad enough to receive the most severe military

administrative discharge, dishonorable (Powers, 2016). A dishonorable discharge is given

for bad conduct and when they fail to meet the military's expected standards and

performance.

Veterans who transition with an honorable or a general discharge are eligible for

educational and health benefits; veterans with a dishonorable discharge are not (Powers,

2016). Entry-level separation also is given for service members who serve less than 180

days in the military. According to the DoD (2015), approximately 167,504 service

members have separated from the military in 2015, with 46.4% being voluntary, 26.9%

being involuntary, and 26.4% being retirements. Zogas (2017) stated that service member

separation numbers are projected to increase between the years 2015 and 2019, with more

veterans transitioning to the civilian job market because of ending U.S.-led conflicts in

Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom

(OIF).

Military Transition

Unemployment, underemployment, and homelessness are three of the main substantial barriers faced by veterans after service transition and can negatively affect veterans' successful reintegration into the civilian workforce and society (Perkins et al., 2020). Knowledge of veterans' difficulties transitioning from the military to civilian workforce has prompted military leaders and the government to assess and implement training and tools to assist veterans' transitions. Military leaders are now focusing on developing service members skills during the military that can be applied to the civilian workforce and improving service members' marketability when they transition into the civilian sector (Chamberland, 2015).

Developing and implementing government based transitional based resources including support services such as educational resources, housing, and welfare program, employment assistance, and psychosocial support are also being used to assist in the reintegration of veterans into civilian life (Ahern et al., 2015). These programs' goal is to help veterans identify their skills, experience, and knowledge that are beneficial to talent-seeking organizations (Arendt & Sapp, 2014). Expert with job-seeking such as resume writing assistance allows veterans to successfully capture and align resume terminology by using language easily understood and appreciated by HRP and employers (Hall et al., 2014).

Arendt and Sapp (2014) suggested assisting veterans with aligning resume with civilian workforce expectations and educating HRP and employers about military terminology will allow them to comprehend the many benefits of employing veterans and

will significantly assist veterans in gaining employment. Veterans tend to feel empowered when they are recognized for their knowledge, skills, experience, and other attributes for civilian workforce vacant positions after transitioning the military, which are goals that reduce veteran transition challenges (Chamberland, 2015). Employment is a beneficial support component for veterans during transition.

Military Culture

The military consists of five branches: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. On the surface, the military shares many similarities with civilian organizations, and its uniform and culture are probably two of the most distinguishing differences between both organizations (Pease et al., 2016). The military culture has a hierarchical structure of clear rules and regulations for service members. The needs of individual service members are filtered through the needs of the military. In the military, service members are taught to abide by a code of standards that includes loyalty, honor, integrity, courage, and commitment (Pease et al., 2016). They are taught the importance of being team members and that teamwork is inherent to the organization. The values of service members change significantly while they are serving in the military and becoming accustomed to the military culture, but as they transition to civilian society, they might need counselors to assist them in that process (R. A. Miles, 2014). The military culture is structure driven, and its hierarchical structure provides clear rules and guidelines centered around a mission-oriented lifestyle (Redmond et al., 2015). The interests of military personnel are subordinated to those of military units or groups (Redmond et al., 2015).

Veterans often spend the first year after service transition from the military to civilian society facing culture shock (Pease et al., 2016). According to Beder (2017), when serving in the military, veterans become rooted in military culture, and transitioning into civilian society with a different culture tends to make veterans' lives confusing, challenging, and troublesome. Veterans asserted that the lack of knowledge of the military culture by civilian HRP made it difficult for them to transition smoothly and find employment (Stone & Stone, 2015). Beder suggested that organizations develop training courses to understand veterans and military culture better.

Some of the significant challenges that veterans face as they transition to the civilian workforce are language barriers, ineffective hiring strategies by HRP, and lack of knowledge of military culture and occupations (Parsi, 2017). Although veterans are taught how to translate skills acquired in the military to civilian terminology for employment, HRP still lacks the tools to hire veterans to fill vacant positions. The military uses a systematized and chronological method to train service members, such as incorporating training programs with on-the-job training, designed to develop one's skills. In a survey conducted by Prudential Financial Inc. (2012), three in five veterans identified HRP lack of understanding of military culture and occupations as a challenge in entering the civilian workforce.

Veteran Unemployment

An average of 200,000 to 250,000 service members annually transitions from the military to civilian life (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Davis & Minnis, 2017; Ford, 2017). According to the literature, upon service transition, many veterans struggle to find

employment (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Collins et al., 2015; Davis & Minnis, 2017; Messer & Greene, 2014; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016), despite having distinctive capabilities, processing critical organizational skills needed in the civilian workforce. Some HRP fails to capitalize on the skills and experiences veterans can bring to organizations. According to the BLS (2019), the rate of veterans' unemployment for September was 3.4% and homeless veterans at 5.4%, which is slightly less than the country's unemployment rate. The rate of veterans' unemployment has significantly decreased from its peak at 9.9% in 2011 (BLS, 2019). There are approximately 326,000 unemployed veterans in the US, nearly 60% from ages 45 and over; 35% ranges from 25 to 45, and 6% are aged 18 to 24. Additionally, the unemployment rate for veterans who served active duty from September 2001 decreased to 3.5% in 2018 from 3.7% in 2017.

Even though the rate of veterans' unemployment has decreased, 326,000 veterans are still jobless. Veterans are equipped with skills and experience that are transferable in the civilian job market. While some veterans and can successfully translate these skills and experiences veterans acquire, others struggle, thus creating employment issues faced by veterans after service transition (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014; R. A. Miles, 2014; Minnis, 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015). Some organizations and HRP fail to implement effective veterans hiring strategies. HRP also view veterans as being unfit as affect veterans' employment. To assist with reducing veterans' unemployment, HR hiring personnel, and organizations need to understand better the military and the skills possessed by veterans. Organizations need to institute programs to better assist in hiring

veterans (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015), such as implementing training programs to help HRP on how to translate veterans' skills.

Veteran Poverty

U.S. veteran poverty is an ongoing social problem. Lawmakers have continued to try to develop and use tools and resources to address this social issue. Although the rates of veteran poverty are lower than the rates of nonveteran poverty in the United States, it remains a sad commentary on the ways that veterans are treated after leaving the military. Veterans face a myriad of challenges when transitioning to civilian society after leaving the military. Homelessness is a significant challenge faced by veterans. Nine to eleven percent of this population are veterans of the U.S. military (Shinseki, 2016). Homeless veterans have been a major concern for the government and were input into the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan's goal to reduce and eliminate Veteran Homelessness by the year ending 2015 and 2014-2020 strategic plan by the DVA. A 23% reduction in veteran homelessness was identified in the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan by the then Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki; however, veteran homelessness continues to plague the government as one of the significant challenges faced by transitioning veterans.

According to the National Veterans Foundation (2015), approximately 1.5 million veterans are facing poverty, with veterans between the ages of 18 and 34 years being the highest percentage group. Veterans encounter poverty because of disabilities and psychological problems, but in most cases, veterans are living in poverty because of unemployment. January 2014 saw an estimated 49,933 homeless veterans, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2015). This figure accounted for 8.6% of the

overall homeless population in the United States. Hawryluk and Ridley-Kerr (2012)

reported that one in seven homeless people was a veteran. Veterans are exposed to the

risks associated with poverty because of inadequate support networks, increasing

unemployment, and lack of affordable housing that eventually may lead to Homelessness.

Veterans are at risk of falling into poverty because they lack the skills to network

professionally, are unsuccessful in negotiating their salaries successfully, and are unable

to transfer the skills that they acquired in the military effectively to the civilian workplace

(Hawryluk & Ridley-Kerr, 2012). In 2014, it was estimated that of the percentage of male

veterans living in poverty, 10.5% were aged 17 to 34 years, 7.5% were aged 35 to 54

years, and 9.5% were aged 55 to 64 (as cited in U.S. DVA, 2016). For female veterans

who were struggling, 13.1% of ages 17 to 34 years were living below the poverty line,

another 8% were aged 35 to 54 years, and 10.2% were aged 55 to 64 years (U.S. DVA,

2016).

Many organizations have the desire to hire veterans because of their transferable

skills, training, experience, and work ethic, however, they lack the knowledge and tools

needed to effectively translate military skills into civilian job opportunities (Stone &

Stone, 2015). Stone and Stone (2015) also stated that veterans often struggle to translate

their skills, as they cannot conveniently compress their skills and experience into an

online required list of list positing, and HRP lacks the ability to translate and match

veteran skills, thus, creating employment challenges for veterans, leading to veteran

homelessness. Although veterans are responsible for the success of their transition from

the military to civilian, veterans do not become homeless by desire or by choice; it is

solely on struggles they face to adjust to civilian life and locate employment (Ward Sr, 2020).

Stereotypes Faced by Veterans

Stereotyping and biases are among the significant challenges faced by veterans entering the civilian workforce after service transition (Kintzle et al., 2015) and play a key role in veteran unemployment (Maclean & Kleycamp, 2014). Maclean and Kleycamp (2014) stated that lawmakers and advocates had recognized the negative impact stereotyping and biases contributes to veteran unemployment and has brought attention to the ongoing social issues. Mental health and violence are some of the biases and stereotyping surrounding veterans (Stone et al., 2018), as veterans' images are often disseminated by new sources about veterans, including these returning from combat zones (MacLean & Kleycamp, 2014). The negative media perception and the increased in the negative spotlight led to stereotyping and biases of all veterans. Hiring managers and HRP might have concerns about hiring veterans because of veterans' stigma (MacLean & Kleycamp, 2014).

Veterans also encounter other stereotypes such as lower or no education, age, and being less skillful or qualify for civilian work than their nonveteran counterparts (Eiler, 2012). Hiring managers and HRP may also confuse veterans' status by not knowing if a veteran is currently serving as a reservist or national guard in the military and maybe be called back on active duty. Kleykamp (2009) stated that veteran discharge status also contributes to veteran stereotype. The political ideology of hiring managers and HRP may also contribute to the negative stereotyping of veterans ((Kleykamp, 2009).).

Stereotypes encountered by veterans are vastly inconsistent (Stone & Stone, 2015). For instance, according to Stone and Stone (2015), although veterans may seem angry and bitter, they also are viewed as having excellent leadership skills.

Veterans' Employability

According to Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al. (2014), one of the critical components for veteran community reintegration is employment. The federal government, organizational decision makers, and community leaders have recognized veterans' challenges to gain employment after service transitions and have continuously sought ways to assist veterans in meaningful employment (Small Business Administration [SBA], 2016). Mutanda et al. (2014) stated that part of the U.N.'s 24 Millennium Development goals is to help reduce veteran poverty by facilitating employment for veterans with the help of organizational decision makers and employers. According to Veterans Job Mission (2015), in 2015, the collective efforts of business owners and organizational decision makers contributed to more than 240,000 veterans finding employment.

While serving in the military, veterans develop a vast, broad asset, including leadership, perseverance, loyalty, dedication, commitment, and much more (Davis & Minnis, 2016; Ward Sr, 2020). The authors also stated that core military values and veterans' respect for authority should make veterans attractive to employers and HRP to fill organizations' vacant position and the needs of the business. Resilience is another skill developed by service members in the military and may make veteran marketable to HRP and employers (Cacioppo et al., 2015). According to Franke and Felfe (2015),

veterans' skills while serving in the military are typically readily transferable to the civilian workforce.

Veterans prove that they are trainable, and military personnel undergoes training courses and unbelievable opportunities to the civilian workforce (Adler et al., 2015). The education and training courses are given to veterans while serving in the military to make veterans qualify for civilian employment after service transition. According to Thomas and Taylor (2016), veterans typically prove their ability to adapt, learn, and apply new knowledge learned in changing situations. For instance, newly hired employees are required on the job and educational training to ensure they acquire the knowledge needed to perform their daily assigned tasks (Horner & Valenti, 2012).

Veterans have experience in sensitivity to cultural diversity, such as people as they are often deployed to different countries (Thomas & Taylor, 2016). Routon (2014) stated that the military structure of collaboration and leadership enhances service members' abilities to work in teams and their accountability to work in a diverse workplace setting. Veterans may offer employers and organizations skills, experience, and skills developed in the context of the necessary cultural competence, mental agility, ethical climate, and physical requirements required to fulfill a military mission, which can transfer to the mission of the business (Toner, 2015).

Veteran military education and training may help enhance organizations' growth and survival through the successful application of veteran skills and experience to fill organizations' needs to which they contribute (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Hartal et al. (2015) stated that veterans ate able to successfully leverage their vocational skills,

knowledge, and experience gained in the military to equal or surpass nonveteran

occupational potential despite the erratic nature of military lifestyle. Adler et al. (2015)

studied service members serving on active duty in the military compared to workers in

the civilian workforce. Their findings revealed that service members in the military

outperformed workers in the civilian workforce, based on physical, intellectual

capabilities, and cognitive skills, knowledge, and experience that can be applied in the

civilian workforce.

Service members also seize opportunities to attend college while serving on active

duty in the service, and the military requires physical, intellectual, educational, and job

training (Blosnich et al., 2015). College enrollment and attendance, concurrently while

serving active duty general, occur in a face-to-face setting or an online format. Service

members are granted the opportunity to attend college to complete undergraduate studies

or pursue graduate degrees using tuition assistance programs (Hall et al., 2014).

According to Blosnich et al. (2015), approximately half a million military post-911

veterans used their educational benefits, and a continuously growing number of service

members enroll in postsecondary educational programs while serving on active duty.

What Transitioning Military Members Offer to Civilian Organizations

The management structure of the military differs from that of the civilian

workforce. The bureaucratic structure of the military has a top-down flow of authority

complemented by high-end authoritative leadership, whereas the management structure

of the civilian workforce is fundamentally geared toward transformational leadership

(Anderson et al., 2012). It also accommodates a diagonal management structure that

allows employees to make decisions that will be supported across organizations as long as they fit with the organizational goals, and the employees are held accountable for their choices (Snyder et al., 2016). The difference in the military and civilian management structures make it difficult for veterans to transition to the civilian workplace because of the cultural differences and HRP misconceptions and lack of knowledge of veterans' skills.

Since 2013, the labor market has been unable to deal with the large numbers of veterans transitioning to civilian life, with the result being a high rate of unemployment among veterans (Robertson & Brott, 2014). The ending of OIF and OEF led to the downsizing of troops in the Middle East, which has contributed to large numbers of members transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce (Davis & Minnis, 2017), thus increasing the numbers of veterans looking for employment. I sought to demonstrate that more research is needed to improve veterans' employment rates after transitioning from the military. It is essential that HRP identify and implement hiring strategies that are successful in helping veterans to transition to the civilian workforce, thus increasing veterans' employment rates.

Service members acquire skills, knowledge, and experience centered on leadership and team building while they are in the military (Greer, 2017). The military invests valuable resources and time in training and educating service members to perform and excel in their jobs and careers in austere environments. The military has its own culture, norms, values, training methods, and procedures to train service members. For example, in the U.S. Army, the primary resource for practical leadership training is the

ADRP 6-22, a publication outlining the characteristics, attributes, and competencies needed to become great leaders. Skills required by leaders, as described in the *ADRP 6-22*, include soft skills such as teamwork, flexibility, problem-solving, and many more that can be used to help veterans to transition into the civilian workforce (Frffer, 2016) and make them valuable assets to civilian organizations. Soft skills acquired by veterans are extremely valuable to private organizations.

Veterans transition into the civilian workforce from the military with valuable transferable skills. Military training and occupations are highly transferable to civilian training and careers. Davis and Minnis (2017) and Greer (2017) stated that organizations that understand the value of the skills possessed by veterans had implemented effective hiring strategies to bring veterans into their workforces. The advantages of hiring veterans include skills, experiences, work ethic, and ability to work as a team. For example, some organizations hire veterans because they know that what the veterans learned in the military can be of great value to their workplaces (Davis & Minnis, 2017).

In the study by Harrell and Berglass (2012), HRP revealed characteristics possessed by veterans that make them valuable to civilian employers. These traits include leadership and teamwork skills, a strong work ethic, the ability to perform under any dynamic environments, loyalty, and many more. Also found in the study was the inability of HRP to transfer veterans' skills and implement effective hiring strategies. The lack of understanding of the military culture and civilian organizations has had a negative influence on the ability of HRP to hire veterans. There is an urgent need for HRP to receive training about veteran, skills acquired, and the military culture and occupation, so

that they will know how to transfer veterans' military skills to the civilian workforce, as well as develop and implement effective hiring strategies to increase veterans' employment rates (Kutsmode, 2015). Several companies, including Man Tech Corp, Lockheed Martin, Intelligent Waves, USAA, BAE System, and others, have initiated, and implemented effective hiring strategies and contributed to over 25% of their workforce being veterans.

Aligning Organizations With Veterans' Skills and Experience

To assists in closing the employment and cultural gap between the military and civilian workforce, the military has incorporated mandatory training and programs to help prepare military personnel transition into civilian society and workforce. Although HRP have recognized the value of hiring veterans, many have demonstrated an inability to connect with veterans and have persisted in viewing them as incompatible with their organizations (Davis & Minnis, 2017). In addition, many HRP has been unable to transfer veterans' skills and experiences to the civilian workplace effectively because of their unfamiliarity with military culture and occupations (Minnis, 2017).

Veterans possess the skills and experience needed by civilian organizations, but some HRP has failed to recognize these skills and experiences, thus failing to develop and implement effective strategies to hire veterans. Minnis (2017) expressed the need for organizations to create and implement effective systems to assist HRP in identifying and transferring veterans' skills and experiences to their civilian workforces. Some organizations have implemented hiring practices to locate and recruit service members while they are still serving the military, such as hosting job fairs on military installations

to identify and recruit transitions veterans, usually within 6 months of exiting the military.

Ford (2017) noted that organizations and HRP find it easier to understand how to transfer service members' military skills while they are still in active service. Davis and Minnis (2017) and Ford stated that organizations' veterans hiring processes needs to be proactive and reactive. For instance, companies like Amazon, Starbucks, and Comcast take advantage of going to military post job fairs to attract, recruit and hire veterans. These companies recognize the value, including skillsets, veterans bring to the organizations and take advantage of hosting job fairs to identify, recruit, and hire veterans.

Military command is similar to the leadership of civilian organizations. Service members are trained to be structured, mission-driven, creative, and free thinkers (Davis & Minnis, 2017). Service members also are trained to operate autonomously and to work as team members to complete given tasks. When transitioning, many veterans might assume that finding employment in the civilian sector will be easy because of the skills, experiences, and knowledge that they obtained in the military, but this assumption is wrong. According to Zarecky (2014), a national study indicated that 69% of transitioned veterans believed that they could easily apply skills acquired in the military to civilian jobs, but only 59% stated that they were able to use their military skills to obtain employment. Even though skills taught in the military are similar to those in the civilian workforce, HR hiring personnel's unfamiliarity with the military significantly impacts veterans' ability to gain civilian employment (Stone & Stone, 2015).

The inability of some HRP to evaluate veterans' skills and fit with their organizations has been a contributing factor to veterans' unemployment (Minnis, 2017). Gonzalez et al. (2014) asserted that because military skills tend to be specific to military occupations, understanding how to transfer veterans' skills to civilian organizations can be complicated for HRP, with the outcome being unemployment issues for veterans. In addition, because of the unique specifications of military jobs, it often is difficult for HRP to adequately assess veterans' skills and determine how they can be transferred to the civilian workforce (Stone & Stone, 2015). Some organizations employ programs such as O*net and the ITMA (Identify, Translate, Match, and Articulate) to identify and match veterans' skills to civilians. Assessing veterans' military skills and experiences is critical in helping veterans to fill vacant positions in the civilian workforce (Messer & Greene, 2014; R. A. Miles, 2014).

According to. Kutsmode (2015) and Stone and Stone (2015), employers are frustrated with their inability to hire veterans, and HRP must construct and implement effective hiring strategies to hire veterans. To hire more veterans, researchers should find out more about why HRP is not hiring enough veterans to provide better effective solutions on how to change this ongoing social problem. Kutsmode stated that HRP must gain a better understanding of veterans and learn how to assess what roles are best suited for veterans in their organizations, including being knowledgeable on veterans' transferable skills and how-to competent match veterans to job opportunities.

Kutsmode (2015) also stated that one common pitfall with HRP is limited training on veterans, which results in HRP mistakenly perceiving veterans as being unfit for

organizations vacant positions. HRP must identify the reasons for their unwillingness to hire veterans and why they find them unsuitable for filling vacant positions in the organizations. HRP must engage in training to increase their understanding of military culture and military occupations, eliminate stereotypes they might have about veterans, and implement more effective strategies to hire skilled veterans (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014).

Employer Perceptions of Veterans

Veterans endure employment challenges because of some HRP misunderstandings and misconceptions of the military, which includes its culture and occupations. This was evident in 2010 when there was a shortage in the U.S. health care system. Some capable veterans possessed the skills needed to fill the shortage but were required to obtain additional diplomas and licensing before being hired (Stone & Stone, 2015). Civilian employers' misconception and lack of knowledge of veterans' skills and military training creates employment barriers for veterans entering the civilian workforce, as noted by Davis and Minnis (2017), Minnis (2017), and Stone and Stone (2015).

Veterans often are viewed by some HRP as being unfitted to fill vacant positions, making implemented regulations ineffective. In addition, HRP hiring policies and procedures are often skewed because some HRP eliminate veterans from the hiring pool, because they lack the ability to translate veteran skills, along with implementing effective veterans hiring processes. This contributed to the US government implementing regulations to assist veterans against various employment discrepancies better.

The federal government in the United States has implemented programs such as tax incentives to address the ongoing social problem of veteran unemployment. Tax credit incentives are given to private organizations for hiring individuals from a target group, including veterans who are faced with employment barriers (va.gov, 2019b). The goal of the tax incentives was to make veterans more attractive to employers and allow employers to take advantage of various tax breaks being offered to hire skilled veterans. While tax incentives serve as a temporary fix to decrease veteran unemployment, there is an urgent need to address veteran employment challenges. HRP should be hiring veterans based on their organizational fit, including skills, training, experiences, and more, and not solely on incentives being given. This often contributes to veteran skills mismatch and skills misalignment. The inaccurate information of the veterans, the military, and its culture often creates bias and speculation, which leads to employment barriers for veterans being created. Organizations and HRP need to remove these barriers and implement effective hiring processes for hiring skilled veterans.

Americans often display their overwhelming support for veterans, yet HRP often stereotypes veterans as being less suited for civilian employment. HRP has viewed veterans as incompetent, ineffective, and unfit for civilian employment (Allen et al., 2014). Veterans also have been viewed by HRP as having fewer skills than nonveterans, resulting in an impediment to their finding gainful employment. HRP wants to hire employees who are ready to work and can contribute to the organizations' goals, but when they fail to capitalize on the qualities that veterans possess. Allen et al. (2014), Davis and Minnis (2017), Kutsmode (2015), and Stone and Stone (2015) concluded that

veterans are considered unfit to fill vacant positions in private organizations because HRP tendencies to view veterans as being unable to learn new skills quickly; thus, impeding organizational growth, and organizations need to implement training to better to assist HRP with hiring veterans.

Veterans possess skills in teamwork, leadership, and discipline, and they have a strong work ethic. HRP also investigate veterans' expertise, level of adaptability, and ability to complete tasks effectively to meet organizations' goals and objectives (Neill-Harris et al., 2015). Organizations such as Mantech, Aon Corp., Bank of America Corp., BNSF Railway Co., Google Inc., and more have recognized the value of veterans' skills and have been active in hiring veterans; however, some organizations continue to struggle to overcome their negative perceptions of veterans. Although tax incentives serve a beneficial solution for HRP to hire veterans, there are many reasons why organizations should hire skilled veterans.

Veterans are being recognized by some organizations as accelerated learning curve because they are able to adapt to a different environment and learn new skills and concepts. Additionally, the skills veterans possess when they enter the civilian workforce are identifiable and transferable and can help enhance private organizations' productivity. Private organizations, like Booz, Allen and Hamilton, CACI and Bae System, Inc, have consecutively topped the list for "*best companies*" hiring veterans by monster.com, a global job search website. For instance, on ManTech International Corporation's career site, there is a link that allows veterans to input their military occupation, after which civilian counterpart occupation is then shown, allowing veterans to apply for jobs that

align with their skills. These companies thrive on hiring veterans because they passionately believe that veterans possess valuable skills that are beneficial to their organizations. Other companies, including Lockheed +Martin, Boeing, USAA, BAE system, Starbucks, Amazon, and others, are also committed to hiring veterans (monster.com, 2019).

Government Roles in Helping Veterans Find Employment

Veterans face many challenges upon transitioning from the military to civilian employment. To assist veterans' unemployment social problems, the federal government of the United States has constructed and implemented various programs and laws to help veterans in being successful integrate back into civilian workforce after leaving the military. The federal government as enacted programs including department of defense transition assistance program, tax incentives for hiring veterans, federal educational programs, and other federal resources.

Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program

The DoD's TAP was created in the 1990s by the U.S. Congress to help veterans gain employment after transitioning out of the military (DoD, n.d: Faurer et al., 2014). TAP is a service offered to servicemembers departing from the military. The program provides information and training to assist service members in readjusting back into civilian society and workforce. In 1990, the U.S. Congress realized that veterans were leaving the military with skills that were not transferable to the civilian workforce. DoD TAP was offered to veterans before their exit from the military with resources and training that they might need to reintegrate successfully into civilian society and the

workforce (DoD, n.d.; Faurer et al., 2014). Some of these resources included résumé writing, ways to find self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, and educational assistance. Although DoD's TAP was initiated to help veterans, it was not effective because many veterans continued to struggle to gain employment after transitioning from the military.

DoD's TAP was redesigned and revamped to include new transition goals, plans, successes (GPS) to help reduce veterans' unemployment rate, which was at one of its highest peaks of 8.7% in 2010 (obamawhitehouse.archives.gov). Adding the transition GPS to the DoD TAP allowed veterans to work with counselors on personalized transition plans and goals. Faurer et al. (2014) studied the effectiveness of the redesigned TAP and found that even though some veterans who had transitioned were able to locate civilian employment after using the program, others found it ineffective and continued to struggle to gain employment. Faurer et al. also noted that veterans who had served more than ten years found the program useful, whereas those who had served for less than 2 years (i.e., separated because of medical or family issues) found that the program was not as effective. Faurer et al. concluded that although the program was effective, the need for improvements was still evident, as the average time served by some service members is 4 to 6 years and gaining employment after service transition is critical to their survival.

Tax Incentives for Hiring Veterans

The federal government recognized the need to implement programs and grant incentives to organizations to make the hiring of veterans more attractive to employers. To reduce the rate of veterans' unemployment, the government introduced benefits and

incentives to employers and HR hiring personnel. The goal of the tax incentives was to make veterans more marketable to the civilian workforce and to reduce veterans' unemployment rates. These incentives include tax credits. Davis and Minnis (2017) and Kutsmode (2015) stated that although many employers and HRP have come to realize that veterans can be excellent employees when given the opportunity, veterans are still struggling to gain employment in the civilian workforce. Veterans are amenable to being trained for civilian positions and possess such desirable working skills as teamwork, loyalty, and technical and soft skills; however, organizations continue to lack effective processes to hire veterans (Stone & Stone, 2015).

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit, also known as WOTC, an extension of the Wounded Warrior Program and Returning Heroes, was modified and enacted in December 2015 by former President Obama after expiring and being extended numerous times. The U.S. federal government launched WOTC in 1978 as a voluntary employment tax that allowed organizations to capitalize on earning tax credits for hiring skilled veterans. Because some transitioning veterans faced with unemployment in the civilian workforce, the WOTC gives them the potential opportunity to find employment. The government has urged businesses to capitalize on these incentives, and organizations can earn as much as $2,400 per veteran employee or 40% of the employed veteran's first year of qualified wages.

In the event where new hires meet qualified long-term unemployment standards, employers are eligible to receive a tax break. To be considered eligible, employers must keep new employees for 27 consecutive weeks. Once these employees have worked

approximately 120 hours, their employers can claim 25% of their first-year wages, which can be as much as $6,000. This results in a maximum income tax credit of $1,500. For employers to claim 40% of the initial $6,000 in wages, employees would have had to work approximately 400 hours. That would be a potential tax credit of $2,400. Another benefit is short-term employment credit. The short-term employment credit is applicable if the veterans are employed and had previously received unemployment compensation for a calendar month. The short-term employment credit enables employers to claim 40% of the initial $6,000 in wages.

Other tax incentives given are the Returning Home Heroes tax credit and the Wounded Warrior tax credit. According to Potter (2016), Returning Heroes tax credit gave employers incentives that would encourage them to employ veterans on either a long-term or a short-term basis. The Wounded Warrior tax credit doubled the tax credit for veterans identified as having disabilities that happened while they were serving. Potter also found that hiring veterans with disabilities would give employers a tax credit of $12,000. Once veterans leave the military and are employed by civilian employers within the first year of their departure from the military, the hiring employers may receive a tax credit of $24,000. Many HRP have come to learn that veterans make excellent employers. Stone and Stone (2015) stated that veterans possess trainable and desirable skills. Although these skills make veterans desirable employers, they are not enough to induce organizations to hire veterans. Tax incentives encourage organizations to hire veterans, thus contributing to veteran employment.

Federal Educational Programs

Education plays a crucial role in veterans' transition to civilian employment. According to Dortch (2016), various educational programs have been implemented to assist veterans in gaining educational degrees, certifications, and trade. Educational assistance originated in 1944 thanks to the efforts of President Roosevelt. The GI Bill of Rights was established to provide financial support to returning GIs so that they could obtain a college degree or certification to help them to gain civilian employment (Dortch, 2016). Congress realized that something needed to be done to help veterans to obtain work after transitioning from the military. In 1956, approximately half of World War II veterans took advantage of the GI Bill of Rights educational program at a cost of $7.8 million (Mattox, 2009). By 1956, more than 2.2 million veterans attended college, using educational benefits (Zhang, 2018). Within the first decade of the bill launch, more than 400,000 engineers, 200,000 teachers, 90,000 scientists, 60,000 doctors, and 22,000 dentists graduated with the educational benefits (Yuill & Katznelson, 2006).

The GI Bill of Rights educational program ended in July 1956, and the Vietnam-era GI Bill was launched in 1955 and continued until 1976 (Mattox, 2009). The post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) was created in 1977 for veterans who were on active duty on or after January 1, 1997, and before July 1, 1985 (Dortch, 2016). The VEAP also allowed veterans to receive a monthly allowance while they were in school. The Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (MGIB-AD) was created next and was available to veterans who were on active duty after June 30, 1985. The MGIB-AD also allowed veterans to receive a monthly allowance while in school, and veterans

were given 36 months to earn certification or a degree; however, to be eligible, veterans

had to be honorably discharged from the Army (Dortch, 2016). The MGIB-AD is still

available for veterans.

The post-9/11 GI Bill makes provision for veterans to have access to 36 months of

educational benefits along with monthly allowance. This is notably similar to the MGIB-

AD. To be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, veterans must have had to serve 90 days on

continuous active duty after September 10, 2001 (U.S. DVA, 2012). The Post-9/11 GI

Bill has been one of the country's most successful legislation on social affairs, and it has

helped veterans gain college degrees and employment. Veterans are allowed to attend

college for free with housing and book allowance. According to Zhang (2018) and va.gov

(2019b) the educational benefit over the past 70 years has helped millions of veterans to

attend college, easing their transition from the military to civilian life, and assisting in

U.S. economic growth because veterans are then able to locate employment. Other

educational assistance being offered to veterans includes the Vocational-Rehabilitation

and Employment education assistance, Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP),

Reserve Tuition Assistance, the Air National Guard Federal Tuition Assistance, and State

Tuition Assistance.

Other Federal Resources to Assist Transitioning Veterans

To help veterans to transition from the military to civilian workforce, several

programs have been offered by the U.S. federal government. Hero2Hired, also known as

H2H, was launched by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve in

December 2011, to assist veterans and army reservists in locating and obtaining

employment. H2H online program allows employers to post openings on the H2H website, where veterans also can post vacancies. The H2H also allows employers to conduct virtual job fairs with veterans and provide them with essential employment information.

The SEI (Special Employer Incentives) Program was initiated by the DVA to assist transitioned veterans with disabilities. The SEI aimed to offer incentives to private organizations to hire veterans with disabilities so that they could obtain paid job training and experience (va.gov, 2012). Participating organizations were reimbursed up to 50% of the salaries of participating veterans for 6 months. Organizations also were reimbursed for the costs of the training supplies used by veterans, including tools, equipment, uniforms, and accommodations (U.S. DVA, 2012). One positive outcome of the SEI was that veterans gained valuable civilian workforce skills that they could transfer to other civilian employment opportunities.

Created in 2011 by former First Lady Michelle Obama and Second Lady Dr. Jilll Biden, Joining Forces is another source that assists veterans in finding gainful employment. The goal of the Joining Forces was to help veterans and their spouses to find employment ("Fact Sheet,", 2012). The Joining Forces allowed the entire country to become involved and work together to help veterans. For instance, the websites offered various resources on employment, recruiting, and other useful information for veterans, spouses, and employers. More than 2,000 employers and their organizations took part in Joining Forces 2012, and approximately 125,000 veterans and their spouses were able to find employment (Cooper, 2012). The program has been praised by many in the military

community for its success in bridging the civilian and military divide and a difference

("Fact Sheet," 2012). Using media campaigns and corporate connection, the program has

assisted in creating veteran's employment and reducing veteran homeliness. HRP is now

able to understand better the skills and experiences veterans possess (Cooper, 2012).

Gap in the Literature

Veterans often exemplify excellent work ethic, teamwork and are viewed as being

reliable and dependable (Hall et al., 2014). Hiring managers and HRP have recognized

and acknowledged veterans' skills to the talent pool, yet they fail to hire veterans (Ford,

2017). Veterans hiring is a priority at some organizations; however, veteran

unemployment remains ongoing social problem veterans face. According to Agard

(2016), organizations are at a competitive disadvantage as they continue to not tap into

veteran talent pool. Implementing effective veteran hiring processes can be beneficial to

organizations and will improve veteran employment rate.

Multiple literature works on veterans' transitions and assistance given by the

federal government to assist veteran unemployment were identified. Gap identify in the

review of the literature was minimum literature on veteran hiring processes and veteran

employment. Transitioning from the Military and successfully doing so into private

organizations can significantly impact the employability and viability of veterans seeking

employment post-military (Ford, 2017; Minnis, 2017). It is imperative that HRP in

private organizations and transitioning service members understand the process and

experiences to assess veteran skills better and bridge the Military and civilian workforce's

cultural gap. Scholarly studies concerning veterans' transition from the Military to

civilian landscape are limited and should be increased (Keeling et al., 2019; Minnis, 2017; Stone & Stone. 2015).

More research is needed to better assist HRP in developing a sustainable veteran hiring processes and model to better and support transitioning veterans in civilian employment. Research is also needed to assess veterans who are already in the workplace. These veterans are a valuable source of information as they can speak to the experiences of searching for jobs and talk about the emotions surrounding leaving the Military and being employed into the civilian workforce. This ongoing social issue requires constructive recommendations to create a tangible solution. The lack of research on potential solutions to increase veterans' employment rate in private organizations, creates a scholarly gap in the existing literature. This study was designed to identify effective hiring processes used by HRP in private organizations with veteran employment of 25% or more. Employed veterans of the selected private organizations will be interviewed to acquire empirical data about their experiences on veteran hiring processes. The study findings may be helpful to other private organizations who may find it challenging to employ veterans.

Summary and Transition

Approximately 200,000 service members transition annually from the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Davis & Minnis, 2017; Ford, 2017). Several scholars have studied challenges faced by veterans as they transitioned from the military to civilian. With military skills and experience linked to that of the civilian workforce, veterans encounter difficulties finding employment. Davis and Minnis (2017), Minnis (2017),

Stone and Stone (2015), and Tanner (2014) believed that finding employment after military transition is an ongoing social issue faced by veterans. The specific problem is that some veterans and HRP in private organizations find hiring veterans hiring process immensely challenging (Carter et al., 2017; Stone & Stone, 2015; va.gov, 2019a). The skills of veterans are still mostly unknown by some private organizations, including HRP (Minnis, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more.

Chapter 2 presented the conceptual framework and literature review researching factors associated with veterans' difficulties in locating employment in the civilian workforce after service transition. The conceptual framework that drove this research was veteran employment and hiring processes, and the theory that was applicable to help provide this qualitative study with an understanding of the identified concepts was the person-organization fit theory. The literature review focused on background information on veterans transitioning into civilian workforce, military culture, veteran's employment, and poverty, employer's perception of veterans, the value veterans can bring to organizations and government roles in assisting veterans in finding employment.

Chapter 3 includes information about the research methodology, design rationale, my role as the researcher, participant selection, procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis. Information on the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures also are included in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. The processes investigated in this case study included hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications. Private organizations with a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more were considered to have a high veterans' employment rate. Employees hired as military veterans and HRP employed by the selected private organizations were the target population. HRP in the selected private organizations identified the hiring processes, including strategies, practices, and approaches that they had adopted and implemented over the years, contributing to the organizations' high veterans' employment rate. Employed veterans shared their experience with the selected organizations' veteran hiring processes. Additional sources that included the selected private organizations' career sites and job postings were reviewed to explore and analyze their hiring processes. The findings may provide insight into the effectiveness of the hiring processes used by the selected organizations and how they contributed to an employment rate of veterans of 25% or more.

Chapter 3 includes details about the research design and rationale, sample size, and sampling method, and my role as the researcher. Also included in the chapter are explanations of the recruitment of participants, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the strategies that enhanced the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

According to Wisdom et al. (2012), the three primary research methodologies are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The quantitative method, which is used to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables in a specific population, was not appropriate for this study (Stake, 2013). A quantitative methodology allows researchers to achieve internal validity through randomization (Stake, 2013). The mixed method approach also was not appropriate because it involves elements of qualitative and quantitative research. I used a qualitative methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic by interviewing a sample of experienced HRP and employed veterans.

Hoe and Hoare (2012) and Yilmaz (2013) stated that qualitative exploratory studies are needed when researchers want to gain insight into underlying reasons, opinions, and motives relevant to research topics, behaviors, or problems being investigated. Yin (2014) also referred to qualitative research as an exploratory method that involves seeking an in-depth understanding of groups, the behavior of human beings, or social phenomena. According to Bailey (2014), qualitative researchers focus on developing social constructivist worldviews. I conducted this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study to explore the hiring processes of HRP in private organizations that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. Using a qualitative methodology allowed me to integrate objective and subjective data to gain a better understanding by narrowing the research focus. Pervez (2014) stated that researchers often benefit from conducting qualitative research because of their ability to observe the participants' social

cues. A qualitative research design is used to investigate, identify, and gain a comprehensive and holistic understanding of unclear and complex issues, and it provides researchers with the opportunity to collect rich data about the phenomena under investigation (Stake, 2006; Yates & Leggett, 2016).

Qualitative researchers employ different approaches to support their selected research designs. According to Yin (2009), researchers conducting qualitative case study research seek to obtain an in-depth understanding of the behaviors of individuals or groups. The research question was appropriate for a qualitative, multiple-case study because it gave me a more in-depth understanding of the selected organizations' cultures, values, goals, missions, and commitment to social change.

Research Design Rationale

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that any research design is driven by the purpose of the study and the chosen data collection method. There are several qualitative research designs: ethnography, phenomenology, case study, narrative, heuristic, and grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that phenomenological research involves seeking to understand the nature and fundamental objective of a phenomenon. Ethnography is used to gain in-depth knowledge of individuals' interactions with others and the culture and society in which they live. Grounded theory is used to understand and expand a substantive theory about a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Case study is used to investigate, explore, and gain a comprehensive and holistic understanding of unclear and complicated issues or phenomena (Stake, 2006). I chose a

case study design for the current qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. A case study design is used to conduct in-depth explorations and analyses of topics or issues (Yin, 2009). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), case study research is not used to determine cause and effect (i.e., quantitative) or make predictions; instead, it is used to gain an in-depth understanding of how and why particular phenomena occurred.

Limited research has been conducted on veterans' employment and the hiring processes of HRP in private organizations (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Keeling et al., 2019; Stone & Stone, 2015). This ongoing social issue requires constructive recommendations to create robust solutions. An exploratory, multiple-case study was deemed appropriate for this study because literature about the phenomenon, the effectiveness of hiring processes to employ military veterans, has been scant (Yin, 2013). Researchers conduct exploratory case studies to obtain information about participants' experiences and arrive at their findings.

Research Question

Research questions are among the essential components of any study and are used to guide construction of interview questions, obtain data, and arrive at findings. One research question guided the current study: What are the perspectives of HRP and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more?

Role of the Researcher

The quality and completeness of any research endeavor depend on the involvement of the researcher. In a qualitative case study, the researcher's role is to be an advocate, an instructor, an investigator, a reviewer, and a biographer. Stake (1995) asserted that from a constructivist point of view, the researcher's role is to interpret and analyze the data to arrive at findings. My responsibility in this study was to ensure that the participants had a clear understanding of my role as the researcher and the importance of using competent and credible data collection instruments.

I explained the data collection, coding, and data analysis processes fully to the participants. I advised the participants that they were free to ask any questions or share concerns about the study to gain clarity. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation were a few of my roles in this study. I also served as the data analyst and used NVivo to assist in transcribing, organizing, and coding all of the transcribed interview responses. Open-ended questions were asked during telephone interview sessions.

HRP participants were selected based on their experiences relevant to hiring veterans for the selected organizations that had a high veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. Employed veterans from the selected organizations also were in the sample. Participants were informed before and after expressing their willingness to join the study of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I had no personal relationships or attachments to any of the participants. I did not use any incentives to attract or retain participants. Participants' names and other identifying information remained confidential throughout the study.

Parker and Henfield (2012) and Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) stated that the risk of researcher bias often manifests when researchers are the primary data collection instrument. Stake (1995) asserted that researchers must maintain full responsibility for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting collected data. To conduct an ethical study, I set aside my personal feelings, values, and beliefs as a military veteran to ensure that they did not contribute to bias. I attempted to isolate all preconceptions and cognitive biases, factors that could have harmed the data collection process. I used bracketing to reduce previous negative assumptions or biases that could have impeded the study.

Methodology

I used a qualitative research method to conduct the study. Stake (2013) noted that the choice of methodology depends on the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and should address the purpose of the research and answer the research question. Researchers are expected to provide adequate justification for their selected methodologies (Boddy, 2016). For this study, I ensured that the selected method adhered to recommendations in the methodological literature. The major components of the research process, including participant selection, recruitment process, and data analysis, are explained next. Included are details about the target population, sampling process and sample, instrumentation, and data collection process.

Participant Selection

To obtain valuable and valid data, qualitative researchers need to recruit participants with knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being investigated (Wisdom et al., 2012). The target population for this study comprised HRP from private

organizations with a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. Participating employees hired as military veterans were employed by the selected private organizations at the time of the study. Participating HRP were required to have 5 years of experience relevant to hiring personnel and to have demonstrated success in hiring veterans.

Sampling was used to obtain 16 participants (i.e., employees hired as military veterans and HRP employed by the three selected private organizations) to collect sufficient information about the research topic of inquiry (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Emmel (2013) and Guetterman (2015) described sampling as the process of identifying, recruiting, and selecting participants from the target population. Depending on the defined number of participants and the data required to satisfy their studies, qualitative researchers often lean on random or purposive sampling. I used purposive sampling to obtain my participants.

Purposive sampling is a subjective technique that relies on researchers' judgment to identify and recruit participants. The rationale for using purposive sampling for this study included the need to generalize the study's findings by selecting the most ideal and resourceful participants. The selected organizations had to have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. They also had to meet the following criteria:

- HRP had successfully hired veterans within the past 5 years.
- HRP were working as full-time employees of the selected private organizations, all of which had a high veterans' employment rate of 25% or more.

- Employees hired as military veterans were employed on a part-time or a full-time basis at the selected private organizations.

- All potential participants had to sign the required consent form to join the study.

- All participants were willing to join the study, as outlined in the consent form.

- All participants were willing to provide insight into the selected organizations' hiring processes relevant to employing military veterans.

- All participants were willing to review the transcriptions of their interview responses and recommend any necessary amendments to ensure that the transcribed documents reflected their responses accurately.

Private organizations were vetted on Google using the search term *best companies for veterans*. Once the private organizations were identified, I randomly selected 15 private organizations to review their employment records relevant to hiring military veterans on their company websites. The private organizations had to have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more to be eligible to join the study. I also explored their career sites to assess the organizations' commitment to helping veterans fill vacant positions.

I then used LinkedIn, a professional networking site, to acquire information about six private organizations that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. For instance, on LinkedIn, there is an option to locate most organizations' employees' names and titles. I used this option to identify and locate potential participants (i.e., HRP and military veteran employees) currently working for the six selected private organizations

to request connections. I used six identified private organizations to increase the likelihood of finding participants.

Once acceptances confirmed connections, I sent an introductory message and letter of invitation through LinkedIn to each participant to solicit participation in the study. Emails were also sent to specific group administrators on LinkedIn requesting permission to post to potential participants. I ensured that all potential participants met the criteria to be in the study and that they were currently employed as HRP or veterans by the selected organizations. Sixteen participants from three private organizations were recruited to join the study.

Instrumentation

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), it is important to choose the most effective instrument that properly aligns with the research purpose. Yin (2017) stated that the goal of instrumentation in qualitative case study research is to gather data from multiple sources using processes that are valid and reliable to answer the research question. I used primary and secondary data to achieve the objectives of the study and to answer the research question. Because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, I conducted primary data collection using telephone interviews. Reviewing supporting documentation, including the selected organizations' career sites and job postings, served as the secondary data collection method to support sources collected during the primary data collection process. An interview protocol that required preparing an interview guide, keeping field notes, and maintaining audio recordings of the interview responses was followed.

Interview Guide

I used an interview guide to conduct all interviews. Before conducting the interviews, I emailed important information to the participants, including the consent form, a letter of understanding, the interview protocol, and information on participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. Participants were also given the option to schedule phone sessions to alleviate any concerns about the research, data collection, anonymity, and interviewing sessions. Reviewing the consent form with the participants ensured that they fully understood the research process and their right to ask any questions about the study. Participants were allowed to contact me as necessary to provide clarification about the consent form. Upon receiving and reviewing the signed consent forms, I scheduled interview times and dates with the participants.

During the interview sessions, I reintroduced myself as the researcher, restated the purpose of the study, reviewed the signed consent form, and answered questions or concerns about the study. Interviews were scheduled to last 45 to 60 minutes. I ended the interviews by thanking the participants and ensuring that their contact information was current.

After all interviews were completed and the data, including audio recordings and field notes, had been collected, I sent the transcriptions to the respective participants for review. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the goal of reviewing interview transcriptions is to improve the accuracy and credibility of a study by allowing the participants to amend their responses if there are any discrepancies between their oral responses and the written transcriptions.

Field Test

For data verification, I conducted a field test of the interview protocol to ensure that the intended data were generated. I sought guidance from qualitative methodology experts to assess the study's quality and alignment of the RQ and the interview questions with the purpose and expectations of the study. Upon receiving feedback, I made the recommended changes and conducted mock online interviews to identify any vulnerable areas of the data collection process. Two HRP and three veterans employed with the U.S. Department of the Army, all of whom were work colleagues with no association to the study, were asked to ensure that any words with elicit bias were eliminated from the interview questions and that the interview questions were comprehensive enough to answer the RQ.

Interviews

Telephone interviews with HRP and employed veterans from the selected organizations were the primary data collection method to obtain insight into the effectiveness of the organizations' hiring processes to employ veterans. Interviewing employed veterans and HRP, along with reviewing the organizations' external documents, facilitated data triangulation and accurate findings.

I served as the primary data collection instrument. Each interview was scheduled to last 45 to 60 minutes. In qualitative research, it is common for interviews to be used to collect the data because they allow the participants to provide more detailed responses to questions about the phenomenon being investigated. The interview data collected over

the telephone were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes. Field notes also were kept during the interview sessions.

Data collection in case studies is different from other processes because the interviewers are responsible for accommodating the interviewees' availability, which limits the interviewers' ability to control the environment or its variables (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) also stated that when collecting interview data, interviewers must always consider the participants' time. I ensured that my participants felt comfortable and in control during the interviews. I treated all participants with the utmost respect, and I ensured that the interviewees had a sense of control over the interview environment so that they were more willing to provide open and detailed responses to the interview questions. Before the interview sessions, participants were informed of the overall process, including measures to maintain the confidentiality of their identities, follow-up procedures, interview protocol, and exit procedure.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) asserted that although interviewing strangers can be challenging, establishing clear and close communication at the initial stage of the participants' commitment to join the studies can eliminate any difficulties. I maintained communication with the participants that spanned the initial participant selection process to completion of the study. According to Rubin and Rubin, during the interviews, respondents may display emotional stress and fatigue through tone of voice or body language. Rubin and Rubin stated that it is essential for researchers to deal with such challenges. If any participants had expressed discomfort with any of the interview questions, I moved on to the next question. The interview protocol was constructed and

implemented to facilitate smooth and successful sessions; however, all sessions remained flexible to include probing questions.

At the end of all interview session, the participants were asked to share additional information about the hiring process relevant to employing veterans or about anything else that was not covered during the sessions. Participants were thanked for volunteering to be in the study. They also were asked to provide contact addresses, if not already obtained, such as email or telephone numbers to schedule and conduct the transcription reviews. This confidential contact information was stored securely with the other research documents.

It took approximately 5 to 6 days to transcribe the recorded audio interviews using NVivo's transcription assistant, one of the newest features in NVivo. The NVivo transcription assistant provides verbatim accurate transcriptions from audio recordings. Once the data were transcribed, transcription reviews were scheduled and conducted with the participants to ensure accuracy. Participants were sent copies of their respective transcriptions for review, possible amendments, and approval. Participants had 1 week to review and approve or correct the transcriptions. If any participants failed to confirm the transcriptions within the 1-week review period, I assumed that the interview responses had been transcribed correctly.

Interview Questions

I collected data for the study using semistructured interviews and open-ended questions. I was responsible for preparing interview questions that met the objectives of the research. The interview questions were flexible, and follow-up questions were

encouraged in case any participants were hesitant to provide information needed to meet the objectives of the study.

Audio Recordings

Audio recordings were completed during all interview sessions. Participants were informed beforehand that the interview sessions would be recorded. Recording the interview sessions was important to the data analysis because they allowed me to capture the participants' responses and listen to the sessions repeatedly. A digital voice recorder with long battery life, adequate storage capacity, and clear audio was used. All recorded data were reviewed and transcribed following the interview sessions.

Field Notes

Field notes are highly recommended in qualitative studies to document contextual information (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). Field notes give researchers the opportunity to capture nonverbal clues, inclusive of facial expressions. During each interview session, collecting field notes assisted in closing the gap where information was not expressed clearly and in situations where the interviewees did not provide complete their responses. The field notes were compared to the recordings to ensure the accuracy of the collected data.

Secondary Data

Reviewing secondary data gave me the opportunity to maximize data utility. Secondary data were external, including the selected private organizations' career, military career sites, job postings, and other resources offered to veterans. The provision

of internal resources such as hiring policies and procedures was not required, but this

information was accepted if given voluntarily by the HRP and veterans in the sample.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The study relied on semistructured interviews, the primary data collection

protocol, to answer the research question. Secondary data were used to crosscheck

primary data collected, including reviewing the organizations' external sources.

Participants were recruited voluntarily through LinkedIn, a professional networking site.

Potential participants were contacted via LinkedIn Messenger and were invited to join the

study. The invitation also was posted in the specific groups, as permitted, to explain the

purpose of the research and the criteria to participate. Identified participants had to meet

previously mentioned criteria. Potential participants were given 1 to 2 weeks to accept the

invitation via email. Once the potential participants agreed to participate in the study, I

sent them the consent form explaining the interviewing process. Participants were

required to review the consent form and confirm their consent to participate in the study.

Interviews were conducted to collect data, and an interview guide ensured the

success of the interview sessions. All interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes

were taken to support the recordings. The data collected from the interviews were

relevant only to the participants' experiences and knowledge associated with the hiring

processes of the three selected organizations, all of which had a veterans' employment

rate of 25% or more. The use of an interview guide helped me to keep the interviews

aligned with the focus of the research.

As a part of the exit process, participants were reminded that the anonymity and confidentiality of all personal and study information would be maintained. Participants were given time at the end of their interview sessions to ask for clarification about any parts of the study. The participants also were given the opportunity to share supplementary information related to the interview questions. I intend to reach out to the participants once Walden University approves the completed study to share the results with them.

Data Analysis Plan

According to Stake (1995), in case studies, most of the data are derived from the participants' responses to the interview questions and the field notes kept during the interviewing sessions. For this study, data analysis was employed using a data analysis plan. Moustakas (1994) and Rowley (2012) suggested that the fundamental components of a data analysis plan are as follows: (a) organizing collected data, (b) familiarizing oneself with the data, (c) classifying the data, (d) coding the data, (e) interpreting the data, (f) analyzing the data, and (g) presenting the findings.

According to Yin (2014), data organizations foster both flexibility and accuracy of data. Proper research requires a good data organization technique. I collected and organized the data into separate groupings of interviews, field notes, and document reviews to facilitate clear identification of the collected data. I employed field notes and recorded the participants' responses during the interviews session to transcribe the data, as suggested by Birt et al. (2016).

The recorded audio interviews were transcribed using NVivo's transcription assistant, one of the newest features of NVivo. I also reviewed the transcriptions to verify that all wordings were valid. I then sent the transcriptions to the respective participants for review and any changes. The transcribed data were stored as Word documents, and I began coding the data once the participants returned their transcriptions to me.

Rowley (2012) recommended that researchers use coding to identify themes effectively. The transcribed interview responses were analyzed and coded using alphanumeric identifiers (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). Data were coded manually. I also used NVivo to place the categories into nodes, a container for coding themes and identifying emerging patterns. According to Woods et al. (2015), qualitative software allows researchers to analyze their collected data. Relevant phases were identified and categorized as preliminary themes. NVivo also allowed me to organize the data and assign group codes into categories to identify themes (Woods et al., 2015).

The quotations and phrases that the participants used to represent themes related to the RQ were queried using a text search string within NVivo. The software visually illustrated the number of times that different classifications of themes emerged from the interviews. This technique is known as developing cases for storage. The memo element of NVivo also was used to record additional findings.

Analysis of the data was a rigorous process. Constant coding was needed to identify the point where data saturation was achieved. I placed a high priority on conducting meaningful interviews to arrive at valid findings. The data were credible and presented an authentic report of the processes used by HRP in the six private

organizations to hire military veterans. The processes in this case study included hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative investigations is more obscure than it is in quantitative research because qualitative researchers cannot use instruments such as established statistical metrics to verify validity and reliability. Recording the interview sessions served as the basis of the study's trustworthiness (Al-Yateem, 2012). In the following text, I explain how I determined that the findings were credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the criteria that establish that the results are credible or believable. To ensure and address any issues of credibility that may have arisen when collecting the data, I used triangulation and transcription reviews. Triangulation means using more than one source to collect the data, including interviews, observations, field notes, and reviews of secondary sources. For this study, interviews, field notes, and a review of secondary data comprised the process of triangulation. The transcription reviews played an important role in the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They allowed the participants to review their own transcribed interview responses for accuracy, discuss any issues that they might have about the transcriptions, or provide additional insight into the interview questions.

Transferability

According to Yin (2018), transferability refers to the results being generalizable beyond the study's original purpose. Extensive and descriptive details were incorporated into my explanation of each stage of the study to ensure transferability. I explained each step of the research process with clarity and detail to ensure that future researchers have sufficient information to evaluate the applicability of the study. The findings also may be used by other private organizations that find it challenging to hire veterans because of ineffective hiring processes.

Dependability

In research, dependability is achieved when the study findings are consistent and enable other researchers to replicate the information described in the study (Yin, 2018). Even though the HRP in private organizations are willing to hire veterans, they remain unaware of what hiring processes to use. To obtain dependable findings, I used data triangulation based on the interview responses, review of secondary sources, and field notes to confirm the consistency of the findings. I also kept an audit trail to ensure that data collection and analysis met the required standard consistently to replicate the findings and that the analysis was justified and was not based on my understanding of the topic.

Confirmability

I applied data triangulation to eliminate or reduce any bias that might have been present and to address any issues of confirmability. Yin (2014) stated that to strengthen the construct validity of case studies, multiple sources should be employed. Using the

interview responses and other data collection methods assisted significantly in addressing confirmability (M. B. Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Ethical Procedures

I adhered to Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements before conducting the study. I obtained all necessary approvals and complied with all of the university's ethical standards before receiving IRB approval to begin the study and conduct the interviews (IRB approval # 09-30-20-0735878). To uphold ethical procedures and practices during the study, I gave the participants detailed information about the study that included details about their role, my role as the researcher, and their right to ask any questions about the study and interview process.

No interviews happened until the participants had signed and returned the informed consent, which ensured that they were fully aware of and acknowledged the study's process and intent. The anonymous and voluntary nature of the interview sessions was stated clearly in the interview protocol and consent form. I did not share any identifying information with anyone during the study.

I used the transcription reviews to ensure the accuracy of the participants' responses to the interview questions and their approval of the retrieved data. This procedure took place done after the data had been transcribed using NVivo. The interviews were completed over the telephone and/or virtually, depending on each participant's preference. All collected data were stored on Google drive, encrypted secure cloud storage, and USB devices. Study information was shared only with my assigned chair and committee members. Walden University recommends that data be stored for 5

years following completion and publication of the study. After that time, all documentation used in the study will be shredded or deleted electronically. To eliminate any ethical issues, no information was shared with the participants about my personal experience as a military veteran and search for employment after service transition.

Summary and Transition

Chapter 3 focused on the methodology used to collect, record, transcribe, and analyze the data. A multiple-case study research design was used to give me the leverage to explore the identified topic. The case study design facilitates the use of various sources of information to conduct in-depth explorations and analyses of topics or issues within the context of understanding such issues or topics from the participants' perspectives (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This aligned with the purpose of the study, which was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. Interviewing was deemed appropriate as the primary data collection method to obtain the participants about their perceptions and experiences regarding the effectiveness of the six organizations' processes of hiring veterans. Open-ended questions were asked during the interviews. My role as the researcher was to collect, analyze, and interpret the data and to enhance the credibility and reliability of the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings and discusses the results in terms of their alignment with the RQ.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. One research question guided the study: What are the perspectives of HRP and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more? The research question was designed to address the lack of research on potential solutions to increase the employment rate of military veterans in private organizations. To fill this gap, I conducted a qualitative exploratory multiple-case study to explore the hiring processes used by HRP from three private organizations with a high veterans' employment rate of 25%. Data from semistructured interviews were collected from the sample of HRP and employed military veterans about their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives concerning the hiring processes of their respective organizations relevant to military veterans.

Data were coded manually. I also employed transcription review to ensure data accuracy, credibility, validity, and clarification with all 16 participants. Using a data analysis plan helped me to generate codes and identify emergent themes, conduct thematic analysis of the data, and produce new understandings and detailed descriptions (Magilvy et al., 2009). The identified themes were solely based on the 16 participants' responses to the interview questions. Use of manual coding and NVivo helped me to identify eight themes, with two themes having subthemes.

In this chapter, I provide details about the interview setting, participant demographics, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter also addresses the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the results based on my assessment of the validity and reliability of the interview responses. Also presented are my findings. The names of the three private organizations have been replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Setting

Semistructured telephone interviews were conducted with 16 HRP and employed veterans from three private organizations. After receiving approval from Walden University's IRB to conduct the study, I recruited the participants using LinkedIn. The recruitment invitation detailed the purpose of the study and criteria to join the study. On the invitation, I requested that interested participants who met the criteria contact me by telephone or email. I also attended several job fairs to network with potential participants to increases my chances to locate participants. I was able to recruit 20 participants successfully, but four withdrew, leaving a sample of 16 participants.

LinkedIn Messenger was my primary communication means of communication with 10 participants. Six other participants used their work email addresses to communicate with me. Upon receiving signed consent from the participants, I scheduled interview sessions at times convenient to them.

Demographics

The sample comprised 16 HRP and military veterans employed by three private organizations that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. The HRP in the

study were required to have a minimum of 5 years of experience hiring veterans. The HRP and veterans were full-time employees of the three selected private organizations.

All 16 participants had in-depth knowledge of their respective organizations' hiring process relevant to military veterans, and all of them were willing to share their experience concerning the phenomenon. Most of the participants were educated about their respective organizations' veterans' hiring processes and directed me to useful resources to assist veterans in finding employment. I did not collect any demographic information about the participants. No identifiers or references were made that would have disclosed the participants' identities. Participants were identified using alphanumeric pseudonyms (e.g., Participant 1, etc.).

Data Collection

Following IRB approval, I recruited potential volunteers for the study and then conducted interviews with 16 participants over 9 weeks. One point that merits mention is the impact of COVID-19 on the study. The pandemic changed the normal activities of HRP and employed veterans. Some potential participants were unable to join the study because they had difficulty balancing working from home and taking care of other responsibilities unrelated to work. In an effort to locate participants for the study, I attended various virtual veteran hiring events to network with veterans and HPR. I also networked with retired military officers who were connected to HPR at organizations that had a high veterans' employment rate. I sent LinkedIn connection requests to potential participants, as well as invitations to join the study using LinkedIn Messenger and email addresses listed on potential participants' LinkedIn profiles.

Once the 16 participants had been recruited, they were asked to review and sign the consent form. Participants were informed about the interview process, the purpose of the study, my role as the researcher, and their right to withdraw at any time from the study without any repercussions. Telephone interviews were scheduled and conducted at the participants' convenience. Interview sessions were conducted over the phone in my home office to ensure a quiet and private location free of interruptions and to protect the participants' identities. The 16 participants were located in various states throughout the country.

Data were collected using semistructured interviews and a review of secondary data. Each audio-recorded interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. Recording the interviews was essential to the data analysis because it allowed me to capture the participants' responses and listen to the sessions repeatedly. A digital voice recorder with long battery life, adequate storage capacity, and clear audio was used. All recorded data were reviewed and transcribed following the interview sessions.

The transcription reviews played an essential role in ensuring the credibility of the study because they allowed the participants to review their transcribed interview responses for accuracy and make changes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Reilly, 2013). Interviews were audio recorded, and the interview responses were transcribed and emailed to the respective participants. All transcriptions were deemed accurate by the participants via written confirmation. I then coded the transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Data Coding

The coding of the transcribed interview responses was done in four stages. The first stage of coding required the identification of common keywords to obtain an idea of how coding appeared in different contexts (Amina & Yokb, 2015). I read four interviews succinctly, two each from HRP and veterans, to identify common keywords. Then I completed a word-query search using the Query Wizard tool in NVivo to find similar and common keywords in all interviews. This process made the coding happen more quickly as it allowed me to see how a single code appeared in different contexts.

In the second stage, I read all interview transcriptions line by line to identify all possible codes (Amina & Yokb, 2015). In this stage, each code represented a single keyword or context. After a few transcriptions had been coded, the codes began to repeat with either the same keywords or context. At this stage, a code did not represent a single keyword or phrase, but rather an idea or a broader concept (Williams & Moser, 2019).

For example, the codes mentioned with the two following transcriptions identified the idea of networking and the idea that knowing more people in the applied firms helped in the process of job application. The two codes were merged into the single code of networking, which referred to both knowing people and talking with people in the companies. This allowed me to reduce the overall number of codes to a manageable extent.

- "I think I just network like crazy, talk to everybody I could, email everyone I could, and get a great essential of what everyone told me, and I just applied it and tried to make it happen." (Code: Networking)

- "Knowing some of the people prior to joining the company, it was relatively easy for me to become a member of our organization." (Code: Knowing people in the company)

In the third stage, the formulated codes were categorized into themes (Williams & Moser, 2019). I used NVivo's cluster analysis tool to create a map of similar codes, which was then used as a guide to form themes and categorize the codes. As depicted in Figure 1, the codes of handshake program, job fairs, referral program, and skill bridge program were mapped closely, whereas the codes of certifications, workshop, résumé writing, networking, and veterans' program were mapped together based on coding similarity.

The codes of skill set transfer tool and TAP were mapped in the second cluster, despite being very close to the first cluster. The two big clusters (C1, C2) in Figure 1 illustrated that at least two themes could be formed from these chosen codes. In the selected codes shown in Figure 1, the first cluster was named "employee support programs," and the second cluster was named "skill set translation." Codes of skill set transfer tool and TAP were mapped in the first cluster of "employee support programs" based on word similarity and context. The same procedure was used to create 11 themes from 53 codes, resulting in a total of 64 coding items in NVivo.

Figure 1

A Dendrogram of Coding Clusters
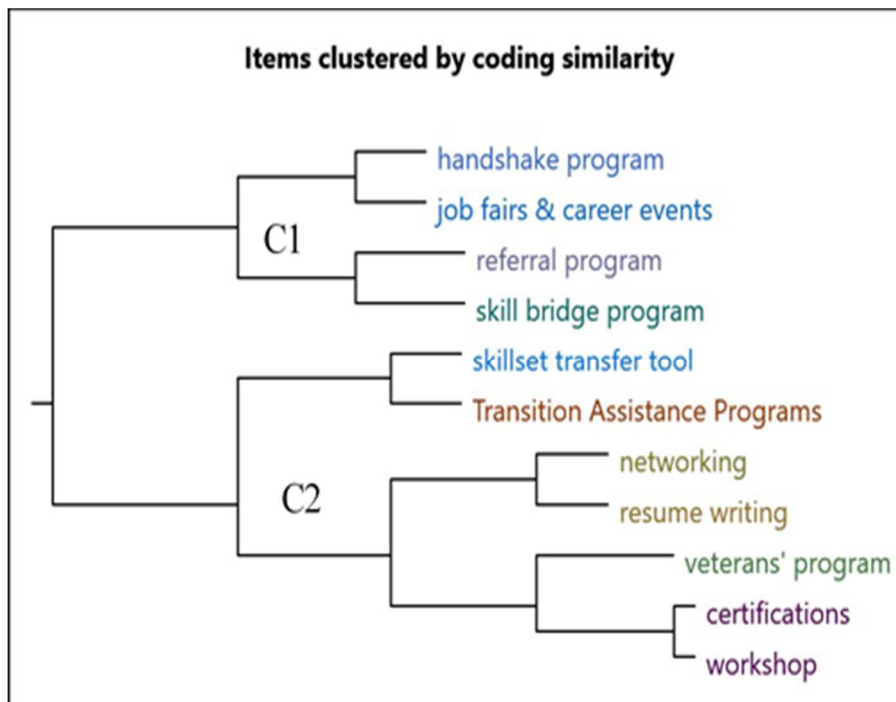
Emergent Themes

I used a multilevel code hierarchy to formulate the eight themes (Saldana, 2015).

This meant that the coding scheme followed a parent → child → grandchild mode. The

two themes that had subthemes were discussed as independent themes. Figure 2

illustrates the eight emergent themes, titled as veteran hiring process, assessment

procedures, commitment to hire veterans, contributing factors in firm selection,

transitioning phase and skill set translation, and challenges for recruiters and veterans.

The theme of veteran hiring process has subthemes of veteran recruitment team

(VRT) and information availability/spread. Similarly, the theme of commitment to hire

veterans has the subtheme of employee support programs (ESP). A pie chart

representation of the themes from NVivo makes it easier to see the overall coverage of

the themes. From the chart, it can be seen that the themes of veteran hiring process

(purple), contributing factors in firm selection (green), and commitment to hire veterans

(yellow) were the most prominent themes in the interview data set.

Figure 2

Themes That Emerged From the Interview Codes
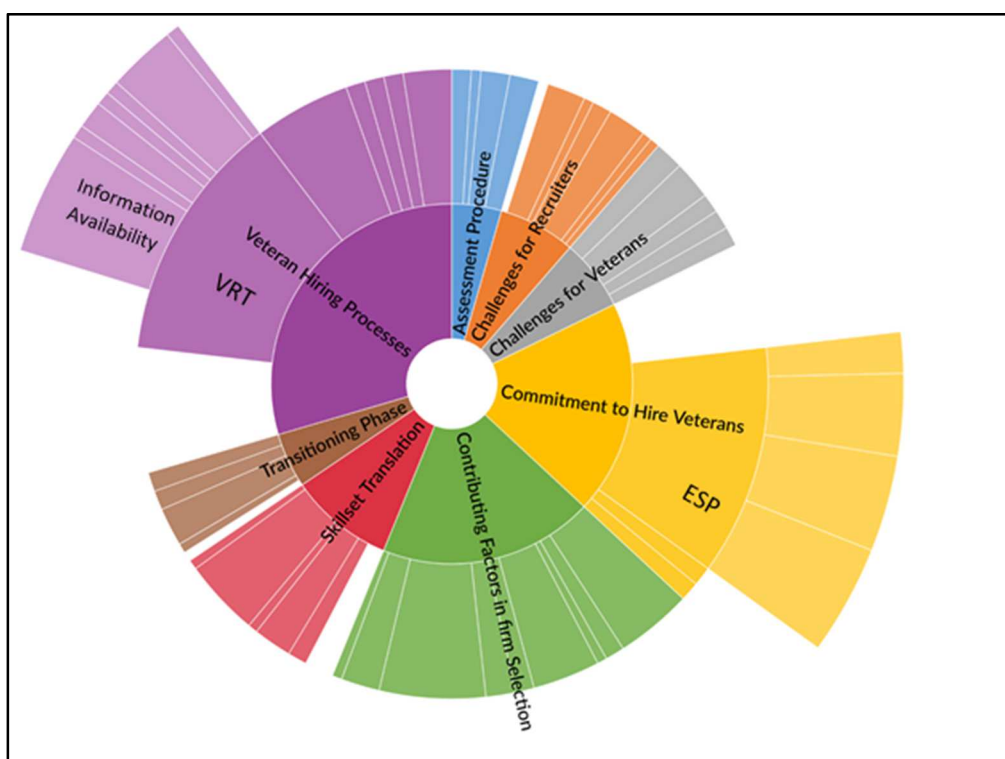
Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility refers to the criteria that establish that results are credible or believable

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To address any credibility issues that could have occurred

during data collection, I used triangulation and transcription reviews. The reviews

allowed the participants to review their own transcribed interview responses for accuracy and to improve the credibility of the study (Reilly, 2013).

The credibility of the findings was enhanced by integrating interviews and secondary data, and by conducting a systematic review of relevant journal articles that focused on employment and hiring processes relevant to military veterans (Reilly, 2013). The interview questions were based on the literature review findings, which then guided the formation of themes. Again, I checked the themes with the systematic reviews to establish relevancy and coherency between the previous research and present findings. Field testing the interview protocol also enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the results being generalizable beyond the original purpose of the study (Yin, 2018). The overall representativeness of the results was enhanced by the sample of veterans and HRP employed by private organizations that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. The diverse sample of veterans and HRP imply that study findings may be applied to other private organizations.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of the findings and how they could be replicated or applied over time (Miles et al., 2014). I used a rigorous audit trail to ensure that data collection and analysis met the required standard to replicate the findings. The dependability of the findings was maintained by using the keyword coding strategy in NVivo. This use limited personal bias when interpreting the data as a whole (Miles et al., 2014).

Using simple codes to represent their data allows researchers to present what their study participants said without injecting any personal interpretation bias (Reilly, 2013). These codes then converge into relevant themes based on their meaning and connotations (Amina & Yokb, 2015). Themes are then compared using a systematic review, allowing for triangulation and dependability.

Confirmability

Data triangulation was applied to eliminate or reduce any bias that might have been present and address confirmability issues. Confirmability addresses the objectivity of a qualitative study, its neutrality, and the absence of personal motives or biases (Yin, 2018). I managed my biases by recording all of the interview sessions and allowing the participants to review their transcriptions to ensure the accuracy of transcribed data to establish confirmability (Kornbluh, 2015). This validation approach demonstrated trustworthiness.

Confirmability of the results was also enhanced by stating each step involved in the formation of the interview questions, participant selection, data collection, and data coding and analysis. In this way, I sought to ensure that other researchers would be able to follow the steps to generate similar results (Kornbluh, 2015). Apart from this, moving from singular one-dimensional codes to high-level themes was done using procedural steps of word similarity and coding similarity in NVivo, which also may be replicated easily by future researchers.

Results

The discussion now turns to how the themes emerged and the codes that they represented.

Thematic Analysis

Explanations of the emergence of the individual themes from the interview codes are presented in this section. The focus shifts back and forth from individual codes to the higher level themes, analyzing the significant and usage of induvial codes and how they combine together in a wider context. I used interview excerpts that presented different aspects of the same codes or themes to build a broader context around theme.

Theme 1: Veteran Hiring Process

The interview questions generated three types of responses: hiring criteria and procedures, prehire and posthire responsibilities, and information spread to candidates. These three responses resulted in a three-level coding hierarchy of parent (veteran hiring process), child (veteran recruitment team), and grandchild (information availability; see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Multilevel Code Hierarchy for Theme 1: Veteran Hiring Process
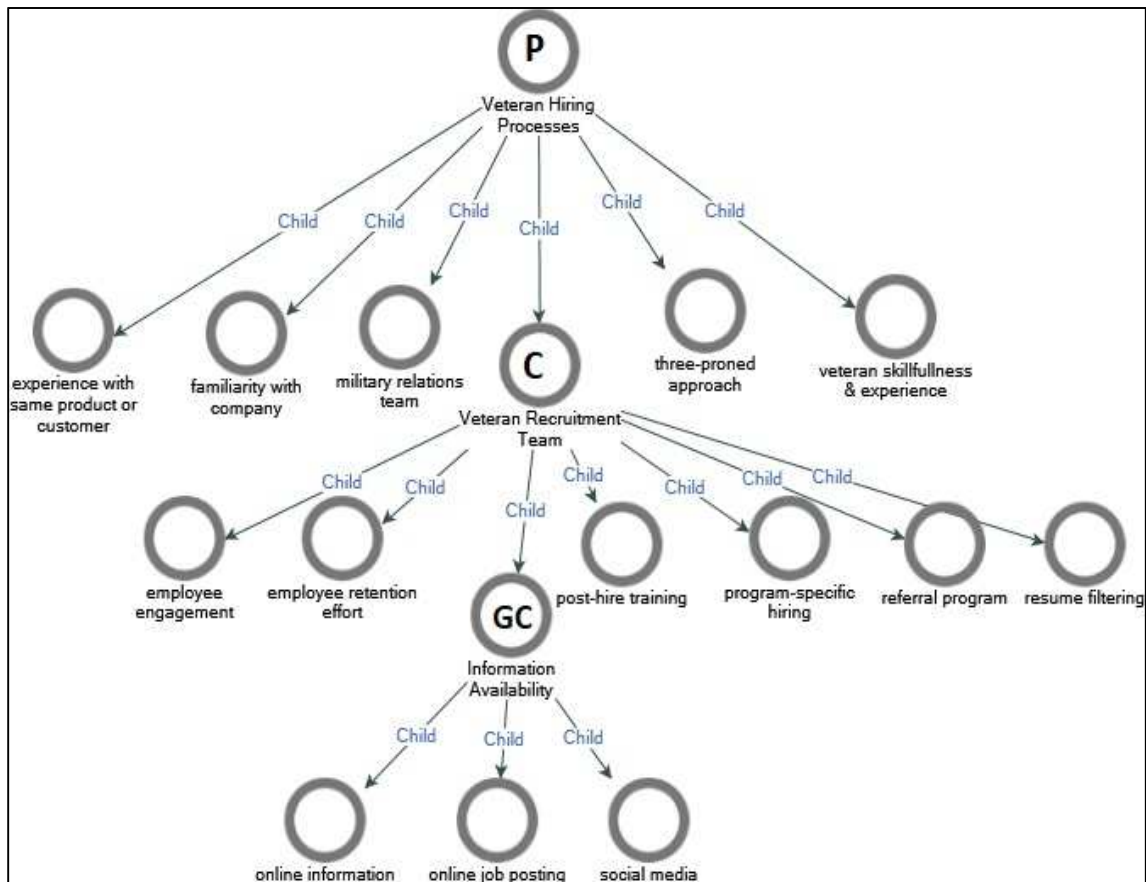
For the hiring process, the most prominent codes were experience with same product or customer (6), veteran skillfulness and experience (4), and three-pronged approach (2).

Participant 13 explained the three-pronged approach as participating in DoD career events to assist transitioning veterans, participating in third-party networking events, and outreach through social media platforms. Other responses shed light on the unique skills and experience that veterans brought with them, which often made them the preferred candidate for job.

Participant 1 said, "They have ability to make decisions after the leadership. They work together in teams very well. So, they bring a lot of intangibles that so many candidates that are not military would not have." (Code: Skillfulness and experience) Participant 16 remarked,

The investment that they have gotten, the experience that they have gotten, the training that they have gotten, is all real world. And 9 times out of 10, exceeds past a normal 7-day, 40-hour work week. So, having that experience come into our portfolio, helps us really to propel. (Code: Skillfulness and experience)

Subtheme: Veteran Recruitment Team (VRT). The three private organizations had dedicated teams for hiring veterans. These teams looked after the overall hiring process, veterans' skills and transition, and training procedures of veterans.

Participant 11 explained the overall protocol followed by the VRT:

We do that both by looking at statistical metrics, as far as who we screened, interviewed, and put through the hiring process as a whole. The second is to look at what the trends are based on our current business model, what we're hiring for and how that relates to veterans who are making the transition out, whether their job category, their profiles from service, and how well that matches to our current business model. (Code. VRT)

The subcodes represented different attributes and responsibilities of the VRT, including employee engagement and retention, program-specific hiring, posthire training, resume filtering, referral program, and information availability (grandchild node). The most prominent codes were employee retention effort and referral programs.

Participant 8 stated, "The company's leadership team constantly seeks to promote retention. Before the pandemic, the Company's leadership team regularly hosts meetings with employees in the local area to enhance cohesion within the corporation." (Code: Employee retention effort)

Participant 13 noted, "If employees are referring veterans, that is obviously a good sign for our hiring." (Code: Referral program)

Participant 9 shared, "And we have a good pulse on veterans from our referral programs, and, also, our CEO has a foundation called Warrior Ethos, where it helps disabled veterans enter into the workplace and transition into that facet." (Code: Referral program)

Participant 15 stated, "At the Company, we focus on advancing Veterans' ability to serve the world's most important customers, Department of Defense. Veterans look to ManTech as the gold standard in hiring, training and long-term career enablement and advancement." (Code: Post hire training)

These excerpts from the transcriptions indicated that during the pre hiring stage, the VRT was responsible to bring veterans into the companies by guiding them throughout their transition process. The post hiring stage provided veterans with continuous support and training in order to retain them for longer durations. This also resulted in senior veterans referring more veterans to the companies.

Theme 2: Assessment Procedures

The HRP were asked about the assessment procedures that they used to evaluate potential veterans as well as their performance after hiring. This theme combined the

codes of application tracking, retention rate, screening form, and skills and salary assessment. This theme fell under the key responsibilities of the VRT and was coded as a main theme. The theme emerges from the HRP questionnaire, when inquired about how they assess the effectiveness of the veterans hiring process.

Participants 14 and 15 mentioned using the application tracking system (ATS) to highlight the commitment of the firms to hiring military veterans.

Participant 14 explained:

The effectiveness of the processes is we track everyone that gets into our hiring system, so we do what is called a source coding… What happens when I source code you, that allows the Company to track you. I can track you in the system, how many people reviewed your resume, and how many interviews you have had, if you were hired, and that is how we track and know exactly, down to the number of exact veterans we have hired across the organization. (Code: Application tracking)

Participant 15 said, "Every candidate goes through the same ATS system and hiring practice. The Company is roughly 50% veterans." (Code: Application tracking)

Participant 15 also noted that the recruitment officer recognized the salary expectations of the candidates and knew that it only made sense for veterans if they get paid more in the new jobs than their old jobs in the military or other services.

Participant 16 commented:

The location, the commute to the job site must line up with what they are looking, and salary. I want to make sure that this salary for this position matches what they

want, and they are taking a step forward in terms of increasing their salary or it is equal to what they are getting currently. (Code: Skills and salary assessment)

The three excerpts showed the commitment of these firms not only to post jobs but also deploy a well-structured system for tracking applications. In this way, the firms knew how many applicants were in the system, knew how many had not yet been employed, and were able to shift their focus accordingly, to assess why veterans were not being hired. Hiring was based on applicants' job preferences, salary expectations, and technical skills, which results in higher retention rates for the veterans, by meeting veterans employment needs.

*T*heme 3: Commitment to Hire Veterans

One focus of the study was to inquire about the commitment of HRP to hire veterans and what level of support they could offer to them. This line of inquiry resulted in the codes of resource spending, veteran quota, and employee support programs, which were then categorized under Theme 3. The subcode of employee support program (ESP) is discussed separately.

Participant 11 shared, "Our goal is to stay at 50% of our workforce being prior service. Our overall and capturing intent is to be at least 60% by 2021." (Code: Veteran quota)

Participant 14 stated, "We are a defense contractor, we support veterans' programs and so there is no commitment that I am aware of to hire any certain number of veterans." (Code: Veteran quota)

Participant 16 responded, "We promote that kind of thing (hiring of veterans)

because we are obviously a government entity. Yeah, there is not a quota or anything like

that sort of thing." (Code: Veteran quota)

Participant 15 said,

The company invests money and time into educating recruiting teams to better

understand military culture, the skills and experience veterans equipped by

veteran…. Veterans look to the company as the gold standard in hiring, training

and long-term career enablement and advancement. (Code: Resource spending)

Participant 11 indicated a 50% hiring quota for veterans, which meant that the

firm was trying to hire more veterans to balance its employee quota. However,

Participants 14 and 16 indicated that even though their companies had no such fixed

quota, they did promote the hiring of veterans. This commitment also was subject to the

companies' contractors and their types of products, a topic discussed in later sections.

Subtheme: Employee Support Programs (ESP). The subtheme of ESP emerged

from a word similarity query run in NVivo, which resulted in the code hierarchy shown

in Figure 4. The three levels were a starting point for categorizing these codes. Level 1

represented codes related to employee support programs. Level 2 was categorized as

holding codes related to responsibilities and efforts of the recruitment team. Level 2 was

further divided into recruitment efforts and information spreading efforts.

Figure 4

A Dendrogram Explaining Code Similarity


Items clustered by coding similarity
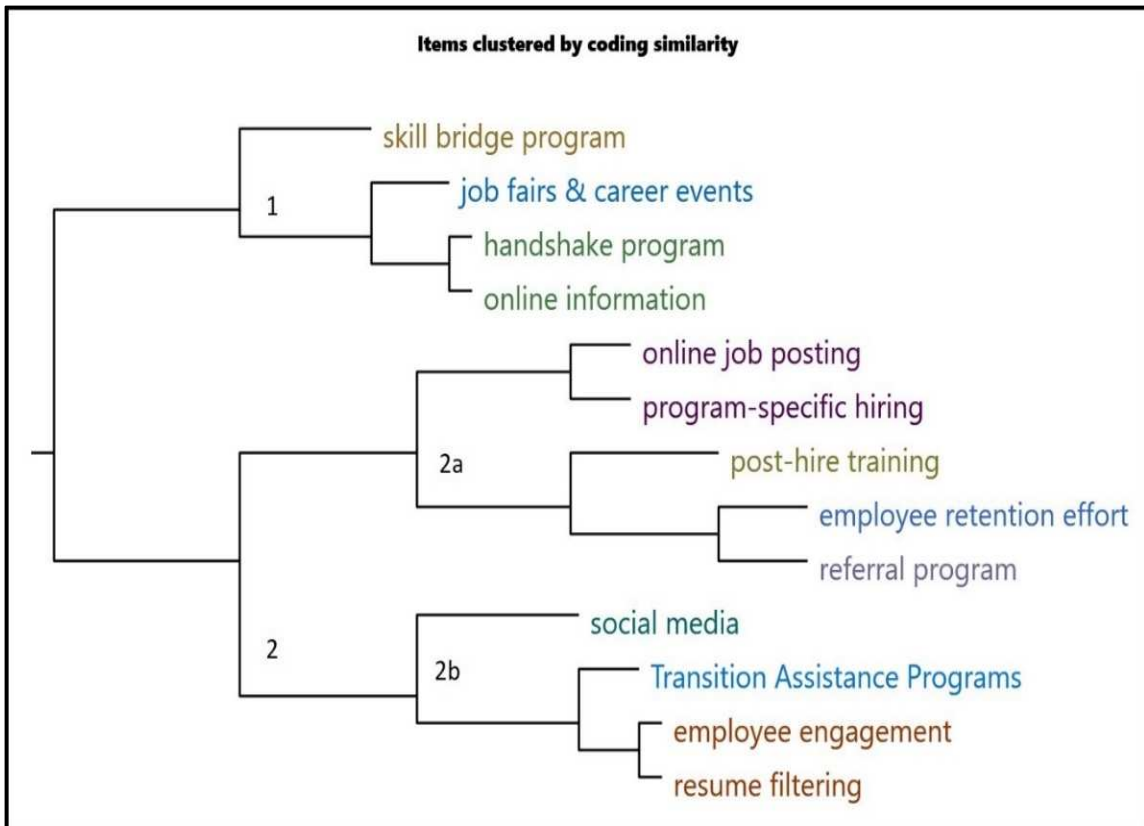
After making these distinctions, all codes related to programs and events supporting the skill translation phase of the veterans were categorized as ESP (see Figure 5). The frequencies of the codes appearing in interviews were job fairs and career events (5) handshake program (2), skills bridge program (2), and Transition Assistance Program (TAP; 2).

Figure 5

Code Hierarchy for Employee Support Programs
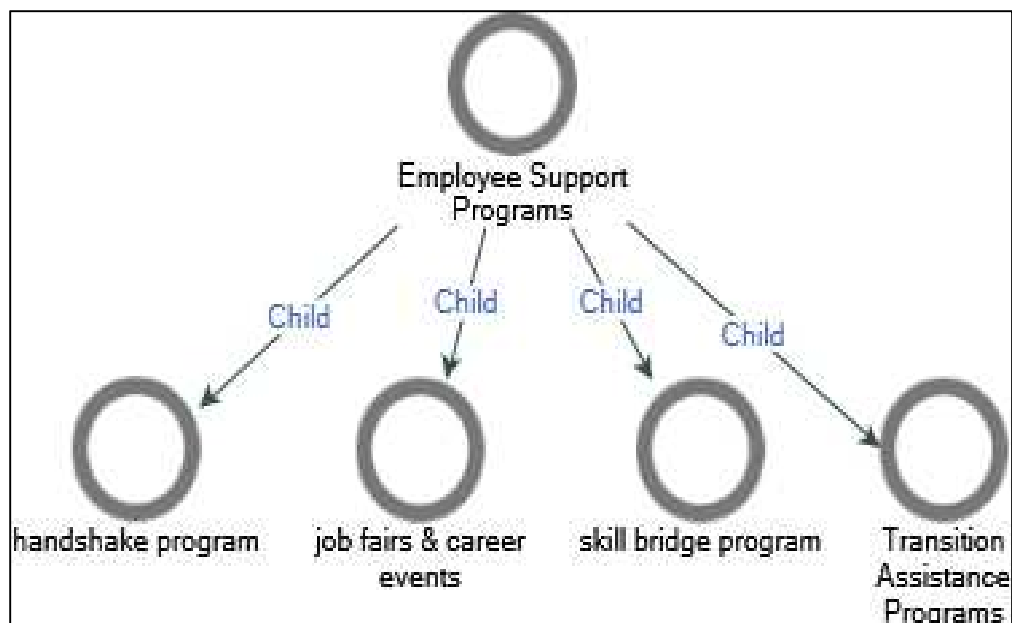
The handshake2Hire program provided detailed insight into the ways that the entire process of veterans interacting with military relation managers and finding employment. Participants 14 gave a detailed overview of the program and Participant 13 noted that the handshake program was not exactly a hiring program, but an engagement program with the hiring of veterans a by-product.

Participant 14 gave a more detailed overview of the program:

Last year we hired over 700 veterans from our Handshake2Hire program… if I meet a veteran like that, say that infantry guy, four years, no degree, then we still will put them in our Handshake2Hire program and give them hire resources. We will teach them how to tailor the resume, how to review job sites, like when you go to the Company jobs, how to navigate through the job search. We still provide

him or her with a ton of resources, because at the end of the day, we want to make

sure that veterans, spouses, and transitioning service members are able to get jobs.

If I cannot help veteran get a job at the Company, one of our resources that we

provide is to help veteran get employed somewhere, because at the end of the day,

we want to decrease veteran unemployment across the board, not just with the

company. (Code: Handshsake2hire program)

Participant 13 commented,

The single most important factor for our success in growing our veteran hiring is

targeting the veteran at the timeframe that they're able to separate and start a new

job… They do not want to have to wait very long after that date, because it means

they are not getting paid. So, we learn to treat that date as a high priority and

engage our veteran community based on the hiring…. We find that the veteran

wants to engage with us very early. So, we go to a career fair at a post, and they

will talk to us a year, 18 months, sometimes two years before they separate. Just

like a college sophomore will come to a job during their sophomore year. What

we do is different than any other company is we capture their separation

availability date. So, the date that they are going to become available, and all our

communication is targeted of that date. (Code: Skill bridge program)

These two excerpts shed light on two programs, both of which indicated the high

level of commitment of the firms toward hiring veterans. The Handshake2Hire program

was designed to help veterans in the transitioning phase to transfer skills acquired during

their military service to private firms more smoothly and efficiently.

Similarly, the aim of the Skill Bridge Program was to train veterans before they left the services so that they would be prepared to enter the employ of private organizations. Another important point that Participant 14 highlighted was that the purpose of such programs was not just to hire veterans for their own firms but to increase their employability in general.

Theme 4: Contributing Factors in Firm Selection

Codes representing the factors that contributed to veterans' decision to apply to particular firms were grouped under Theme 4. The prominent codes were security clearance (8), high veteran population (5), DoD relationship (5), and serve the country (3). Other trivial codes are presented along with the intersecting codes in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Code Intersection for Theme 4
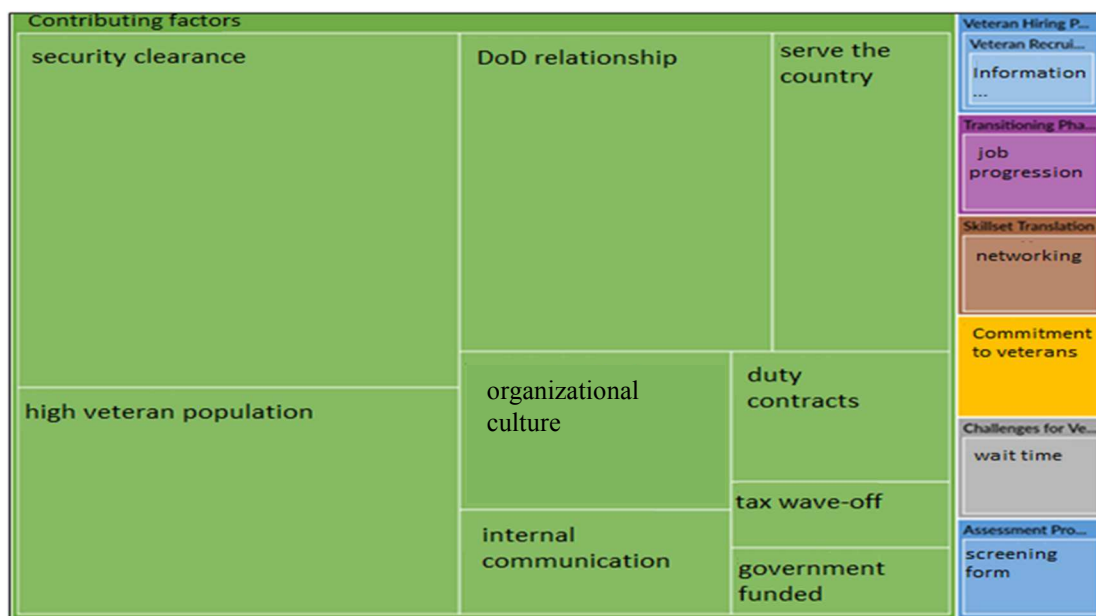
The most prominent code of security clearance appeared in all responses. Three HRP stated that they looked for security clearance in candidates and that veterans often had such clearance. Four veterans agreed that having security clearance boosted their chances of employment.

Participant 16 explained, "A lot of these positions I hire for tend to higher clearances and just in the nature of having openings that require those clearances, usually they end up being veterans." (Code: Security clearance)

Participant 6 stated, "I think that they might prioritize veterans over someone else, but I think that is mainly driven by security clearances. Right? So military people tend... especially in IT, they tend to already have a top-secret SCI clearance." (Code. Security clearance)

Other important factors were the high number of veterans in the companies and their relationships with the DoD. The code of DoD relationship also was linked to the code of serving the country and hiring process/experience with the same customer. From the veterans' perspectives, having a relationship with the DoD meant that the firm were contributing to a military cause, giving veterans a feeling that they were still serving the country in some capacity.

Participant 10 shared, "I wanted to continue working with the DOD and Department of the Army, and the company gives you a better chance of doing it because they are a government funded contractor." (Code. DoD relationship)

Participant 12 said, "I wanted to be oriented to the defense industry to try to improve what we had as an organization as a whole, for the army." (Code. DoD relationship)

From a recruitment point of view, having partnerships or customer relationships with the DoD meant that the companies would be dealing with military personnel, so having veterans on board gave them an advantage to deal with customers because they had already worked with the same people or on the same technology.

Participant 11 noted, "Most of our customers are the military, Department of Defense. So, having veterans take roles on that they might have traditionally done in while in uniform service, they now get to do that same job back here." (Code: Experience with similar customer)

Theme 5: Transitioning Phase and Theme 6: Skill Translation

When inquiring about the ways that the veterans transferred skills from their military service to the private sector, two types of codes were identified (see Figure 7). The first code addressed the mental preparedness of veterans, and the second code addressed different strategies and efforts to transfer their skill sets. Themes 5 and 6 emerged from the codes. Both themes are discussed together because they collectively explained how the veterans prepared to switch to a new work environment.

Figure 7

Codes Generated From the Inquiry on Veterans' Transfer
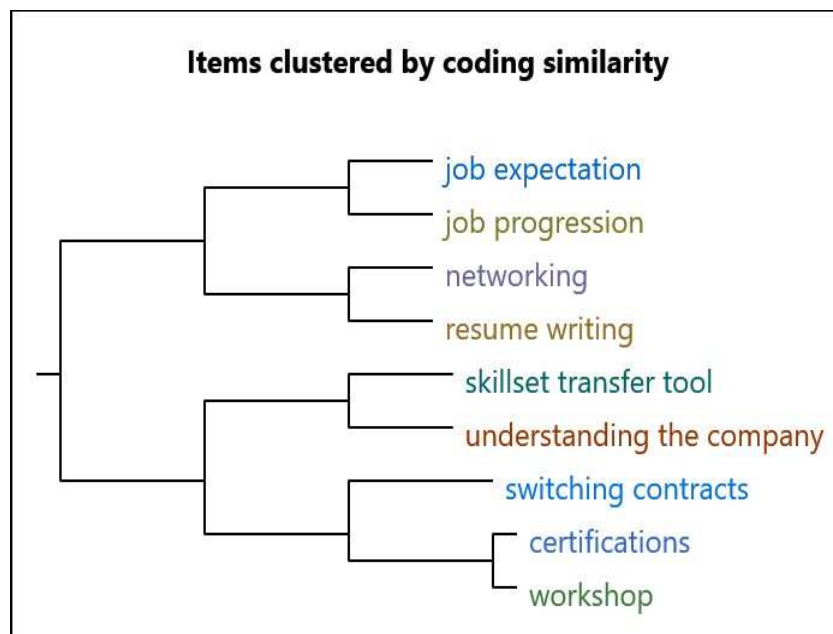
Theme 5 combined the codes of job progression (3), job expectations (1), switching contracts (1), and understanding the company (1). The theme explained how veterans mentally prepared to switch their contracts and also learn about the companies that they were interested in applying to for employment opportunities.

Participant 2 remarked,

It was almost the same job that I've been doing for the 4 years that I was in the military, but when you're in the military, you are limited on what you're allowed to do by what your job is, and your career progression is only ranking up within your job. I was never going to be able to get to that next level of IT and technology experience while still being in the military. In the company, I had that option. (Code: Job progression)

Participant 3 said, "There's a ton of information out there for veterans. I know the Company provides some excellent tools, but some people just don't know how to navigate properly to all those tools." (Code: Understanding the company)

Similar to the response given by Participant 2, two other participants noted that they looked for jobs similar to their old jobs to make it easier to transfer their skills. Participant 3 suggested that the problem that many veterans faced during this phase was that they did not know how to access all tools and information available for them. This is an area where HRP and military supervisors might need to work before the end of a veteran's contract.

The veterans also mentioned the procedures and tools that they used to move from the military to the civil sector more easily. The codes addressing these procedures were skill set translation tool (5); networking with other veterans in the firm (3); and one appearance each for resume writing, certifications, and workshop. For the skill set transfer code, the HRP interviews (question 3) explained how the tool works while the veteran interviews (question 2) discusses if the tool has been useful for them in transferring their skills and finding a job or not.

Participant 1 stated,

A lot of times there could be candidates that want to be a part of the Company but does not really know how their job in the military translates to the Company and so that skills translator assists in saying, these are possible avenues that you can consider when looking for opportunities. (Code: Skill translation tool)

Participant 15 noted, "Our career site provides a skills translation tool that veterans can use to translate their military skills. On this tool allow veteran to input their military job title, which will then display equivalent civilian jobs." (Code: Skill translation tool)

Participant 1 said, "I was able to use the military skills translation from their website, although I didn't apply for any of the positions that came up underneath that." (Code: Skill translation tool)

These aforementioned excerpts shed light on the fact that even though a skill set translate tool was available, many veterans either were not aware of it or did not know how to use it properly. Therefore, their primary approach was to network with and inquire from other veterans working for the firms that they wanted to apply to for jobs.

Theme 7: Challenges for Recruiters and Theme 8: Challenges for Veterans

The challenges that occurred when hiring veterans was duly noted by all of the participants. I felt the need to explicitly inquire about the challenges that happened during or after the transitioning process to gain all of the participants' perspectives. As expected, codes generated from this inquiry resulted in the emergence of Theme 7 and Theme 8. Both themes were discussed together. It was understandable that veterans and HRP faced different challenges to hiring procedures; however, I wanted to see if there was any intersection between the themes.

Theme 7 combined the codes of timeline matching, insufficient positions, virtual recruitment setting, skills matching and transfer, external regulations, and COVID-19. Theme 8 emerged from the codes of wait time (after application submission), skills

translation, technical questions, and interview and résumé skills. The highlighted parts in Figure 8 depict the intersection of the two codes (skills matching & transfer and COVID-19), and the pink and green sections depict intersection of the two themes with other codes. An intersection between the themes can be seen for skills matching and transfer and COVID-19.

Figure 8

Hierarchy of Coding Chart With Intersecting Codes

Some transcription excerpts related to skills translation and transfer are presented in the following text.

Participant-11 noted, "The biggest challenge is just understanding what the job somebody does in the military comprised out here, how to turn that around in experience, and not always in the military." (Code: Skills matching and transfer)

Participant 14 said, "The big challenge is really figuring out how to translate the skills that they held in the military in order to align them with the jobs we have open." (Code: Skills matching and transfer)

Participant 12 stated, "I think it was challenging overall because you are trying to relate some of the technical aspects of what they are looking for and providing certain situations that you've experienced in the field." (Code: Skill translation)

These excerpts indicated that skills transfer was a problem for veterans and HRP. For veterans, this code was closely related to the code of résumé skills, the second most referenced code after skill translation. The process of skill translation should have been reflected in their résumés, which was a learning curve for many of the veterans.

Participant 12 noted, "Everybody says, you know, you have to tailor your resume. Like, I did not know what that means." (Code: Resume skills)

Participant 5 explained,

You have to tailor a resume for a particular company or particular location, so on and so forth. Right? So, I mean, it takes some work and not having done a resume in 20 plus years, almost 30 years, it's difficult to figure out what's right and what isn't? (Code: Resume skills).

These two themes provided evidence of the challenges facing HRP and the veterans. With COVID-19 regulations and restrictions in practice, organizing job fairs and career events has become more difficult, and has added to the wait times and skill translation skills of veterans.

Factoring Discrepancies

Regarding the interview question about the factors contributing to the recruitment of military veterans, the most common replies were that veterans had unique skills and experience with similar products or customers, and that hiring veterans gave the firms a competitive edge in the marketplace. However, Participant 12 noted that companies often got tax write-offs when employing veterans; however, the participant did not give any example or offer any proof to support the argument. The argument did not completely nullify other reasons identified by veterans and HRP, but it did add to other incentives explaining why firms would prefer to hire veterans over nonveteran candidates.

Another finding related to the transition process of veterans was that transferring security clearance from the military to the private sector takes time. This transfer added to the overall difficulty of the veterans' search for jobs. However, one of the HRP participants noted that the transfer of security clearance from the military to private organization is not as rigorous and time consuming as completing the entire process when employed as a new employee at a private organization.

Participant 14 responded,

If anybody tells you that the clearance is a problem related to military hiring, they are actually looking at the wrong data. Most of our military community actually has an active security clearance that is able to transfer over very quickly… we want to make sure that we hire the best candidate and are fully compliant, and that clearing process can sometimes take time. It does take time. (Code: Security clearance)

The case helped to better understand the process of hiring veterans. From the veterans' perspectives, the transfer of security clearance and other documents delayed the hiring process. However, even though the transfer often was quite quick, recruitment teams had to filter numerous applications before they could schedule interviews with applicants.

Comparative Analysis

Following is a comparative analysis to report the major findings and differences or similarities in the perspectives of the veterans and the HRP in the sample. One of the major findings was that the skill set translation from the military to the civilian sector was a daunting task for veterans the HRP responsible for hiring them. Appendix B displays coding distribution for Skillset Translation and Transition Phase themes.

Many veterans did not have a clear understanding of how their skills and experiences in the military could be used in the private sector. One exception was that of veterans who had an IT background: They would generally look for jobs in the same sector and field of technology.

The responses of the HRP participants indicated that firms often needed veterans on the recruitment team because they would understand military jargon, help to network with veterans, and analyze their skill sets. The graph in Figure 9 shows the high distribution of the skill translation theme, indicating that it was relevant to veterans applying for positions and the firms looking for veteran candidates. One inference of these results is that not having enough veterans working for them limited the skill set translation abilities of the firms and their overall employment rate of hiring veterans.

Figure 9

Interview Distribution of the Theme Skill Set Translation
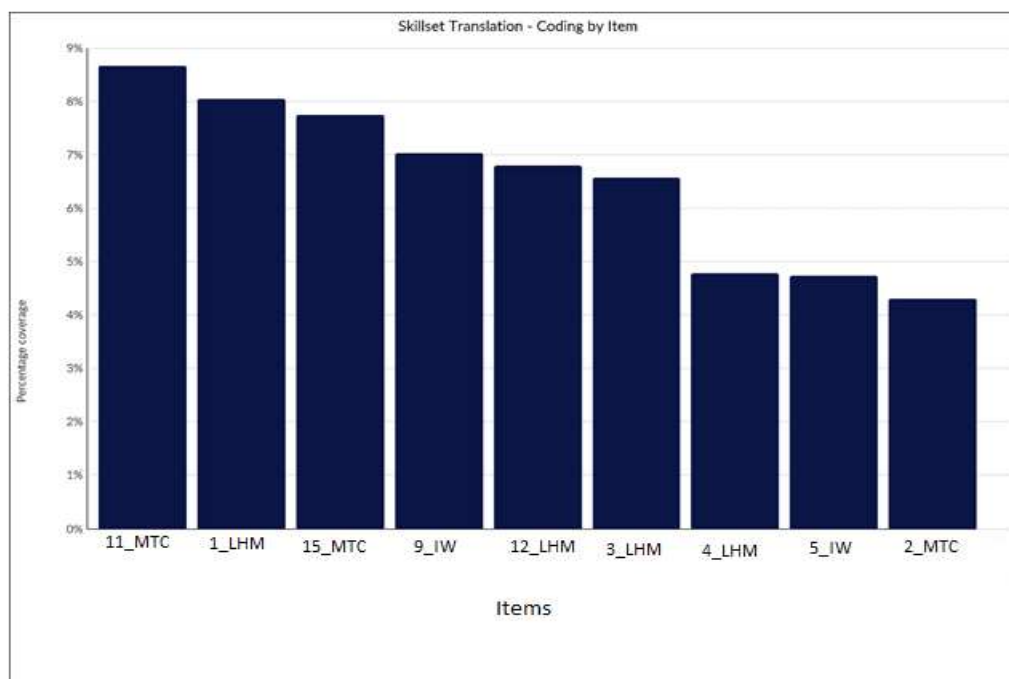
One contrasting opinion was found in the context of the skill set translation tool. This discussion is important because for many HRP, this tool served as the primary source to filter veterans as potential candidates for job openings. The results showed that HRP considered the skill set translation tool to be quite promising because of its automated notification system to let specific departments know about new applications.

However, the online tool, available on the interviewed firms' websites, did not hold the same value for the veterans. Participant 12 explained,

I think I used it sort of, but I did not find it as useful. So, I had to translate it (manually) because it seems like I am the only infantry guy or infantry officer that

had different type of background, with the leader background. (Code: Skillset

translation tool)

Other veterans also noted that they were unable to find vacant positions using the

skill set translation tool on the websites and had to search manually for all vacant

positions and then apply for relevant ones. One HRP participant noted that veterans

simply had to enter their military job titles and the tool would display relevant job

positions. However, the tool is unable to explicitly tell skills and qualifications for some

veteran job titles held in the military, so the skill set translation tool needed to be

upgraded.

The RQ (i.e., What are the perspectives of HRP, and employees hired as military

veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans'

employment rate of 25% or more?) was created to understand how the overall hiring

process was executed by HRP. It was noted that veterans employed by the firms played

an important role in attracting the interest of other veterans, spreading information about

job vacancies, helping them during their transition phase, and improving the engagement

level of veterans.

Participant 11, an HRP participant, commented,

With the company being so largely encompassed with veterans and having over

50% of our workforce being prior service, this also helps the employee to engage

with a hiring manager, program manager, senior leadership, as well as coworkers.

They know the same bandwidth that they're on, whether they were in the Marines

or they're in the Air Force, in the Navy or in the Army, or even the Coast Guard,

there's a common brotherhood, sisterhood, family type being in that. So, the

dedication level of trust and perseverance to really accomplish any mission or any

task that's given their way is exponential. (Code: Employee engagement)

This excerpt summarized the commitment level of these firms and how they were

able to attract and retain veterans as employees. From the perspectives of the veterans,

the transition process was simpler if the companies that they were applying to for jobs

had a large number of veterans, many of whom could have been colleagues or friends in

the military. This network made it easier for new veterans to connect with them and ask

for help with résumé writing, search for vacancies, and other tasks involved in the

transition phase.

I noted that very few participants were aware of the Skills Bridge Program. Only

one of the veterans (Participant 2) mentioned the program and its advantages to the firms

and veterans. Under this program, private firms could employ veterans for up to 6 months

as trainees, and their salaries would be paid by the military.

Participant 2 discussed the level of unawareness of this program among private

firms:

There are a lot of companies in the IT world that have a military foothold, like

AbleVETS a company started by VETS used by VETS and hires predominantly

VETS had no idea that this program existed. The Company was one of two

companies that I had talked to that knew of this program's existence. Company

was one of two companies that I had talked to that knew of this program's

existence…. Booz Allen had no idea, Oracle had no idea, NASA had no idea,

AbleVETS that company made by VETS had no idea, sensor had no idea, tech systems had no idea. All of these major companies that hire predominantly military veterans did not support or know anything about a program designed to get them free labor while the military pays and trains them. (code: Skills Bridge Program)

Many companies, including ones with a large veteran population, either did not make an effort to learn more about new veteran hiring possibilities or had never thought of it. Therefore, having veterans in higher managerial positions could help to introduce such programs into the hiring process of the companies. Clearly, there was room for the firms to learn about and improve their commitment to hire more veterans.

Summary

The study sought to answer one research question: What are the perspectives of HRP, and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more? Much planning, effort, and commitment go into the hiring process relevant to employing military veterans because HRP must find potential candidates and then try to determine if their service skill sets match those need by the firms. The companies that had a veterans' employment rate of 25% or higher clearly were highly committed to hiring veterans and valued the skill sets and experience that the veterans bring to the jobs in the private sector. The spread of information through online platforms and referrals, the online skill set translation tool, and prehiring and posthiring training programs are examples of the firms' efforts to

attract and hire more veterans. The skill set translation remains a challenge for veterans and HRP, so more effort must be directed toward addressing the issue.

Chapter 5 presents the conceptual analysis by reviewing the primary findings from the literary lens. The literature discussed topics of P-O fit theory and transition from military service to the civilian sector. I will now present a critical analysis of the interview findings, with the aim to construct a general theory pertinent to the veteran hiring processes led by private organizations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP and military veteran employees about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. This information is important in understanding the challenges and solutions that have been implemented to address the challenges of unemployment among veterans. The research offered insights that can be adopted to influence constructive change and improve employment rates among veterans. Fundamentally, this research also supports the need for increased utilization of the talents, skills, and experience of veterans.

The research was accomplished through a qualitative exploratory multiple case study approach. The nature of the study facilitated a focus on various factors that included hiring strategies, practices, actions, steps, and applications in the employment of veterans. It also made it possible to draw insights from individuals that offered substantial information to address the research objectives. The multiple case studies used in this research increased the credibility of the findings and in-depth understanding of the veteran hiring process used by HRP. The data were collected through interviews and thematically analyzed.

The key findings emerging from the primary research were focused on addressing the research question: What are the perspectives of HRP and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more? The research established that the hiring process

utilized by HRP takes into account the experience of the applicant in the products or

customers served, as well as veterans' skillfulness and experience. The research also

indicated the involvement of third-party networking events, the application of social

media platforms for outreach, and the use of referral programs. The findings showed that

there is more focus by HRP on the unique skills and experience that veterans can

contribute to the workplace. The research found that the VRT is instrumental in the

prehiring stage by bringing in veterans and guiding them in the transition to civilian

working environments. At the post hiring stage, continuous support and training increase

retention. Senior veterans also play an important role through the referrals that they make

to firms.

Interpretation of the Findings

This research was an in-depth exploration of the various experiences of veterans

and organizations that facilitate veterans' transition to civilian life and employment in the

private sector. The findings of this research present consensus with an array of studies

that show that one of the daunting tasks for veterans and HRP is the transition that

facilitates the transfer of skill sets from the military or army to the civilian sector.

According to Grimell (2017), being a veteran implies not only a career in the U.S. Armed

Forces, but also a way of life, further implying that veterans must transition back to the

civilian way of life. The spirit of being a member of the military makes it difficult for

veterans to adapt to civilian work environments. Subsequently, organizations that

facilitate such transitions are important in guaranteeing success for veterans. Grimell's

research also established that the skills that an individual can transfer to the workplace

are an important consideration in the hiring process. This is linked to the type of job that an individual applies for and whether the individual has the right experience to perform in the specific role.

According to Minnis (2017), veterans need to choose lines of work for which they have developed skills and experience throughout their military career. This contributes to their ability to engage and perform in the workplace. Furthermore, Neill-Harris et al. (2015) noted that some private companies seek to employ veterans due to their work ethic and discipline. Subsequently, where individuals have the right skills and experience, they are more likely to be employed. The conceptual theory underpinning this research was P-O fit theory, which is premised on the compatibility that emerges between the potential employee and the organization. According to Teimouri et al. (2015), P-O fit theory focuses on the congruence between the potential employee's beliefs and values and the employer's mission, values, and ethics as they are reflected in the organizational culture. The following is a discussion of the major themes and how they are aligned with the research objectives and conceptual framework.

Veteran Hiring Process

The findings of this research show that the hiring process for veterans involves hiring criteria and procedures, prehire and post hire responsibilities, and information shared with candidates. These insights are aligned with the ideas presented in P-O fit theory, which highlights the need for potential employees to have skills and knowledge that are linked with the responsibilities that they will have in organizations. According to Davis and Minnis (2017), access to information is often a limiting factor in the

achievements made by veterans when seeking employment opportunities. In this context,

individuals might seek employment but lack insight into the responsibilities that they will

have in civilian organizations. This is attributed to the fact that the military and civilian

work environments are substantially different, which implies that similar positions might

have varying job descriptions. Cooper (2012) suggested that the lack of appropriate

information can be attributed to poor recruitment practices by organizations. This leads to

a lack of consideration that veterans have experienced some work environments unlike

those experienced by their civilian counterparts that tend to influence the behaviors,

attitudes, and perceptions that they hold in relation to the workplace.

The findings of this study regarding the veteran hiring process also indicate the

use of third-party networking events and social media to inform people of job openings.

Cooper (2012) stated that there is no guarantee that these sources of information are

accessible to all potential candidates. Despite the proliferation of social media,

engagement in these platforms is often voluntary, which means that people who fail to

participate in the platforms miss out on crucial information. This increases the need for

the stakeholders involved in veteran transition processes to employ different and efficient

means of communication to ensure that all interested veterans receive such information.

Organizations should seek information from the military to identify individuals

who fit the opportunities they have based on their records and performance in the

military. The findings presented in relation to this theme show that veterans' skillfulness

and experience can be best understood with increased cooperation between the military

and the private sector. Developing databases that present relevant information about

individuals and match candidates with opportunities can be instrumental in the

constructive development of the veteran hiring processes.

Veteran Recruitment Team

Based on P-O fit theory, the candidates for a particular role are required to fulfill

job description requirements. Additionally, the theory indicates that candidates should

have the required qualifications, which include hard skills, soft skills, cognitive abilities,

and appropriate experience (Cable & Edwards, 2004). With the large diversity of careers

in the military, there is the potential for long placements or evaluation of candidates. This

has increased the need for VRTs, especially for companies that are committed to hiring

veterans.

My research found that companies such as IW, LHM, and MTC have dedicated

teams that focus on hiring veterans. These teams ensure that candidates meet

organizational needs by overseeing the hiring process, evaluating skills among the

veterans, facilitating transition, and conducting training programs for veterans. In this

context, the respondents in this study highlighted the importance of using statistical

metrics in determining the most appropriate candidates. This is in line with P-O fit

theory, which highlights the need to use interviews to determine the most appropriate

candidates to be engaged by the organization.

The research shows that VRTs are also important in tracking the labor market and

matching candidates with current business model needs. With such a focus, there is

increased efficiency in developing training programs that match the workforce with

organizational needs. Frffer (2016) showed that recruitment teams are instrumental in

enhancing the capabilities of HRP recruitment initiatives. These advantages of VRTs and their effectiveness are premised on the roles they play in the organization. These responsibilities are linked to the concepts highlighted in P-O fit theory, such as developing a hiring strategy, which involves effective communication to attract candidates and develop their interest in the organization in relation to opportunities that exist and the necessary skills that veterans have, which make them appropriate candidates.

VRTs are also engaged in program management that facilitates various aspects of recruitment and sourcing. Subsequently, there is the effective utilization of organizational resources that are committed to increasing the engagement of veterans in veteran training programs. VRTs are also important in developing important partnerships with stakeholders that support veterans, such as health providers, the government, other employers, and the military. Fundamentally, VRTs work with veteran groups to ensure ease of access to candidates and in shortlisting the most appropriate individuals for emerging opportunities. The most important role played by VRTs can be linked to the training and education opportunities that they create for veterans. This includes oversight of other groups in the organization that are involved in developing talents that emerge among veterans.

The findings of my research indicate that VRTs are linked to improved employee engagement and retention. This can be attributed to the ability of VRTs to focus on veterans' needs, understand the challenges that veterans face, focus on their transition, and make them feel that they are part of the organization. Furthermore, VRTs offer

continuous support and training for veterans, which enhance their contribution to the organization. Organizations that have high effectiveness in the roles played by VRTs develop a good reputation among veterans, which results in more referrals and increased opportunities to benefit from the skills and knowledge that individuals develop in the military.

Assessment Procedure

P-O fit theory advocates for assessing and understanding the skills that exist in potential employees for them to meet organizational needs (Kristof, 1996). These sentiments are reflected in the findings established in this research, which show that the HRP in organizations employ an array of assessment procedures to evaluate potential veterans, their productivity, and their performance. In these assessment procedures, there is a focus on tracking, retention rates, screening forms, and skills and salary assessments. The outcomes from these assessments offer insights into the contribution that these individuals make to the organization.

The research also found that the application of tracking systems highlights the commitment that firms have toward the hiring of veterans. Drawing from the strategies employed by HRP, LHM's and MTC's use of technology facilitated increased effectiveness in tracking individuals who entered into their hiring systems. According to Kutsmode (2015), application of technological solutions has increased the efficiency of HRP practices in most organizations. This includes online recruitment procedures that enable companies to reach and assess talents in potential employees across the country.

According to Kutsmode (2015), the use of technological solutions increases the efficiency of HR practices by ensuring that the hiring process is not only strategic, but also fair to all people. This is due to the use of the same system and hiring practices for all potential employees. Such a system reduces the challenges that might be associated with unfair recruitment and hiring practices and ensures that the entire process is based on merit. As a result, the requirements of P-O fit theory are upheld by ensuring that the individuals who score the highest based on the various assessment strategies are more likely to be employed.

With the information gathered in the assessment procedures, companies can effectively place veterans in positions where they can maximize their skills and talents. The tracking achieved in these systems ensures that companies can follow up on individuals to establish if they have other opportunities or they can be employed in the organization. Additionally, the assessments help in determining the appropriate compensation that should be offered to individuals based on their contribution to meeting organizational goals. Suggestively, there is a guarantee that veterans' skills will match the salaries and benefits extended by the organization.

According to Hawryluk and Ridley-Kerr (2012), effectiveness and fairness in reward systems are important in keeping workers committed to organizational objectives and developing loyal employees. Organization decision makers make these considerations such as reward system if the assessment is effective and fair. Nevertheless, this research also highlights that employment should be given based on the individual's job preferences. This is important to ensure that individuals are

comfortable and engaged in roles that they appreciate, which leads to more autonomy and increased employee productivity and performance.

Commitment to Hire Veterans

MacLean and Kleycamp (2014) posited that veterans are more attracted to organizations that market themselves as veteran friendly. A commitment to hire veterans is linked to the reputation that an organization develops and to the perceptions and attitudes that people develop. Access to information about veteran-friendly organizations is imperative to increase the opportunities and intention of veterans to apply for jobs. In relation to this theme, this research established that HRP should show a commitment to hiring veterans. Such commitment by HRP is linked to various factors, which include resource spending, veteran quotas, and employee support programs.

In resource spending, hiring veterans can be a challenge for organizations due to difficulties in transitioning from the military working environment to the civilian world. As a result, it is imperative for companies that are veteran friendly to commit resources that are necessary to prepare veterans to engage effectively in the workplace. Such moves include investing in technologies to track and assess potential workers and offering the necessary resources for training programs.

According to Horner and Valenti (2012), training can be carried out as individuals engage in the workplace or through special programs such as seminars and workshops that are carried out in cooperation with other employers, organizations that support veterans, and the government. According to Thomas and Taylor (2016), some companies reserve some positions for veterans or ensure that a certain percentage of workers are

veterans. For instance, MTC maintains a veterans' quota by ensuring that 50% of employees are veterans, and there is an intent to increase this figure by 10% by 2021. MTC also invests time and money in the recruitment of veterans to ensure that they are productive for the business.

The research also found that government entities play an important role by offering employment opportunities to many veterans and facilitating their training and development to meet the needs of public services. The research also showed that companies that establish quotas are likely to influence similar undertakings across their supply chains where contractors are encouraged to reserve some positions or a particular percentage of the workforce for veterans.

Employment Support Programs

The research established that there is a need to boost the skills that veterans gained in the military for these skills to be useful in a different work environment. This highlights the importance of organizations being involved in the transition from military to civilian life. Adler et al. (2015) suggested that veterans should make themselves available for training and skill-building initiatives that can enable them to tackle the situations that emerge in civilian work environments. Similar insights were expressed by Horner and Valenti (2012) and Delbourg-Delphis (2014), suggesting that veterans can improve their employability by seeking higher education, which contributes to the development of skills and knowledge required to participate in civilian workplaces.

This research also established that ESP embraced by organizations could be used to show commitment to hiring veterans. These programs are designed to ensure that

employees have the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in the workplace. According to Horner and Valenti (2012), ESP are sustained by HR departments. The activities of these support programs range from training and knowledge sharing to initiatives that support personal issues faced by employees. According to Blosnich et al. (2015), many individuals who face challenges associated with PTSD due to experiences in the military can benefit substantially from ESP that facilitate counseling and access to mental health without burdening the employee. Such initiatives are an important characteristic of veteran-friendly organizations.

The study shows that many veterans have been engaged in occupations that do not require substantial transformation for the skills gained in the military. These include opportunities in law enforcement and security, which offer a similar work environment. Nevertheless, Davis and Minnis (2017) stress that it is important to engage in training that offers insights on how to apply the skills appropriately based on the job description. Other considerations are in contracting jobs that offer similar working environments. These allude to occupations where military skills such as communication, attention to detail, leadership, and organizational skills are the strengths of the individual. In such jobs, one does not only use these skills, but they have an opportunity to continue developing them while at the same time expanding their experience. For instance, veterans can engage in the development of military technologies and other occupations linked to defense and security training, strategies, policies, among others.

In such cases, MTC and LHM utilize the Handshake2Hire program and gives veteran resources that increase their ability to engage in the organization as well as seek

opportunities in other companies reducing the number of veterans seeking employment. The development of effective employment support programs ensures that the skills emerging among the veterans are appropriately developed, and they feel conformable in the roles they play in the organization. Furthermore, the P-O fit theory supports the notion of developing skills to meet organizational needs. The support programs also increase competitiveness among the workers by ensuring that their roles and contribution is comparable to other people in the company. Notably, the employee support programs ensure the personal objectives, skills, and knowledge are aligned to the organizational objectives, mission, vision, and values.

Contributing Factors in Firm Selection

The P-O fit theory highlights the importance of individuals selecting firms that they can comfortably work by committing their skills and knowledge based on the organizational objectives and values. McKennon (2014) alludes that a career in the military leads to the development of a way of life that persists even after leaving the military. Important findings that contribute to the decisions made by veterans when applying for a job in a particular organization include security clearance, high veteran population, DoD relation, and the significance of serving the country.

According to Faurer et al. (2014), careers in the military are characterized by high levels of discipline and ethical conduct. Nevertheless, some individuals get caught up in wrongdoings in the military or after services. This compromises their security clearance and reduces their employment opportunities. This makes security clearance an important aspect to consider because it communicates the discipline and compliance of the

individual to laws and regulations. Resultantly, individuals with high-security clearance have more opportunities because they exhibit behaviors that show they can be compliant with the organizational policies. For instance, MTC's employment opportunities require high levels of clearance, which attracts veterans because they tend to have higher levels of clearances, making them more desirable in some positions.

Organizations with a high population of veterans are considered to be veteran-friendly, which makes potential employees confident that they can engage appropriately with like-minded colleagues. The relationship of the company and the DoD integrates with the notion of serving the country. In this context, veterans are more likely to choose organizations that cooperate with the DoD for the progressive development of the employees, the company, and the nation. This is in line with the P-O fit theory because organizations that are committed to serving the nation show similar values as those of the military. It is such factors that influence the engagement of veterans with organizations such as LHM and MTC that are government-funded contractors. From this perspective, organizations that have healthy relationships with the DoD are more desirable for veterans because they promote the commitment to serving the country by upholding similar values as those that existed in the military. This is exemplified by offering the veterans roles similar to those they had in the uniform services. According to Davis and Minnis (2017), veterans are more productive in roles that do not require substantial changes from the careers and experiences that they had in the military. Additionally, such careers reduce the stress of adapting to the workplace and transitioning to new working environments.

Transitioning Phase and Skill Translation

The findings made in the theme of transitioning phase and skill translation are linked to the ideology of P-O fit theory in the context that individuals should engage in responsibilities where they can maximize their skills and knowledge (Cable and Edwards, 2004). The theme is also linked to the psychological aspects that influence the beliefs and attitudes an individual has towards new responsibilities compared to what they have been doing in the past.

The findings in this research show that there is a need to address the mental preparedness of the veterans and the efforts and strategies implemented to facilitate the transfer of skills. The study shows that the skills gained in the military can be useful in the civilian working environments if the veterans can strategize on an effective transition that involves seeking support and training. McKay (2017) highlights that there are numerous and transferable skills that increase the employability of veterans. Communication skills are among the transferable skills that are considered important in any workplace. In the forces, individuals learn to communicate clearly with all stakeholders regardless of rank. Such skills can support the development of a career in the private sector.

Stone and Stone (2015) alludes that soft skills such as effective communication skills can also be instrumental in enabling individuals to seek employment by enabling the individual to interact with employers and other stakeholders who can contribute to alleviating the challenges faced in seeking employment. Organizational skills gained in the military career can easily be transferred to civilian workplaces. Fundamentally,

effective organizational skills increase the opportunities for employment among veterans, considering that they can cope well under pressure (Davis & Minnis, 2017; Messner & Greene, 2014; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016).

Subsequently, employers can value the dedication and expertise of veterans in dynamic and competitive work environments. Leadership, administrative, and problem-solving skills are also important factors considered by employers seeking to engage veterans. These skills are appropriately developed in the military, which increases the ability of individuals to address the challenges that emerge in the workplace, engage others, manage resources, and support the achievement of organizational objectives (Stone & Stone, 2015).

The findings in this research show a consensus with researchers such as Stone and Stone (2015) by stressing the importance of the transitioning phase to prepare individuals for their new roles. Undertakings in this phase include a focus on job progression, job expectations, switching contracts, and understanding the company. In job progression, there is a need for companies and stakeholders such as the VTP to ensure that new opportunities offer better opportunities. For instance, veterans can be admitted to roles that offer better working environments, a possibility for promotions, and better compensation. The switching contracts should take to account the need for effective transfer of skills based on personal preferences and the organizational labor requirements.

All these achievements are accomplished if the veterans understand the companies. These findings highlight the need for effective communication of organizational needs, values, and objectives for veterans to make informed decisions. In

the same context, the research established the need to use skill translation tools and

ensuring the potential candidates understand how the tools are used. Creating awareness

about skill translation tools can increase the efficiency of recruitment and effective

placement of individuals in the organization to ensure high levels of productivity and

engagement in the company (Chamberland, 2015).

Challenges for Recruiters and Veterans

Drawing from the application of the P-O fit theory, developing individuals who

can effectively meet the organizational needs and achieve high levels of job satisfaction

are likely to be coupled with various challenges. Furthermore, Teimouri et al. (2015)

alluded that the application of P-O fit theory in practice often faces challenges that

emerge `in the differences between the expectations held by the recruiters and those of

the candidates. This research established that similar challenges are often experienced in

the context of recruiters and veterans based on the responses offered in the HRP

interviews.

In this theme, the research found that the challenges faced by recruiters include

timeline matching, insufficient positions, virtual recruitment setting, skills matching and

transfer, external regulations, and COVID-19. According to Ford (2017), the recruitment

of veterans is an intensive process because they have different skills and experiences, and

personal interests that increase the complexity of assessment strategies used. Timeline

matching presents challenges where the opportunities available are not desirable due to

an individual's phase in life or personal interests at a particular moment. For instance,

individuals starting a family might be difficult to recruit to fill up positions that lead to conflicts in family-work life balance.

Davis and Minnis (2017) allude that despite efforts by the government and the private sector, there is a large number of veterans compared to the positions available, which makes the selection and recruitment processes intensive to ensure that the best people are the ones offered the opportunities. The challenges with virtual recruitment settings emerge from the lack of human contact that is achieved through other means such as face-to-face interactions, which allows the recruiters to gather extra information such as attitude and perceptions among the participants.

Skill matching and transfer can be challenging, especially where there is a lack of effective communication or application of appropriate technological solutions. External regulations such as licensing and health insurance policies can be limiting factors in recruitment due to the intricacies of integrating such policies with those of the organization (Stone & Stone, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on recruitment due to its impact on the economy and resources, leading to reduced recruitment initiatives.

The research established that challenges faced by the veterans are associated with the wait time after they make their job applications, skills translations, technical questions, interviews, and resume skills. Similar insights are presented by Zarecky (2014) and Neill-Harris et al. (2015), who suggests that in some cases, veterans are not confident that they can effectively engage with the company and implement the skills they have in certain work environments or conditions. For instance, Zarecky (2014) suggests that

veterans need close supervision to reflect the conditions they worked in while in the military for them to be more productive and appreciate the authority that comes with following orders. Such mindsets are reflected in the P-O fit theory that shows the importance of achieving a balance in the beliefs an individual has for them to engage in new working environments.

Additionally, many veterans lack the interview and resume skills that can enable them to negotiate and engage effectively in recruitment programs (Arendt and Sapp, 2014). This implies that veterans have to learn such skills before they start applying for jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations that have been put in place have also reduced the opportunities for engaging in job fairs and career events that can contribute to improved skill translation and development of skills necessary for successful application of jobs and participation in interviews.

Factoring Discrepancies

This research shows that there was a consensus among research participants and scholars that veterans offer unique skills that can contribute to increased competitiveness for firms. Nevertheless, the research also found that companies tend to hire managers because of the tax write-offs from the government. This implies that some companies are committed to hiring veterans due to the benefits they enjoy rather than their skills and contribution to the companies. Another discrepancy is the long time taken in the transfer of veterans to civilian organizations. According to Beder (2017), this long period is sometimes enough for veterans to align themselves with experiences and conditions of working in the new settings.

Limitations of the Study

The research was accomplished through a systematic approach that involved data collection and analysis premised on the research objectives. The trustworthiness of the research is premised on the effectiveness of the data collection and analysis processes. In this research, the insights offered by the respondents reflect the true situation within the respondents' organizations, or they offered biased information to maintain a good reputation. This limitation was addressed by ensuring that the research engaged a wide range of respondents, and the information was triangulated with a literature review. This contributed to the credibility and reliability of the findings made in this study.

A huge volume of data was collected, which made it necessary for the researcher to review and summarize and develop a summary based on the actual insights offered by the respondents through a member check. This feedback offered by the respondents made it easier to address the research objectives. This was limited by the fact that the respondents had to review the information to ensure that it was accurate.

Another limitation of the research is the lack of transferability, which is attributed to the fact that the study was using a qualitative approach. In this light, a generalization of the findings might be detrimental, considering that the outcome might not reflect the actual experiences among many other veterans or organizations. The findings in this research are aligned to previous studies, which implies it achieved dependability. The research contributed some new findings that might not be consistent with previous studies due to changes experienced in the recruitment of veterans, such as increased use of technology and the use of integrated systems such as databases.

The conformability of this research was achieved through the focus on different sources of data, but there is no guarantee that the sources used in triangulation are reliable. This can be attributed to the fact that the limitations experienced in the previous studies might have been transferred to the current research.

Recommendations

This research shows that there is a significant advancement in the hiring processes used among veterans. Different strategic measures have fostered strategic change, resulting in increased and improved opportunities for veterans. Drawing from this research, some developments can be adopted to improve the hiring processes.

According to Davis and Minnis (2017), there is a need for increased and improved communication with veterans and their families to ensure that they stay informed and understand the companies and work environments. With the appropriate information, the candidates are in a better position to make the right choices and seek help in addressing the challenges faced in applications and settling at the workplace. Fundamentally, the research shows that communication should be beyond social media by venturing into communication strategies that are more personal and structured to offer the most relevant information to the veterans based on their employment needs. Additionally, communication should use a military-friendly language. This paints a picture that the organizations are military-friendly and committed to hiring veterans.

Companies may consider developing a strong commitment throughout the organization, including executive sponsorship of the veteran hiring programs. This increases the commitment and investment in the hiring process. For instance, with

executive sponsorship of the programs, there is effectiveness in budgeting and developing initiatives that facilitate the engagement of different professionals in training and education programs. Organizations can also support veterans by establishing quotas, which will ensure that the company focuses on absorbing a number of veterans each year.

Thompson and Jetly (2014) stated that this should be coupled by the organization highlighting employees that have made successful transitions from military to civilian employment. This can be a motivating factor for individuals seeking opportunities in the organization, and it serves to highlight that the employer is veteran-friendly. Other efforts to improve veteran employability include developing veteran talent communities. The veteran recruitment teams should also involve veterans that have been successful in transitioning to civilian employment, which makes them more effective in meeting organizational goals, and they understand the challenges faced by the candidates. It is also important that the processes used in screening and prioritizing military candidates are not only effective but also fair to increase confidence among them and ensure that companies benefit from the best talents.

Implications

The insights emerging from this research show that positive social change can be influenced by effective veteran hiring strategies. This is attributed to insights by Vellenga (2014), suggesting that increased hiring of veterans guarantees increased and economical use of the skill and talents among military workers. At the individual level, the veterans can have a source of income that can meet their personal and family needs. It also minimizes the challenges they would face with exposure to hardships in society. At the

family, hiring veterans reduces the burden associated with dependency. It also increases the ability of veterans to take care of their families. The organizations benefit from the talents and skills of the veterans. There is increased value for the companies and the economy by taking advantage of the skills they have productively developed.

For society, the research implied that there is a need for companies to be more engaged in communicating and developing opportunities that can be offered to match the veteran's skills. Taking care of veterans is central to how the community manages the challenges they face. Furthermore, high unemployment rates and the impact of issues such as PTSD are not only a burden to individuals and the government but also the communities where they live. Employment opportunities help to address these challenges by giving individuals a purpose for life and a source of income that improves the quality of life.

This research shows that further advancements in knowledge on hiring veterans need to take to account the different perspectives that emerge among respondents. This can be addressed through the application of a quantitative research approach that ensures focus on different empirical outcomes. The P-O fit theory was appropriate for the research, but further insights are needed to establish the role of the organization in defining and meeting the needs of the individuals for them to be more productive. In this light, there is a need for more focus on the P-O fit theory in the military context to understand its application in research.

For stakeholders involved in hiring veterans, there is a need for increased engagement with individuals to understand the needs and challenges they face in

developing talents and skills among veterans. From this research, it is evident that the best employers among veterans are organizations that have strategic approaches to becoming veteran-friendly. This implies the development of teams and systems that are dedicated to identifying, selecting, prioritizing, compensating, and tracking the value added by the veterans in the organization.

Veteran-friendly organizations also tend to have a large population of veterans as employees and recruiters. These sentiments show that the application of the P-O fit theory should take to account that there are factors that can be used to establish veteran-friendly organizations. Such factors can be used as standards that are used to determine the companies in the private and public sector that are most appropriate for veteran employment. Furthermore, such factors can be easily understood or learned by the veterans, improving their decision-making capabilities. This can be achieved with further research that is designed to improve the P-O fit theory through quantitative evidence that highlights the strengths and importance of different factors to consider when determining veteran-friendly organizations.

Conclusion

This research intended to address the question of *What are the perspectives of HRP and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes used by private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more?* The research was accomplished through a qualitative approach that gathered data through interviews from recruiters and veterans. Based on the thematic analysis carried out, the research shows that many veterans lack a good understanding of organizations and how skills they have

can be transferred to the private sector. These challenges have been a limiting factor for both individuals and organizations.

The findings in this research show that there are different factors that individuals take to account when determining if an organization offers better opportunities. Such considerations include establishing if the organization or potential employer is veteran friendly. The research established that veteran-friendly organizations are characterized by having a high number of veterans and the availability of support programs that are focused on meeting the veteran employment needs. The research confirms that veterans are more comfortable in seeking employment from organizations with a high presence of veterans.

Seeking opportunities in companies that offer similar opportunities to the military is an effective approach for developing a career in the private sector. The use of recruiting teams and effective communication increases the efficiency of engaging veterans in the workplace. A key challenge faced by veterans is the lack of effective access and consumption of information. The research found that information about companies and job opportunities should be appropriately communicated to ensure that their channels and the content of the message can be accessed and understood by the veterans. The use of personalized communication channels that facilitate sending the message directly to the target audience increases the opportunities for veterans getting the information.

The research confirms that there has been increased effectiveness in hiring veterans, but there are still opportunities for improvement. The key insight in the study is

that the hiring process of veterans is subject to the experience and skills of an individual. There also other factors that contribute to how veterans meet the objectives that include their ability to network, the use of social media and referral programs, and the continuous support from the support programs and stakeholders in VRTs. The support initiatives should be strategic and target the challenges faced by the veterans in the employment process.

From this study, the support programs should ensure there is increased focus on fairness to offer all veterans equal opportunities. In this context, the evaluation should be effective and data-based to ensure effective prioritization, which also contributes to the value that the veterans add to the company. With the increased application of technological solutions in the recruitment process, there is a need for companies and the other stakeholders involved to have high levels of transparency, which increases confidence and trust among veterans involved in different employment processes.

Veteran-friendly companies are more desirable and effective in meeting veteran needs while transitioning to civilian work environments. Companies should focus on developing strategies that make them veteran-friendly to increase opportunities for the high number of veterans in the country. Other strategic measures that can be adopted by the government and companies are to support the development of self-employment among veterans. This can be achieved through training to sharpen their skills and make them marketable in self-employment and funding to ensure access to resources necessary to make businesses economically viable.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Introduction Script:

Hello, my name is Tiffany Barrett, and I am a doctoral candidate working on my dissertation at Walden University. I would like to thank everyone for participating in today's session. I will be asking questions related to hiring strategies used by human resource personnel to hire veterans. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study was to explore the perspectives of HRP, and employees hired as military veterans about the hiring processes of private organizations that have a veterans' employment rate of 25% or more. Some private organizations including the organization where you presently work seem to be hiring more veterans than others because of their effective hiring processes. To facilitate the accuracy of data collected, I would appreciate your permission to tape-record the session. In addition to accuracy, this will allow me to get an inclusive record of responses to questions being asked. I will also be taking notes during the session. The session will last for approximately 45 - 60 minutes. If you are uncomfortable with any questions being asked, please let me know. Also, you may at any time stop the session based on the provided consent form signed. Let us begin…

- Good morning or good afternoon!
- How are doing today?

I would like to start the session with an introduction of session and by asking some general questions to be followed by the interview questions.

1. Please state the name of your organization
2. Please state the number of years you been working at organization X

HRP Interview Questions:

1. How does organization X target veterans to be potential employees?

2. What hiring processes are used by organization X to hire veterans?

3. How do you assess the effectiveness of organization X veteran hiring processes?

4. What challenges have you encountered with organization X veteran hiring processes?

5. What is organization X's commitment surrounding hiring veterans?

6. How are veterans assessed by organization X to ensure that they are an ideal fit for the organization?

7. Based on your experience, how have organization X veteran hiring processes benefited the organization?

8. What information do you find pertinent to share in respect of what we have not discussed in this interview?

Employees Hired aa Military Veterans Interview Questions

1. Describe your perception of the veteran hiring process used by organization X.

2. Why did you apply for employment at organization X?

3. After reviewing the job posting, how did you translate your skills based on the requirements listed in the job announcement?

4. What do you believe are some of the contributing factors to organization X's high veteran employment rate?

5. How would you describe organization X's commitment to hiring veterans?

6. What challenges did you encounter during the hiring process?

7. What information do you find pertinent to share in respect of what we have not discussed in this interview?

Ending Script:

Thanks again for your participation in this study. Data collected today using NVivo transcription assistant, one of the newest features to NVivo qualitative software. Upon receiving transcribed data, I will email you a copy of the transcribed data for your review to ensure that all responses were accurately captured. If there are any errors in the transcription, please reply within one week with comments to the document. If I do not receive any comments within one week, I will consider that transcribed data was accurately captured, and no errors were detected. Once again thank you for your time and comments during the session. If you are interested in learning the results of the study, I am willing to share the result after completion and acceptance by Walden University. I will stop the recording and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Appendix B: Coding Distribution for Skillset Translation and Transition Phase Themes

	A : 1 Lockheed Martin1	B : 10 Veteran Lockheed Martin1	C : 11 ManTech1	D : 12 Veteran Lockheed Martin1	E : 13 Lockheed Martin1	F : 14 Lockheed Martin1	G : 15 ManTech1	H : 16 ManTech1	I : 2 Veteran ManTech1	J : 3 Veteran Lockheed Martin1	K : 4 Veteran Lockheed Martin1	L : 5 Veteran Intelligent Waves1	M : 6 Veteran Intelligent Waves1	N : 7 Veteran Intelligent Waves1	O : 8 Veteran ManTech1	P : 9 Veteran Intelligent Waves1
1 : Commitment to Hire Ve	0%	6.08%	22.79%	0%	7.52%	0%	7.08%	7.08%	9.07%	10.07%	13.05%	17.26%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2 : resource spending	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	62.03%	37.97%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3 : veteran quota	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4 : Skillset Translation	8.38%	0%	27.37%	7.26%	0%	0%	8.1%	0%	8.94%	8.85%	8.57%	15.18%	0%	0%	0%	7.36%
5 : certifications	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6 : networking	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	30.95%	0%	0%	0%	22.02%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47.02%
7 : resume writing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
8 : skillset transfer tool	17.24%	0%	56.32%	8.43%	0%	0%	6.7%	0%	0%	11.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
9 : workshop	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10 : Transitioning Phase	0%	25.29%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	32.57%	12.45%	14.56%	0%	0%	15.13%	0%	0%
11 : job expectation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12 : job progression	0%	45.99%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27.53%	0%	26.48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
13 : switching contracts	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
14 : understanding the con	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%