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Single-Term Soldiers' Job Satisfaction and Job Meaningfulness in Second Careers

Bethanie Hiramoto
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Bethanie Marie Hiramoto

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

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MS, Walden University, 2019

MSCP, Chaminade University of Honolulu, 2017

BA, University of Hawaii West Oahu, 2014

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Walden University

May 2023

Abstract

Past researchers have informed future researchers of the challenges soldiers experience when transitioning to civilian life and the civilian workplace. This qualitative study aimed to understand the lived experiences of six single-term soldiers and their levels of job satisfaction through job meaningfulness in their second careers. Data for this study was collected using semi-structured interviews and interview protocols. The theoretical framework combined Herzberg's two-factor theory, McClelland's needs theory, and Organizational Socialization. The entire study was framed through this framework, and collected data were analyzed. The findings of this study indicated that job meaningfulness occurred while in their single term in the Army and played a role in job satisfaction during their transition. The current Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program (SLF-TAP) could be adjusted to include the importance of the psychological impact job satisfaction has when transitioning. The implications for positive social change include addressing the importance of job meaningfulness within a career, including job satisfaction and organizational socialization, which can lead to more success in veterans in their second careers.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my grandmother, Marife; since I was a little girl, you never missed a moment to remind me how important education is, and I know from heaven you are beyond proud of the Wife, Mother, Student, and Professional I have become.

I would also like to dedicate my dissertation to my Husband, Trent; you have always been my best friend and partner through this and in life. Thanks for putting up with the random hours of paper writing and years on top of years of being a student.

My children, Sadie and Roland, it's now Dr. Mommy to you! From the days you both would sit under my desk and play with toys to this moment now. Thank you for the encouraging smiles and hugs that I would get when it was needed.

Mom and Dad, I know you are proud. I love you both very much. Thank you for teaching me how to push forward and challenge me.

Ashlie, Hector, and Marisol, my siblings. Thank you all for celebrating my accomplishments while challenging me to accomplish more. We really are the fantastic four.

I would also like to dedicate my dissertation to my dear friend and rock during this journey, Dr. Moriah Thomas. I know that I would not be here without your support, encouragement, and tough love. You have no idea what your support means. No words can express my true gratitude. Thank you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Transitioning from a military workplace to a civilian workplace can bring complex and challenging side effects. These side effects can range from negative job satisfaction to mental health issues affecting all areas of daily functioning (Krigbaum et al., 2020). Research shows that no transition is the same; this unique process deserves focus and study that has yet to occur (Robertson & Brott, 2014). This may increase understanding of possible adverse side effects allowing for the formulation of solutions for transitional programs. Understanding the individuality that arises during a military transition can improve the ability to influence the positive social change needed within this unique population (Morin, 2011). This study sought to increase knowledge about different populations of veterans, such as single-term soldiers, and the struggles with transitioning to civilian workplaces. For this study, the single-term soldier population is defined as a soldier completing one Army contract and choosing not to reenlist by one's own choice. This population may struggle with the different transitional side effects when obtaining a job after leaving the military. This is different from those retiring or multiple contract soldiers—noticing the uniqueness and understudied population of single-term soldiers. The single-term soldier population, typically younger, seeks the connections made while serving activity duty in the form of job meaningfulness (Keles & Fındıklı, 2016). Then the need for job meaningfulness plays a role in obtaining job satisfaction as they find their next job in the civilian workforce. These two related factors, job

satisfaction, and meaningfulness play a critical role in easing the transition and pursuing the needed helpful resources.

Research conducted by Robertson and Brott (2014) offered an opportunity for future studies on the topic of challenges with transitioning into civilian employment. The study explored the surveyed life satisfaction and career transition variables on military veterans. The study's results showed that there are different levels of challenges that occur within the transition, and it is not set as a single struggle or toward a single population. Robertson and Brott (2014) concluded that future research opportunities were significant for veterans in various stages of transition and service members on different times spent in the military.

While completing basic training, soldiers are indoctrinated into the Army's workplace culture, beliefs, and values (Halvorson, 2010). At this time, they begin to develop a type of tight-knit family that then becomes a part of their own identity (Jackson et al., 2011). With the completion of basic training, meaningfulness occurs and is developed. Job meaningfulness is defined as a psychological state composed of traits of skill variety, task identity, and task significance that leaves a person with pride and achievement for their job (Kordbacheh et al., 2014)). The level of meaningfulness increases as soldiers complete their contracts. When faced with the choice not to reenlist, a soldier can then lose job meaningfulness and, in a more significant part, job satisfaction (Igielnik, 2019). This occurs as the culture that they are a part of comes to an end. The transition to a civilian workplace then causes important adjustment issues and a need to experience job satisfaction through meaningfulness in the new workplace. Soldiers have

high levels of job satisfaction through experiencing job meaningfulness (Fors Brandebo et al., 2019). The effects of not receiving job meaningfulness in a civilian career then impact overall job satisfaction. This effect then plays a significant role in the transition that is occurring.

Chapter 1 includes the introduction, background of the study, the problem statement, purpose, research questions, framework, and nature of the study. Also included are definitions, assumptions, scope, limitations, significance, and a concluding chapter summary.

Background of Study

The United States Army is the largest branch of service in the United States Armed Forces (Halvorson, 2010). Those who choose to be a part of this military organization become deeply rooted in the Army culture; they are no longer civilians but soldiers (Zogas, 2017). Soldiers join the Army on a contractual basis and commit themselves to several years of service (Halvorson, 2010). Each contract can range from two to six years, depending on the soldiers' Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Once an agreement has been fulfilled, soldiers have a choice to reenlist for another contract if they choose (Halvorson, 2010). Soldiers who stay in the Army for one contract period are called single-term soldiers; for this study, the term single-term will fulfill a contract. With their commitment to the Army fulfilled, single-term soldiers move on to another job when they leave the Army, leaving the Army culture behind with it (Zogas, 2017). After the commitment is completed, their transition begins into the civilian workplace.

Transitioning to the civilian workplace is vital to the single-term soldier population as a need to obtain a job is present. When the indoctrination of the Army's culture is present within a soldier, it can be challenging to change civilian workplace culture. Job satisfaction is vital to the soldier; there is great importance in this concept for the organization. Lower turnover, higher productivity, increased profits, and overall loyalty plays an essential role in how an organization can function (Paramita et al., 2016).

The research conducted by Robertson and Brott (2014) presented a gap in the literature. Their study presented information on military veterans and their career transitions. In this research, Robertson and Brott (2014) focus on the population of veterans who have transitioned into a second teaching career. This study allows for additional knowledge to be obtained about the job satisfaction of transitioning military personnel and identifies areas for further research. The focus of job satisfaction is the connection as it pertains to job meaningfulness experienced by the soldiers. Current research allows future research opportunities about transitioning experiences and factors of job satisfaction and job meaningfulness of diverse military populations.

Problem Statement

The transformation from civilian to military culture takes place in basic training through which new soldiers are indoctrinated into the Army's workplace culture, beliefs, and values (Halvorson, 2010). In essence, they are adopted into a tight-knit group and family, which serves as more than a simple workplace culture, as it pervades their lives holistically (Jackson et al., 2011). Regardless of the MOS chosen and skills developed in acquiring the MOS, soldiers develop with the same Army values driving success. This is

the emphasis the branch teaches during training (Halvorson, 2010). It is vital to the 'success that each soldier become a contributing member of the team and designated branch of the service (Halvorson, 2010).

Through a sense of belonging to the Army, the level of meaningfulness that occurs for single-term soldiers begins to play a vital role when their contract is up. They exit the Army and military service and, consequently, leave the psychologically ingrained job meaningfulness they had for the term of their Army contract (Morin, 2011). Losing job meaningfulness, which is a large part of job satisfaction, causes single-term soldiers to experience an adjustment (Keles & Fındıklı, 2016). The single-term soldiers in this study have made a choice to leave military service and engage in this transition; therefore, those soldiers that have been forced out are not being addressed in this study. This adjustment occurs during the transition to civilian life. Transitioning to civilian life, the single-term soldiers endure losses of finances, belonging, prestige, sense of accomplishment, group membership, and the Army culture, which may cause feelings of anxiety, shock, feelings of isolation, loneliness, insecurity, uncertainty, and other emotions (Winkler, 2018). The adjustment and negative emotions are compounded by a loss of job meaningfulness, especially once obtaining civilian employment (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018; Rosso et al., 2010). As a result, some veterans struggle in their new workplace (Lange, 2019).

The transition that occurs to the civilian workplace is a part of the significant adjustment to civilian life. All soldiers planning to separate from the Army must go through the Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP, n.d.). This

transition program seeks to help Soldiers uphold the Army goals, ideals, and values to encourage influential alums and veterans (SFL-TAP, n.d.). However, the program does not prepare single-term soldiers for the potential of job dissatisfaction through a loss of Army culture and job meaningfulness. This dissatisfaction can come from differences experienced in the military workplace culture and the civilian workplace culture concerning having job meaningfulness in the Army and not having it in the civilian culture (Zogas, 2017). The differences in job meaningfulness cause single-term soldiers to struggle in their new civilian workplaces (Zogas, 2017). For this reason, single-term soldiers experience job satisfaction issues after they leave military service and attempt to assimilate into the civilian culture and life (Ahem, et al., 2015).

When considering this study, research showed a study performed by Robertson and Brott (2014) that addresses a need for future research. This study sought to understand veteran soldiers' transition and life satisfaction when transitioning to a second career of becoming a teacher. However, life satisfaction and job satisfaction differ in the formal definition. They both address the critical concepts of satisfaction, identifying a relevant component to the stated study. Robertson and Brott (2014) determined future research opportunities to examine a diverse population that includes those of varying transitional stages and different demographic backgrounds—taking this information and noticing that single-term soldiers are a diverse population and at a different transitional stage demonstrates the need for providing a comprehensive advancing knowledge toward social change.

Furthermore, including various types of studies such as longitudinal, interviews, and qualitative research studies will help to gain insight into the personal experiences that occur during transitions. The study may identify these associated desires to increase the initial motivating factor of military personnel's transitional effects. Lastly, diversifying the careers being explored can offer more insight into life satisfaction and career transitions for a wider group of veterans. The authors suggested various transitional stages of study are needed; thus, single-term soldiers and the loss of job meaningfulness have yet to be addressed by current research (Robertson & Brott, 2014).

Many programs exist that assist eligible military personnel in starting new jobs or careers in the civilian workplace, which are useful resources for finding soldiers a job. However, they do not prepare soldiers for a loss of meaningfulness and job satisfaction (Fors Brandebo et al.,2019). Nevertheless, it is essential to address that a single-term soldier may have chosen a different MOS during their career. Even with keeping the other MOS in mind, the single-term soldier experiences high levels of job satisfaction through experiencing job meaningfulness, which is addressed in this study (Fors Brandebo et al.,2019).

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study aims to understand the experiences of single-term soldiers, the loss of job meaningfulness, and its impact on job satisfaction in a soldier's next civilian job after leaving the Army. The goal is to provide greater insight into the unique population of single-term soldiers, regardless of MOS, after three years of service have been completed and the experiences of single-term soldiers transitioning and

experiencing the negative adjustment that comes with losing job meaningfulness and, thus, job satisfaction. With increased insight into this population, challenges can be identified and potentially addressed. Addressing these potentially identified challenges can help to make programs, such as SFL-TAP, utilize the information and move toward the application of ways to help the unique population of single-term soldiers.

Research Questions

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How would single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness during their single term in the Army?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness in their civilian workplaces after the Army?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do single-term soldiers describe their personal want and need for continued levels of job meaningfulness?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is Herzberg's dual-factor theory, also known as Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959). Herzberg stated that there are two dimensions to job satisfaction; motivation and hygiene. The hygiene issues are understood as dissatisfiers. When not present or handled correctly, they will bring dissatisfaction to the worker in the workplace externally. Herzberg classified ten events as being hygiene factors; company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationships with peers, personal life, relationships with subordinates, status, and security. On the other hand, the motivators were understood to be satisfiers internally, causing the fulfillment of achievement and

personal growth to occur with the worker. These satisfying events are achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and development (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The framework developed by Herzberg has been utilized in research to expand on the ideas of job satisfaction. With the growing research, the military population has been studied due to their uniqueness and the connection of motivation and hygiene factors that are noticed within this group of people and in the task characteristics and social context of the military (Sungmin & Haemoon, 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that with the unique population of military personnel, job satisfaction through meaningfulness plays a significant role in the service duration (Abu Bakar et al., 2015).

The two-factor theory is appropriate for this study as single-term soldiers experience a transition that plays a significant role in overall job satisfaction and their ability to function as successful civilians and alums of the Army. The factors of hygiene and motivators are present within the Army culture. The culture then shifts to the civilian culture, and the need for understanding what will mean for job satisfaction through meaningfulness needs to be understood. Understanding what leads to job satisfaction within the workplace can help single-term soldiers address the development need to be contributing and meaningful members of civilian society like they were within the Army culture (Bahadori et al., 2013). The level of adjustment to a new culture and functioning system decreases the chance of isolation, thus, the need for meaningfulness (McConville & Swanson, 2017). Herzberg's two-factor theory relates to this study by allowing for a theoretical understanding of factors that play a role in job satisfaction through job

meaningfulness for soldiers as they transition from military to civilian workplaces, regardless of MOS.

Furthermore, McClelland's human motivation theory, also known as the needs theory, builds upon the motivation aspect of job satisfaction in a workplace. Psychologist David McClelland states that we have three types of motivation, regardless of age, sex, race, or culture (Sparks & Repede, 2016). The three types of motivation are the need for achievement, affiliation, and power. The need for achievement is explained as a person with this need and personality type that becomes motivated by accomplishments in the workplace. The accomplishments in which they tend not to engage in are high-risk or low-risk situations but instead place their efforts on tasks that they are known to be able to reach. The need for affiliation is present in a way that they must spend time within the workplace to create and maintain social relationships. This need presents a personality type of the desire to feel a part of a group. The third need, the need for power, in motivation, is important in discipline within the workplace and the tasks that need to be completed. This need can present in recognition, competition, and influencing others. (Lăzăroiu, 2015).

The influence of Herzberg's two-factor theory and McClelland's needs theory relates to this study by adding increased ideas of job satisfaction and, thus, the role of job meaningfulness. With an increased understanding of the two factors as well as the three needs, the implication can be noticed in the transition of single-term soldiers. The workplace connection fuels the importance of meaningfulness and its role in the transition into a second career.

Nature of the Study

This study used a qualitative method of collecting data that uses semi-structured interviews to focus on the lived experiences reported by single-term soldiers and job satisfaction through job meaningfulness. In this study, the phenomenological analysis research design is the best choice to understand how people make sense of their lived experiences allowing for a focused understanding from the interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research and data collection properties through a case study method are aligned with this study as single-term soldiers' experiences with job satisfaction when transitioning from military to civilian life and beginning a second career. A qualitative research method is best for this study because it increases the ability to understand job satisfaction through job meaningfulness for single-term soldiers. The research design aligns with the research problem, purpose, question, and theory, as each factor is addressed by identifying the framework. The targeted population consisted of 6 working veteran soldiers who have completed only one term of service, consisting of three years. These participants' contractual time will be one that was wholly fulfilled. The meaning defines the fulfillment that they have not been discharged from the Army under less than honorable discharge conditions or general discharge conditions and are not medically retired.

Definitions

Transition: “a period of adjustment, which includes the planning and preparation accomplished during military Service, when Service members and their families explore

and embark on endeavors in the civilian world upon leaving active duty” (U.S Department of Veterans Affairs, 2018).

Single-term soldiers: Fulfillment of a three-year contract, chosen to not reenlist by own choice.

Job meaningfulness: “an inclusive state of being where employees express the meaning and purpose of their lives by engaging in activities that compromise their working hours” (Kordbacheh et al., 2014).

Civilian workplace: a place of work for non-military personnel.

Job Satisfaction: “positive emotional state, which is the result of the individual’s judgment of his/her job or job experiences” (Fors Brandebo et al., 2019).

Assumptions

In this study, the assumptions are that participants answered the interview questions honestly, as the event has occurred in their personal experience. The participants have a genuine interest in participating with no other motives in mind. Participants experience job meaningfulness during the completion of their contract while in the military, and job meaningfulness is not found otherwise. Another assumption is that the sample size is appropriate to ensure that the participants involved together share similar experiences. The researcher also assumed that participants would consent to audio recordings during the interview and note-taking by the researcher. An additional assumption is that all participants currently have a level of motivation to experience job satisfaction.

Limitations

The study's limitations and challenges include researcher bias, potential challenges in obtaining participants, trustworthiness in participants' responses, and analyzing the data obtained. The researcher's bias is present through personal experiences with the presented topic. The researcher was vigilant and proceeded with the necessary process to ensure discrimination was not present as much as possible. The challenge of obtaining participants is a general concern, as the population is specific, and some participants may not want to come forward. When considering the challenge of not all people wishing to participate in research studies, this challenge is addressed by the information presented in the informed consent and what the data will mean for the veteran community. The trustworthiness in participant responses is addressed by further explanation within the informed consent explaining what the research has to offer; and how studies of this type can bring awareness to transitional factors of military personnel. Making sense of or analyzing the data is addressed in this study; this happened by remaining focused on allowing the data to be the driver. The data remained the focus and the grounding knowledge of the process. A significant influence to consider in this study is the population; when the values are considered of Army personnel, their loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and courage come into play to diminish possible barriers.

Significance

The importance of this study to the field of Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychology is that the results provided insights into how single-term soldiers experience

job satisfaction factors through job meaningfulness. Job satisfaction is defined along with the loss of job meaningfulness. As job meaningfulness begins, it is compounded by the issues that occur when soldiers leave the Army culture, regardless of the differences in MOS. The transition from military service to the civilian workplace causes a wide variety of concerns for the soldiers, in particular, single-term soldiers after three years of service. The soldier's potential loss of job meaningfulness may impact their overall job satisfaction and causes further psychological issues.

The results of this study can generate positive social change by presenting the opportunity to revamp the coursework within SFL-TAP. The coursework could be amended to include understanding job satisfaction factors, which provides for losing their job meaningfulness, and the impact young veterans encounter when transitioning to civilian life after one term. The program could prepare young soldiers for the psychological adjustment that will take place between the military and civilian workplace, regardless of their chosen MOS. With the knowledge an adjustment will take place, Soldiers could be prepared through awareness and coping methods for processing and mitigating the adjustment symptoms. The program could teach skills utilizing evidence-based research allowing for practical application by the soldiers during the SFL-TAP process and beyond.

The most significant potential for social change is that soldiers can better understand the toll that the transition takes on overall job satisfaction and meaningfulness and how it impacts their next job. Another implication of this study could be the formulation of new conversations surrounding this topic, which could cause increased

research and subsequent results, allowing for social change. These potentials surrounding social change will increase human interactions and relationships and increase the inevitable need to be a part of the change.

Summary

Military-to-civilian transition can be very complex when accounting for job satisfaction, as single-term soldiers must find a job after military service. After finishing a three-year contract, single-term soldiers are typically younger; these soldiers make up a population that goes through a different type of transition and psychological adjustment compared to those that retire after 20 years of military service (Robertson, 2013). An essential aspect of that transition is transitioning to their next job and finding satisfaction within that job or career. This satisfaction comes from the meaningfulness they feel and need to continue (Igielnik, 2019).

This study aims to understand the experiences of single-term soldiers, the loss of job meaningfulness, and its impact on job satisfaction in Soldiers' next civilian job after leaving the Army. The study addresses an essential population of single-term soldiers and the crucial issues of veterans' job struggles and belongingness. This qualitative study may contribute to scholarly literature in the area of increased understanding of this population and the experiences from the perspective of single-term soldiers, a population that is not often addressed.

Chapter 2 will contain an introduction, a literature search strategy, the theoretical framework, and a review that captures the literature related to studying the Army

experiences of job meaningfulness by single-term soldiers. At the conclusion of chapter two, a summary of the chapter will transition into Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The research sought to continue looking into the experiences of single-term soldiers, the loss of job meaningfulness, and its impact on job satisfaction in Soldiers' next civilian job after leaving the Army. The researcher sought to bring forth a new understanding of the research problem and contribute new knowledge to the overabundance of research conducted about veterans and transition factors. With the plethora of focus on veterans in general, there have been no specific studies about the population of single-term soldiers. This population brings diverse challenges in their experiences and requires new contributing knowledge to bring about social change. Research on this different population of soldiers may allow the field to increase transition programs as they apply to the single-term soldier population. This chapter contains an overview of the literature that is currently provided on job meaningfulness and the impact on job satisfaction, including the historical data and current work surrounding the population of veterans and current transitional programs as they transition into a second career post-military.

There is a gap in the literature relating to job meaningfulness and job satisfaction in civilian and military workplaces that veterans experience as they transition to second careers (Robertson & Brott, 2014). There is a more significant gap in the literature when examining job meaningfulness and job satisfaction in civilian and military workplaces in

single-term soldiers that are veterans as they enter a needed second career. This noticeable gap becomes the reason wide-ranging research is necessary. The study presented includes the overall military culture that creates job meaningfulness, current information on transitional programs, information on the population of single-term soldiers, job satisfaction, job meaningfulness, and lastly, present findings that discuss the variables within the study (Krigbaum et al., 2020, Robertson and Brott, 2014). Furthermore, this chapter will also state the literature search strategy explained along with the theory addressed in an in-depth way that connects the study's relevance.

Literature Search Strategy

Several resources were utilized to examine the literature on these topics and thus identify a gap. The Walden University database provided peer-reviewed articles, professional publications and websites, dissertations, and e-books. EBSCOhost, ProQuest Central, and Military and Government collection were search engines used when using the Walden University database. The keywords used in the search engines were *job satisfaction, one-term military, single-term military, transition military, job meaningfulness, military and second career, military and job satisfaction, civilian jobs, veteran job satisfaction, and military veterans*. The search brought upon many results, and the researcher examined the abstracts, if provided, from these search engines to conclude relevant information to the topic at hand. After the examination, the researcher could then collect and document where the data was collected to apply the information in a structured form to the literature review chapter.

Herzberg's Dual Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg's dual-factor theory, also known as the two-factor theory and motivation-hygiene theory, will be discussed as a dual-factor theory within this study; the theory states that firm factors in the workplace cause job satisfaction and thus, a separate set of firm factors cause dissatisfaction that works independently from each other (Hyun, 2009). In other words, Herzberg discusses motivation within the workplace as a set of job characteristics that lead a worker to satisfaction at work and another set of job characteristics that lead a worker to dissatisfaction at work. This idea increases the knowledge of motivation in the workplace by looking at satisfaction and dissatisfaction, not on a continuum where one will increase as the other diminishes but as two independent characteristics present within the workplace. This information was current to help leaders within the workplace to address the improvement of job attitudes and productivity through understanding both sets of job characteristics and not the original idea that increased levels of job satisfaction automatically create a decrease in job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg et al., 1959).

The original research of dual-factor theory occurred when Herzberg interviewed 203 engineers and accountants when these two professionals were growing and showed their importance to the business world. The interview began with Herzberg asking for a response from the participants that answered a time in their life when they were overjoyed with happiness and the opposite of being unhappy at their jobs. With the responses, Herzberg noticed that the shared events had the ability to be identified as a change in a feeling as well as a beginning and an end. This led to verification of the

hypothesis discussing that the factors of achievement, intrinsic interest in the work, responsibility, and advancement led to satisfaction and the other non-favorable aspects of company policy and administrative practices, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, and salary led to dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1996). Furthermore, the conclusion showed that job characteristics related to what a worker does in the workplace contribute to job satisfaction and happiness at the workplace. The absence of those characteristics did not lead to job dissatisfaction; instead, a different set of job characteristics did (Herzberg et al., 1957).

The original research by Herzberg discussed the different job characteristics, and Herzberg's theory discusses these as motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators provide job satisfaction; these play a role in achievement, personal growth, and recognition. The motivators can be noticed in challenging work, responsibility, meaningfulness, a sense of feeling important in an organization, and involvement in decision-making processes. Hygiene factors are those that dissatisfaction grows from; these are in the absence of in the workplace; factors can include company policies, supervisory actions, salary, and wages leading to dissatisfaction. The hygiene factors were named for a sense of "maintenance" that includes job security, pay, benefits, and work conditions (Herzberg et al., 1957, 1959).

Herzberg's dual-factor theory can provide important information to motivating forces for workers in any workplace (Herzberg et al., 1959). Dual factor theory plays an essential role in veterans finding job satisfaction after leaving the military and working in the civilian workplace. Understanding the evidence of this, Herzberg's research can play a

role in the vital transition from military to civilian workforces (McConville & Swanson, 2017). In the utilization of transition programs, along with providing various forms of information to veterans, the adjustment is taken into account, allowing for a transition to be positive and not have reserve effects. The population of single-term soldiers needs to be considered as the need to work is more significant than their older counterparts. The need to perform is more present due to several factors (Hyun, 2009). These factors can range from retirement money, disability status, financial stability, and marital/ family relations. Understanding a more significant application of dual-factor theory is discussed to formulate a military culture where the motivators and job characteristics become presented (McConville, Arlene; Swanson, Andree, 2017).

Research has occurred on the military population with Herzberg's dual-factor theory as a driving factor. McConville, Swanson, and Zobisch (2017) looked into the effects of motivators and hygiene factors on job satisfaction in the military. The main focus of this research was active-duty military men and women. Furthermore, their study also looked into age, gender, and employment longevity to be able to form conclusions on satisfaction and dissatisfaction that may lead to potentially discounting their want to be a part of a volunteer force like the United States Armed Forces. Overall, motivation is a critical factor in any workforce or organization, and the military is no different. The results supported Herzberg's theory within the military population; although the population differs, the motivators and hygiene factors were still in line with satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the workplace. Along with the support to the theory, this research concluded that satisfaction levels changed as they related to the respondents'

characteristics of age, employment longevity, and gender. This type of research allows for the theoretical framework of Herzberg's dual-factor theory to exist and shows the same existence in the relevant research occurring (McConville et al., 2017; Keles & Fındıklı, 2016).

Organizational Socialization

The concept of organizational socialization is present within the military and military culture, and this presentation is an important one. Organizational socialization is explained as the process that new members of an organization learn about the expectations, culture, acceptable behaviors, attitudes, boundaries, skills, values, and how to assimilate to be a part of that organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The socialization process occurring focuses on the learned skills to function effectively within the organization; without this adequate level of functioning, new members of an organization tend to quit or not put forth the effort needed to benefit the organization's cohesion (Fisher, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The importance of this topic brings along the necessary research to support the socialization that occurs within the military. The process becomes a psychological aspect that needs attention to address. The presented study discusses the importance of this concept in expressing the values and cohesion that need to occur within a structure. This research plays a role in what happens when a person leaves such a highly structured organization for one, like a civilian job, that may have a different structure or may lead to much less structure (Dalenberg et al., 2013).

Military Culture

Culture is explained as the customs, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or social group. The military culture is just that, with the added unity, purpose, and direction. No different is the Army rooted explicitly in long history and uniqueness as a part of the United States Armed Forces (Hsu, 2010). The Army culture is a glue forming levels of trust and cohesion, creating the identity of every one part of it. Culture can be noticed on four levels: artifacts, use practices, exposed beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. Noticing artifacts are what is seen, heard, and felt outwardly within the Army. Noticeable artifacts are the visible aspects of the culture; mottos, insignia, flags, uniforms, and protocol for how ceremonies are performed are all artifacts part of the Army culture (Halvorson, 2010). Customs and language utilized within the Army allow for respect to be conveyed in practices. The actions that a soldier engages in, like shared communications and interaction, increase the representation of the culture with the ability to be presented in thoughts and decisions made daily (Watson, 2010). The exposed beliefs and values are not only in each soldier's mind but also noticed in published information, from rules, regulations, and policies. As a soldier grows in their career, they can learn more about these beliefs and values through the Seven Army values, soldier's creed, and office ethics (Halvorson, 2010; Hsu, 2010). The last and most profound level of culture is the underlying assumptions that are present; this level of culture allows soldiers to practice in a way with assumed principles and convocations that have been shared and grown from years of experience to create a more significant professional component of the Army culture (Halvorson, 2010).

When understanding the levels of culture and those noticed within the Army, a common and shared purpose, level of sacrifice, and mission are noticed. This culture begins to create a force that cannot always be explained but only lived. The Army has a collective mindset versus the individualistic mindset that is noticed in the civilian culture (Watson, 2009). Awareness of this collective mindset plays a role in the need to be in a cohesive group and strive for unit achievement, placing units' goals ahead of personal goals and emotionally being invested in the company. There is a sense of identity that becomes part of the Army culture, and this identity tends to play a role with any of those around the veteran (Halvorson, 2010).

Single Term Soldiers

One in six younger veterans reported that the transition to civilian life has been challenging, according to a survey conducted by Pew Research Center (Morin, 2011). They understand that the transition out of the military can be just as complex as the transition into the military. Single-term soldiers feel this transition too soon after the first occurs. The first transition of entering the military starts with recruiting; the expensive process of recruiting explains the importance that the Army places on this process. But the expense and investment do not stop there; there is an ongoing process of investment that happens through the first term of a military contract (Shane, 2019). Younger soldiers go through different types of growth and development. This different type plays a role in current relationship patterns, ability to use coping skills, cognitive processing, and distress tolerance levels (Shane, 2019). There is a need for increased development in eight different areas to increase overall levels of success. Social, psychological,

behavioral, educational, occupational, health, ethics, and civic dimensions all play a role in that success. In the military, and through the course of a single term, these are taught through military culture, values, and missions (Scales et al., 2015). These areas are addressed, and when taken away from the military, lives are lost at a level of comfort.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a variable that is widely researched within the field of I/O psychology; understanding this variable has created many levels of growth in leadership to overall job design. Although there are many different ways to define job satisfaction, for this study, job satisfaction will be defined as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job value" (Locke, 1976). The theory of job satisfaction has a significant overlap with theories of motivation, thus allowing for Herzberg's dual-factor theory to be of great importance in this study. Noticing that the population of military veterans is different from non-military veterans creates a different need in the areas of job satisfaction. There is the potential to have more energy spent on motivators than hygiene, allowing for the neutral state that Herzberg discusses to be present.

In the workplace, it is essential to eliminate stereotypes, clarify the mission, show the procedures, provide autonomy, create mentoring, explain budgets, set roles and expectations, explain context and culture, engage, focus on leadership, and lead by example when involved in a military workforce (Ingalls, 2019). Knowing that these variables are present allows for the job characteristics model to come into play. The job characteristic model (JCM) discusses that job satisfaction happens when the work

environment one is a part of has the ability to encourage intrinsically motivating characteristics. The five key job characteristics are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Lăzăroiu, 2015). These five key job characteristics then influence three psychological states, creating favorable personal and work outcomes, thus achieving job satisfaction.

Job Meaningfulness

Job meaningfulness in the workplace is defined as the importance of the purposes of work in the eyes of the worker, taking into consideration their view on life and current attitudes. When meaningfulness is present in the workplace, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and economic benefits are noticed. These benefits are not only seen within the workplace but have the ability to show in other aspects of a person's life. Work is an essential part of a person's life, regardless if it is civilian work or military work (Krigbaum et al., 2020). Work and working need to occur to be able to provide for one's self and one family. This essential factor of work has the ability to become a time-consuming part of a person's life. With that much time being spent, work becomes a part of their identity, and thus, meaning will begin to be noticed. This meaning creates a want for meaningfulness and the fulfillment of that aspect (Jackson et al., 2011; Krigbaum et al., 2020).

The meaningfulness that is discussed is present, grown, and groomed within a soldier. This is a part of the Army culture that is lived day in and day out through the soldier's time in service. Understanding this ingrained practice keeps a want for it even after military service. These soldiers are soldiers 24 hours a day, seven days a week,

during their contracted time. Living this way does not just stop; this meaningfulness is not only needed in the workplace from an organizational structure component but also from the person's need, the single-term veteran soldier (Krigbaum et al., 2020).

Transitional Programs

A transition is a period of adjustment. More specifically, a transition is defined by the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (2018) as "a period of adjustment, which includes the planning and preparation accomplished during military Service, when Service members and their families explore and embark on endeavors in the civilian world upon leaving active duty." In the United States Army, a soldier must often transition, with a significant transition occurring when their contractual term is completed and the transition to civilian life occurs. With this significant transition, military programs have been explicitly involved in helping the adjustment from soldier to a veteran. Although there has been growth in support of a successful transition of veterans into the workforce, many programs provide the initial stepping stones. Still, they do not allow for a lasting effect on job satisfaction to occur (Hawkins, 2014).

The Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) is a program providing transitioning assistance from Army to civilian life with the hopes of producing successful alumni of the U.S. Army. SFL-TAP assists by teaching, training, and applying a soldier's experiences to professional and personal growth in the civilian world. Throughout the program, soldiers are given information on formal education opportunities, benefits for the time in service, and overall growth opportunities available

when earning the title of veteran. As soldier work conditions and schedules can be unpredictable, the SFL-TAP can be utilized one year before the soldier's date of separation. This allows soldiers to balance obtaining the support of SFL-TAP while also performing the daily duty requirements. The one-year prior time frame allows for the most information and assistance to occur from the program. To increase the use of SFL-TAP, there is a 24/7 virtual center for all veterans to use (The Soldier for Life- Transition Assistance Program, n.d.).

The program SLF-TAP creates an excellent stepping stone but can fall short when others not considering specific populations, like single-term soldiers. Growth in this area can be noticed with an increased network of support that allows for a proactive approach to help veterans who are unable or struggling to seek their support. Education for those that may work with veterans in a way that increases the empathy for experiences veterans has gone through (Hawkins, 2014).

Organizations such as the Wounded Warrior Project, along with State organizations, have implemented different programs that provide structure and action and allow communities and organizations to place a proactive role in this transition (Hawkins, 2014). These types of programs help military veterans transition into different support areas. Organizations are then able to provide specialized services to those in need. The veteran population needs an effective way to feel a part of the community. Having an effective way eases the transition, thus decreasing distress that may negatively affect the veteran and those they interact with (Ingalls, 2019).

Summary

The transition of workplaces is a tough challenge, and adding a deep-rooted culture and young age creates a big missing piece. Meaningfulness taught and lived is not present and needs to be found. This meaningfulness plays a significant role in job satisfaction. Understanding the impact of information from Herzberg's dual-factor theory, along with military culture, single-term soldier, job meaningfulness, job satisfaction, and transitional programs, creates a level of understanding to make positive social change. These different aspects of information can develop a more comprehensive view of the connection and the effects that loss of meaningfulness can have on single-term soldiers.

Chapter 3 will describe the study's methods: design, population and sample size, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures, validity, and ethical protections. Chapter 3 will also discuss the research utilized on the identified variables. Chapter 4 consists of a summary of the study's results. In Chapter 5, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This chapter includes the research approach used to explore the job meaningfulness of single-term soldiers as they transition to civilian workplaces. This qualitative study aimed to examine the experience of single-term soldiers and job meaningfulness as they transition to the civilian workplace. The study's goal is to understand better the levels of job satisfaction in the civilian job that single-term soldiers experience through job meaningfulness after they leave the Army.

Chapter 3 presents the research approach and design and offers the rationale for the process and design and the role of the researcher. The chapter also explains the participant selection logic, instrumentation, recruitment strategy, target population, data collection methods, and data analysis. Lastly, confidentiality and all ethical concerns are explored, and methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures will be presented.

Research Design and Rationale

This study utilizes a qualitative approach; the qualitative design that will be used for this study is an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. An IPA qualitative method will allow for collecting and analyzing the data as it focuses on the lived experiences of single-term soldiers and job meaningfulness in their civilian job. Furthermore, an IPA provides for the experiences explored to be shared by the participant on their terms. This will allow for the research questions below to be addressed in the

complexity of the transition and level of job satisfaction through meaningfulness (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

(RQ1): How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness during their single term in the Army?

(RQ2): How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness in their civilian workplaces after the Army?

(RQ3): How do single-term soldiers describe their personal want and need for continued levels of job meaningfulness?

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants. The researcher was also able to analyze and report findings from the collected data. The importance of this role is gaining insight into the experiences; therefore, there will be no professional or personal relationships between the research and participants of the research study. There will be no conflict of interest regarding the researcher's work environment and the research participants because the researcher does not have employment, current, past, or further with any participants' institution. If any issues are present, the researcher is aware of mitigating the problem by maintaining the highest ethical and professional formatting level.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population for this study is U.S. Army Soldiers who have completed one contractual term and have not reenlisted but have chosen to end the military career of their own will. The soldiers who are part of this study are to be no more than ten years post-service from data collection and are now working in a civilian workplace. Although there is no age requirement for the study, it is important to note that the age limit to join the Army is 35 years old (MilitaryBenefits, 2021). The target size for the population will be six single-term soldiers. For a qualitative study, it is typical to have a small sample size due to the amount of data collected (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). It is predicted that data saturation occurred with the target sample size, consisting of the full amounts of data collected. The participants are required to meet the following criteria to participate in the study: served only one term in the U.S. Army, left the Army by their own will, are currently a veteran, and actively working in a job that is within a civilian workplace. The Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) or job the soldiers were working in may vary and have no restrictions. Active-duty soldiers will be excluded and unable to participate in this study, as a single-term soldier, now considered a veteran, is required. Participants for this study were recruited from various social media groups and word of mouth from professional groups that included the desired population. Participants were contacted and recruited via e-mail and telephone.

Instrumentation

The instrument that is used for this study is semi-structured interview questions that consist of open-ended questions (Appendix B). The interview allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions increasing the data collection rich through the experiences shared by the participant. The questions (Appendix B) are based on topics of the participants' current personal and professional situation, job meaningfulness, job satisfaction, and their current civilian work environment. Recording of the interviews added to the credibility and validity of the interviews allowing for accurate data collection and analysis.

Procedures for Recruitment, Target Population, and Data Collection

Participants for this study were recruited from various social media groups, ACS locations, and word of mouth from professional groups that include the desired population. The utilization of specific social media pages, as well as support and ongoing resources that have been provided to soldiers, were used. Participants were contacted and recruited via e-mail and then telephone. Participants included single-term soldiers that have left military service of their own will. The participants are currently working in a civilian workplace. Recruitment of the participants continued until six single-term soldiers were identified. The following research questions for the study are as follows:

(RQ1): How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness during their single term in the Army?

(RQ2): How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness in their civilian workplaces after the Army?

(RQ3): How do single-term soldiers describe their personal want and need for continued levels of job meaningfulness?

As soon as the appropriate participants had been recruited and identified, the data collection began and consisted of the semi-structured interview (Appendix B).

Discussions were conducted on the phone. All interviews took place in a private area, allowing confidentiality to be upheld by the researcher. Signed informed consent was collected from each participant, and interviews were recorded. Following the interview's completion, resources will be provided for coping techniques, as well as hotlines to be contacted if required. Participants were given information on the research process and the next steps, including information on member checks and contact information of the study in case any questions or concerns needed to be addressed.

Data Analysis

All data collected from the participants in this study were done over the phone. All the interviews were recorded for accurate data collection. The recordings were then assigned a number to keep the information confidential. The recordings were then transcribed using the transcription software, NVivo, to aid in this process. Member checks were utilized to account for accuracy. When the data had been checked for accuracy, the transcribed interviews were coded by the researcher manually using thematic content analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The coding was conducted by highlighting words and phrases within the transcript that explain the same meaning. This then allowed for the codes to be colored and larger patterns of meaning to be placed together. The thematic approach allows patterns to be identified within the data collected.

The codes present then produced themes that will allow for the research to form conclusions in the study's findings and discussion section of results. Data will be kept secure by using codes instead of names on data, storing names separately from the collected data, and double-password protection of data. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years on a password-secured hard drive and physically locked cabinet by the researcher. After five years, the data will be destroyed by shredding all paper documents obtained and permanently deleting all electronic recordings and files.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Issues of trustworthiness are considered and addressed as a part of any research study, as this helps to ensure data is accurate and as unbiased as possible. Credibility is my ability as a researcher to assess my study holistically (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Creditability is established in this study through member checks and data saturation. Member checks are the process of transcribing the interviews that will be conducted and then sending the transcribed and coded interviews back to the participant for review. The interview was accompanied by member check questions for the participant to answer via e-mail, allowing for the data to show consistency in the responses. Data saturation occurs when new participants do not provide new answers, and there is a significant pattern within the participants' responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The number of participants was chosen with data saturation in mind. Qualitative studies tend to have a lower number of participants to reach saturation. Data saturation was confirmed with committee members to establish a mutual understanding and noticed a level of saturation.

Transferability is the idea that the study's results can be generalized within the studied population (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Transferability within the qualitative research approach is not typically possible due to the data seeking and providing lived experiences. Although, it will still be essential to obtain transferability as much as possible. This study allowed for transferability to occur as specific description and variation within the participant selection as possible. The selected population of single-term soldiers is a particular group within the military; therefore, randomization occurred when possible. The participants sharing their descriptions and experiences with meaning will provide satisfactory transferability.

Dependability discusses the alignment of the study concepts, such as research questions, data collection, and how that data will stand up over time (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The presented elements of this study appear to be aligned. The research questions align with the theories, and the questions align with each of those as well.

Confirmability is the qualitative researcher's admittance and acceptance that all qualitative research comes with a certain amount of researcher bias due to the researcher being the primary instrument of data collection (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Since all qualitative research includes the assumption of a certain amount of bias, it is essential that other steps are taken to ensure the least amount of bias possible. That will be achieved in this study through data triangulation, transferability, and member checks.

Ethical Procedures

In research, it is essential for the investigation to acknowledge the possibility of ethical issues within the research design. This research study involved single-term soldiers that are currently working in a civilian workplace. The level of data collection, recording, and reporting data is vital and requires care and confidentiality to protect the current jobs of single-term soldiers. Participants were made aware at different points of the recruitment and interview process that they may stop their participation at any time if they choose to. Approval for this study was gained from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before any data was collected. The study participants were kept anonymous, and all data collected was confidential. To maintain this level of confidentiality, each participant was given a number so that the use of their real name did not occur. Participants signed informed consent prior to participation in the study. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix D. Furthermore, the protection of the veteran population was addressed, so no harm was done. If during an interview, a participant felt anxious or uncomfortable, they were allowed to stop at any time. Resources obtained from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the National Center for PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), were available and provided during and at the completion of the study to each participant.

Consistent communication and validation with the committee chair and members will avoid ethical and legal issues. This is important in conducting research and was not taken lightly. Identifying and addressing any ethical and legal issues that occurred before the research began. Taking this component into consideration, the following steps were

taken: signed informed consent was obtained from every participant, every effort was made to keep all participants and their provided data confidential via informed consent and discussions before data being collected, ensure all participants engaged in the study willingly, ensure participants are protected from any harm as best as possible, provide and use (if necessary) resources for participant safety, obey the APA code of ethics, and adhere to all standards of conduct concerning human subjects as it relates to research.

Summary

Chapter 3 collectively expressed the details of the methods of this study that were utilized. The topics being covered were the research design, the role of the researcher, how participants would be selected, questions during the interview process, the data analysis plan, and ethical procedures, among other details. Chapter 4 is to follow, detailing the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of single-term soldiers, the loss of job meaningfulness, and its impact on job satisfaction in the soldier's next civilian job after leaving the Army. The purpose of this study was of great interest in understanding the experiences of single-term veterans. Understanding single-term veterans' experiences are vital to understanding the military-to-civilian transition. Also, this study focused on the potential differences pertaining to Army single-term length in contrast to longer terms of service. The insights gained through this study have the possibility of bringing forth positive social change

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness during their single term in the Army?

RQ2: How do single-term soldiers describe their experiences with job meaningfulness in their civilian workplaces after the Army?

RQ3: How do single-term soldiers describe their personal want and need for continued levels of job meaningfulness?

Chapter 4 includes a discussion of the research setting, demographics of the research participants, how data were collected, data analysis, and a summary.

Setting

The setting utilized for this study was social media platforms. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram were employed to recruit study participants. Facebook was the platform that generated the most participants for the study. Due to the researcher's

involvement and membership in various military communities and groups on social media, multiple social media groups that included members of the target population were present and reviewed the recruitment flyer. As a result, snowball sampling occurred. Members of the groups communicated, "I am going to share this,"; referring to the recruitment flyer. The study participants all reported seeing the flyer posted on social media or being referred by someone who had seen it, which led to their participation in the study.

All six study participants met the inclusion/exclusion criteria in that they were single-term soldiers, currently working in a civilian organization, and it had not been more than ten years since the end of their contractual term in the Army. The study participants did not willfully sign a reenlistment contract at the end of their single term of service. The participants had all transitioned into the civilian workforce and ranged from 2 to 8 years of being out of the Army. The participants also served in the US Army exclusively. To maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned a participant number. During the interviews, a discussion of confidentiality occurred several times to allow for responses that provided depth and as complete an understanding of the experiences as possible. The demographic information that does not breach confidentiality is shown in Table 1.

Demographics

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

<i>Participant number</i>	<i>Years out of the Army</i>
1	8

2		3
3		5
4		2
5		5
6		6

Data Collection

The data collected were from semi-structured interviews. The target number of participants was six single-term soldiers, and six single-term soldiers participated in the study and willfully engaged in the interview process. The recorded interviews ranged from 25 to 60 minutes in length. Participants gave their consent to having the interviews recorded via written and signed informed consent and verbally during the interview process. All interviews were conducted via telephone and using the Ring Central application. All interview questions were asked to each of the participants, and responses to each question were recorded audio through the Ring Central application. No unusual circumstances occurred during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The data for each audio recording was transcribed using the NVivo 12 transcription software and then verified for accuracy by listening to the recordings while reading the transcript transcribed by the software. Mistakes in the transcription that were noticed were corrected to reflect the participants' precise spoken words. The participants reviewed their corrected transcription during the process of member checks. Any changes noted by the participants were corrected. Once the transcripts reflected the interviews accurately, the interpretative phenomenological analysis method allowed for the data to

be analyzed. The transcripts were manually coded using thematic coding and the NVivo 12 software. The NVivo 12 software is utilized by computer assistance to transcribe the recorded audio. With the utilization of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) for this study, an essential part of the data analysis is looking for patterns and themes that occurred throughout the interviews of each participant. In this process, I began with open coding that highlighted words and phrases attributed to the same or similar meaning. Each word or phrase was then given a color code. These colors were then grouped into larger patterns, creating categories. Noticing the color codes on each transcript allowed for a visualization of the patterns for the researcher to help to group them, as shown in Table 2. This visualization occurred with each like color being able to be moved from the transcript to the table, placing those like colors together. The categories revealed patterns in the participant's responses from the interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The patterns were given names and overarching themes, and the overarching themes will be discussed in the results section of this chapter. To better illustrate this process, Table two shows the coding process. All data collected will be maintained for a period of 5 years.

Table 2
Data Analysis Process

Words and Phrases	Categories	Themes	Overarching Theme
RQ1			
Army	Military career	What was taught/learned/experienced throughout career	knowledge of importance and work affecting others
Army/Military Culture			
Training	Learned about		

Mission			
Investment			
Important/ Importance			
Fellow soldiers	Work and working with others	Focus of the effects of the work	
Supporting/Supported			
Getting to work with others			
Making a difference			
Disconnect	Orders from higher up's	Leadership didn't communicate this	Lack of Reminders Throughout the Term
Had to			
Meant something	Knowledge of meaningful work		
Doing something			
Didn't know why			
Now I know	Self-reflection	Knowledge after the fact	
Taking a step back			
Stress levels			
RQ2			
Job now	Civilian career	Individual skills in Civilian job	Skill Set Mattered More Than Rank
Civilian			
Do with job	Showing off more		
Gained			
Always help out			
confidence	Noticing Differences		
Biggest differences			
Making decision			

Expected		Major differences between Military and rank not playing a role		
Attitude				
Asking why				
Rank doesn't matter	Changes in the leadership structure			
Discussions				
Rank/Having Rank				
Respect				
Listening	New Skills	Focused on self and increased knowledge of self	Became More of an Individualized Identity	
Came in handy				
Very open	Personality			
Life experience				
Refreshing				
Excitement				
Important job				
RQ3				
Doing something	Satisfaction	Needs/ Wants		Close relationships
Understanding				
Friendships	Relationships			
Having a bond				
Forced friendships				
Hit	Closeness	Deeper level than just working together		
Miss a lot				
indescribable				
Understood				
Regret	Missed out on	Understanding that not every transition is the same	Individualization of the differences	
Stayed longer				
Learned	Contributions			

Attention to exactly			needed through the transition
Vital role			
No psychological			
Check-box			

Evidence of Trustworthiness

An essential part of all research studies is to consider the evidence of the trustworthiness of the entire process. For this qualitative study, those elements of trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). All of these elements were carried out throughout the research process.

Credibility was achieved using member checks, as each participant reviewed their interview transcripts for accuracy. Data saturation was reached and can be perceived by the themes presented in this chapter's results section. Data saturation is the point in the research process when no new information is discovered; with the commonality in themes being presented, data saturation is confirmed (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Data saturation was reached with the 6 participants of this qualitative study. Confirmability states that qualitative research includes the assumption of a certain amount of bias. I was able to achieve confirmability in this study through data transferability and member checks—each of the mentioned elements allowed for as much reduction of research bias as possible. The bias discussed in chapter 3 of the researcher's personal experience in the presented topic remained present.

Results

Several themes emerged through data collection and qualitative analysis of the data. Each theme presented below was related to the other themes, such as a ripple effect; this allows the data to be presented comprehensively and narratively. The themes were discussed and presented as they related to and answered each of the three research questions—this format allowed for the flow of results to be easily communicated.

The overall narrative of the participants' lived experiences, levels of job satisfaction, and job meaningfulness is both present and significant; this plays a role during their transition. The experiences reported and explained by the participants are in line with the framework provided in chapter three.

RQ1: How Do Single-Term Soldiers Describe Their Experiences with Job Meaningfulness During Their Single Term in the Army?

Numerous themes emerged from the data relating to the experiences of job meaningfulness for single-term soldier participants. The coding process began with noticing where in the interview the participants reported anything related to the Army career specifically. My coding began with terms like “Army and military, important, knowing, experience, learned, Army culture, and fellow soldiers. The most prominent themes associated with RQ1 are (a) knowledge of the importance and work affecting others and (b) lack of reminders throughout the term. The following is a discussion for each of these themes, and quotes from the participants are presented in support of the themes.

Knowledge of Importance and Work Affects Others

During the interviews with participants and discussing the levels of experienced job meaningfulness in the Army, the theme of knowing its importance and the work affecting others emerged. Each participant reported the knowledge of job meaningfulness in their way. When compared to the other participants' responses, this theme was common in the experience of being a single-term soldier. The reported knowledge also highlighted how the participants' work impacted others. The participants' job meaningfulness was not just about the participants' own jobs but also about the importance of job meaningfulness in their careers. Knowing that there is a level of meaningfulness allowed the participants to notice and understand a certain level of job meaningfulness, thus, job satisfaction.

Participant 1 reported: "I mean, in my eyes, it just like, you know, it will throw you a job at you and this is what you do anyway, and the investment makes sense."

Participant 2 stated:

"I never got deployed, but I knew that if I did or if our unit did that what we were doing was going to make a difference. What we were preparing for, what we were training for, what we were already ready meant something somewhere down the link was needed and important and really affected other people. I think the military really does show that even your smallest task, even, you know, you would be far away it was meaningful".

The participant's responses are able to capture the knowledge of important work that was occurring throughout their Army career. A common theme of expressing the preparation

as well as the need to follow through on what was learned showed the connection of knowledge and its effect on others besides themselves. Participant 3 reported:

“Overall, I was satisfied with my job. There were days I was stressed. We had to wake up early. That sucked. But overall, I feel that. I was satisfied. I was happy I was engaged and kind of doing something”.

Participant 4 says: “A lot of times when we talk about being mission ready and doing our jobs to the fullest, it's present within what is taught.”

Participant 5 added:

“We knew we were important because we get like big heads in the field because, you know, everyone is supporting what would come out to support us. But our job specifically felt like we were getting to work with everyone, every single line of business”.

Participant 6 said: “I had a group of brothers and a group of people that just knew me, that supported me, that we're able to just be present and help through things.”

Furthermore, the participants continued to express how collaborative the job was and that their single action could affect a wide range of people and disciplines within the field. Knowing this and living it allowed for a level of satisfaction to be achieved through meaningfulness. The satisfaction came from the significance of the job that needed to be done, thus the overall meaningfulness.

Lack of Reminders Throughout the Term

Another theme that emerged was the discussion among the soldiers about not being reminded of the meaningfulness of the job during their term. The participants

reported how meaningfulness was not a pressing awareness during their day-to-day tasks. This theme presented itself as what Herzberg would call a hygiene factor (Herzberg, 1966). A hygiene factor is a workplace's elements like policies, working conditions, and benefits. Leadership, job duties, and military culture played a significant factor in this lack of reminders. Only when the soldiers were asked about meaningfulness during the interview was reflection able to occur to communicate the knowledge of meaningfulness. The participants reported that this information was never directly communicated by their leadership, during work, or even during conversations between soldiers.

Participant 1 stated:

“I mean, I had a hard time with disconnect of my leadership. It was kind of a military thing. You just did what was told. Sometimes I didn't know why, nor did I even ask. We just did it because someone in charge said we had to”.

Participant 3 said:

“I felt that all of us together doing the job, doing the task at hand, meant something. Maybe not in that second, but an overall big picture, it had to, right? It did mean something you were doing, something that somewhere down the line, maybe?”

The responses from the participants had the ability to show that the topic of job meaningfulness was never discussed during their team. The level of self-reflection that occurred during the interview allowed the participants to notice now that it existed but was unable to make a connection to a time during their term when anyone in a leadership role communicated it with them.

Participant 4 reports:

“I liked what I was doing. I got to meet people. I got to interact with families. But the level of satisfaction wasn't there because of my superiors and the overall leadership I had. They weren't good leader and caused a lot of distress for me. My stress levels every day were terrible”.

`. Most of the interviews needed moments to self-reflect on the questions being asked. The responses were able to explain more of a personal experience instead of an overall understanding. As a whole, the military did not express how meaningfulness plays a role in job satisfaction.

Participant 5 says:

“One, mental state of infantry is you don't need to go to the doctor, you're fine. Quit crying. I think that is not across the board in the military, but just to some extent. It's always going to there like now, now I know the importance, and I go to therapy”.

Participant 6 said:

“I feel that in the day-to-day, the military doesn't play a role in meaningfulness, but when you take a step back and look at the bigger picture of how they are supporting families and supporting the soldiers outside [life].”

Again, the participants explain that only after this interview was conducted did they notice how meaningful the job was and how the job itself allowed so many others to be affected by their actions. After the interview was completed, the researcher got feedback

from the participants about how the increased self-reflection and psychoeducation helped to increase overall motivation in their careers now.

RQ2: How Do Single-Term Soldiers Describe Their Experiences with Job Meaningfulness in Their Civilian Workplaces After the Army?

For the second research question, again, the themes emerged and were connected to the civilian career, differences noticed, new skills, changes in leadership structure, and being able to show off more. With those themes, the main emergent themes that were formed of RQ2 are (a) skillset mattered more than rank and (b) the participants felt that in their civilian workplace, they became more of an individualized identity. These themes represented the differences in job meaningfulness in the civilian workplace after the soldiers had completed their Army term. The data suggests that there was a minimal amount of time, on average two months, in which the participants found a job in the civilian workforce. All but one participant stated that they utilized their terminal leave time to look for a civilian work position. This terminal leave time allowed the participants' military pay to continue during their job search and presented as a method that took some of the pressure off of needing a job after getting out of the Army since income was continuing. Since most, if not all, single-term Soldiers then obtain a civilian job after getting out of the Army, this relief of pressure was significant.

Skill Set Mattered More Than Rank

The skill set was a more significant factor in the participants in their civilian careers than rank was during their single-term careers. This theme was discussed throughout all of the interviews as something noticed during their civilian careers. The

following are the participants' responses so there may be a better understanding of how this theme emerged.

Participant 1 reported: thinking about it, just you know, in the Army, they just throw jobs at you because of your rank. Now, my skills are noticed. I feel that I have become more of an investment, if that makes sense.

Participant 2 said:

“How we talk to each other is the biggest difference. The level of communication and respect in doing what is told is different. Rank doesn't matter. I feel that I can make the decision right there at the drop of a hat. Anybody can kinda make a decision. Where in the military the discuses have to come from the top”.

Participant 4 says:

“Military is a lot about the rank and just having the rank. Civilian, yes, there is rank, but there is also [more] about what you could do with your job. Respect seems to be more earned in civilian culture than military culture”.

Rank and terms related to leadership and the ranking system within the Army came up often during the interviews. The participants mentioned rank in response to multiple questions. In these responses, the researcher was able to notice that it was an important factor of their now civilian workplace and the experience of rank in the civilian workplace shifting. Now that rank seemed to shift from being the main focus to not, this allowed for more of the individual skill set to take place. The participants were able to share experiences that allowed them to speak up if they felt the need to and to move

toward the task at hand during their civilian job, while during their time in service, all decisions came from a higher-ranking official.

Participant 5 reports:

“I believe I gained a lot of confidence, say, like leadership skill. More than like an office setting. Like I'm able to converse with my coworkers, and now I am able to be treated fairly. I always like to help out, and I can now help out even if I am not in charge or something”.

Participant 6 said:

“I would acknowledge things are very much different, how we talk to each other and what's expected of each other. Attitude that is in the military, you just kind of do it because you were told to do it. I don't ever remember asking why to anything in the military”.

Rank was a topic that came up often, and the interviewees presented it in a way that the researcher concluded as a feeling of relief. Rank was a subject that was shared, and research shows is a driving force learned in military culture. The ranking official has authority over all lower-ranking soldiers, and at times, this can cause a conflict that does not get resolved. It was noticed that a breath was taken by the participants during the interview as if pressure was taken off when discussing the differences between the military job to where they are now.

Became More of an Individualized Identity

An individualized identity was reported as the participants discussed the other civilians they worked with during their second career. Although this was not a main

conversation point during the interviews, it is important because the then soldiers, now civilians, lost the togetherness experienced and reported in the responses related to RQ1.

Participant 2 said:

“I had a lot more skills and just personality and interactions, and I think a lot of the more senior people realized that I wasn't just starting off. They noticed that I had more life experiences than just my military career”.

Participant 3 explained:

“I had communication, respect, and following direction and being able to listen. I feel that I was really direct, which came in handy in my civilian job because I am very open to a lot of things. I got to put these into effect in my job now”.

Participant 4 says: “I feel that going into the [civilian] workforce was kind of refreshing, it was different. It was new, and I was more excited to start doing something different, and something new, something for me”.

The participants shared experiences that related to the change in who they were or needed to become when in the Army to who they are and have become in the civilian workplace. Many of the skill set they had in the Army was able to transfer into different situations. It was observed that the participants expressed a different focus on the individual skills they had and how those skills are not being utilized within the civilian workplace.

Participant 5 reports:

“I look at it now, and I'm just like, man, I was a child. I got out of basic training when I was 17 years old. I didn't turn 21 until I got out. I couldn't even drink that whole time. Now, I am me. I am doing a job that it's very important, I believe”.

Participant 6 said:

“I didn't expect to struggle in having a job because I had the experience, and I knew I could do it. I knew that I had a skill set that was needed and could hold my own without the team I had prior”.

Like the response related to rank, the participants expressed the importance of self within the responses. Increasing their own level of understanding, the increased skill set they learned during their time in service, and how it was able to continue to grow in their civilian careers.

RQ3: How Do Single-Term Soldiers Describe Their Personal Want and Need for Continued Levels of Job Meaningfulness?

To answer research question three, the coding process allowed for themes related to job meaningfulness and needs and wants. Initially, themes were coded with terms such as needs, wants, missed, learned, contributions, satisfaction, and relationship. The most notable themes associated with RQ3 are (a) close relationships and (b) individualization of the differences needed through the transition. These themes helped to address the specific factors of moving from the Army workplace to the civilian workplace. The participants were able to report a similar experience of being a part of one unit they had solid friendships with and being in for a single term in their unit, and those friendships changed minimally. This experience is different from those who may spend more time in

the Army and adds a unique level to the single-term soldier population. Although the participants reported having support from relationships prior to the military experiences, when they went back to these relationships, things were different. They felt they had a need that others could not relate to.

Close Relationships

The participants' wants and needs were other themes that emerged in the data. All of the participants discussed the relationships made with other soldiers during their term and how they felt a closeness to their fellow soldiers. This closeness was an experience that did not have to be explained or could not be explained except by those living it. The participants experienced a multitude of shared experiences while serving in the Army, and those relationships were valued by the participants in a way that words were difficult to express. The relationships with each other, on a deeper level than just being a coworker, mostly because of the amount of time spent together. The military culture helped develop the relationships and played a significant role throughout their single term. This plays a role in the participants' wants and needs for continued relationships like the ones they once had while serving in the Army. The following are quotes that support this emergent theme.

Participant 1 reported:

“When I first left, it hit. I was sad because it was just the experience of what I've learned. The men I worked with seen the world. I mean, that's what I was going to miss a lot. Maybe a year after, I was kind of regretting that I got out. I should have stayed longer. It just sad kind of thing. I miss my coworkers”.

Participant 2 said:

“Created bring together friendships, forced friendships even but friendships that you kind of have laughter, happiness, just an overall idea of doing things together and having this bond that can even be explained that I don't even know how to describe. You know, you have an increased bond because of a joke that we did. If we told that word or we have an understanding because we all know what it is and how it sucks to have to get up at 5 am and be away from our families”.

Participant 3 explained:

“I knew I had friends; I knew we had a bond. That was indescribable. I knew that I was able to be around people that understood me in a way that is hard to explain. I really enjoyed the overall commonality that we just had, that we had this thing of being soldiers together, and it made a big difference”.

During the interview, the participants, at times, had a hard time talking about the relationships that were built with fellow soldiers. Many of the participants experienced a loss of friendships due to most peers choosing to continue their contracts with the military. Since there isn't that forced environment bringing them together. The participants really focused on how this level of togetherness meant a lot to them and played a role in their attitudes and showing up for work. Noticing these patterns allowed the researcher to form a conclusion that increasing meaningfulness and its role in job satisfaction also needs to include a discussion of the close relationships service members build.

Participant 5 reports:

“I didn't notice how different it was until I started hanging out with my friend again from growing up. And I would say some things would be normal. [then] they would look at me like I was insane. So, I guess it just was really different from the friends I had in the military”.

Participant 6 said: “I don't feel like anybody got me, period. But I knew my friends in the military got me. It was known without it being known”.

When it came to talking about relationships, the participants seemed to have a commonality in explaining something that was hard to explain. The relationships formed presented with meaning and importance; it was shared that these relationships were very close due to the amount of time spent. This time spent increased the levels of intimacy, thus, a stronger bond that was present in different situations.

Individualization of the Differences Needed Through Transition

“The concept of organizational socialization allowed for a greater understanding and a lens through which the participant's experiences and their wants and needs in the single-term soldier population were viewed. The concept of organizational socialization played a role in the theme of the need for individualization in the civilian career as the participants needed an adjustment of the organizational change from military to civilian. The military-to-civilian transition that the participants went through was not fully addressed in the SFL-TAP program, as each participant explained significant struggles when getting out of the service. The struggle was noticed as the information presented in SFL-TAP did not always apply to the individual areas of struggle”.

Participant 1 reported:

“I didn't have to ask for help, but I mean, I did go to some place and then asked me some questions to help me find a job. It was kind of helpful but not anything big. I don't feel like they really played attention to exactly what I needed”.

Participant 2 said:

“For me, it was very vital role. I don't think they realize how much it affected me. Having that program and going through the training, and putting in that extra effort. I mean, I pretty much went to school for my next career through the SFL-TAP. I don't know many people that actually got accepted and stuck with the program I was in because it was so specific”.

Participant 3 explained:

“I don't feel like the program prepared me psychologically. I think it was more focused on writing a resume, and there are some resources. This is who you call. Here are some numbers, websites, and stuff like that. I don't feel like it was individualized to me, especially psychologically. I don't think there was a mental health component to it”.

Participant 4 says:

“I don't feel like the classes did much. I went to those classes that were required. Yeah, they showed me how to do a resume. But other than that, it was kind of just a checkbox on the way out. I don't think my superiors, my leadership team really cared about me going either. Since they didn't care, I didn't think I needed to”.

During the interview, the participants were observed taking pauses when talking about SFL-TAP, as this program is one of the last encounters they go through in the transition.

Although forced, it was noticed that the participants all had strong feelings about it and its importance for a transitioning soldier.

Participant 5 reported: “Honestly, I don't really remember much about it [SFL-TAP]. I honestly feel like they were like, does anyone have mental issues? Okay, we're moving on, next”.

Participant 6 said:

“I think it just gave me these things. Do these classes. Here are some resources, but I don't think it was every very specific to my situation. What was different? The fact that I had a young wife, I was young. The fact that I never had to do these things prior, I never had to think about medical. I didn't know how to do that. There was no help for that [stuff]”.

The participants all expressed common emotions about the SFL-TAP program and how something needs to be changed. They were able to say how some of the information did not relate to them or was very specific. This caused a disconnect in the transition from soldier to civilian.

Summary

Chapter 4 included the results of the three research questions that were presented. The research questions presented contained many emergent themes from the collected data. The central theme for RQ1 was the overall noticing of job meaningfulness being present during the single term in the Army. The central theme for RQ2 was missing something occurring in the Army and is now not appearing in the soldier's civilian workplace. Lastly, the main theme for RQ3 was needing and wanting connection of the

experience so that the soldiers may obtain continued job meaningfulness. Chapter 5 will include the interpretation of the findings, study limitations, recommendations, and implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of single-term soldiers and their levels of job satisfaction through job meaningfulness in their second careers. This study allowed for a depth of understanding of what occurs regarding job satisfaction for this unique population. The key findings include the pattern of meaningfulness, job satisfaction, and the need for connections with others for this population to be able to adjust during their military-to-civilian transition successfully. In Chapter 5, I discuss my interpretation of the findings, implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

The population of single-term soldiers was the focus of this study because this population does not leave the military with the same veteran benefits as other military veteran populations (i.e., military retirees). This population experiences a much different transition than other veteran populations and usually is younger in age, which increases the uniqueness of the experience. In the literature review presented in Chapter 2, I concentrated on areas that revealed the gap in the current research. The single-term veteran population has not been well-researched in previous studies (Roberston & Brott, 2014). The available research showed that the gap included certain veteran populations and stages of transition (Roberston & Brott, 2014). The topics covered in the literature review discussed Herzberg's dual-factor theory, organizational socialization, military

culture, single-term soldiers, job satisfaction, job meaningfulness, and military-to-civilian transition programs. Based on the literature review, it could be noticed that single-term soldiers experience a range of negative issues when transitioning to the civilian workplace due to the loss of military job meaningfulness and the lack of job meaningfulness in the civilian workplace.

This study included six single-term soldiers working in a civilian workplace. I sought to understand their lived experiences as they transitioned out of the Army and into the civilian workplace. My interest in their lived experiences concerned how they might have experienced job satisfaction through job meaningfulness during their single term in the Army and later in their second careers in a civilian workplace. The themes of knowledge that the work affected others, lack of reminders throughout the term, skill set mattered more than rank, became more of an individualized identity, close relationships, and individualization of the differences needed through the transition. The results showed that this population of single-term soldiers reported they were taught the purpose of their jobs throughout their military careers and were presented with forced relationships through joining an organization like the Army. When those relationships were removed, the experience was drastic, and the relationships were not replaced in their civilian workplaces.

Interpretation of the Findings

Many studies focused on the long-term military service members and the psychological struggles that occurred for that population during the time when they left the service. However, few studies included single-term military service members. The

results of this study may contribute to the body of research in several ways. This study may contribute to the understanding that veteran transitions have a high level of uniqueness. This becomes apparent when considering the variables of time in service, single-term population, and job meaningfulness. In the context of the research reviewed in Chapter 2, the results of the current study introduce another focus area, job meaningfulness, that can be a pivotal factor in lasting job satisfaction for single-term soldiers transitioning to the civilian workplace. There is a need for dialogue regarding job meaningfulness during the transition process and ongoing into a civilian career. Findings indicated that single-term military members notice some level of job meaningfulness that is not replicated in the civilian workplace. The concept of job meaningfulness addresses those who experience the change and struggle with the transition, as it was something present in their day-to-day and then something not. Although it is possible to have different factors affecting job meaningfulness in their second career, the noticeable changes in workplace culture from the Army to a civilian career present an opportunity for positive social change to be achieved.

Herzberg's dual-factor theory addresses the factors that create job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Bhatt et al., 2022). As an integral focus of the current study, job satisfaction is known as a motivator's outcome. These motivators were missing during portions of the single-term soldier's time in the Army and their time in their civilian careers, as reported through the interviews conducted in this study. The motivators can be observed in elements such as challenging work, responsibility, meaningfulness, a sense of feeling important in the organization, and involvement in the decision-making process.

The single-term soldier participants explained that, at times, these factors played a role in their adjustment to civilian life, along with a need for these factors to keep that motivation present in their current jobs.

In the following sections, I summarize the emergent themes from the study and incorporate them into the context of the existing literature. Each of the six single-term soldier participants answered the interview questions in different ways. However, I looked for patterns in the statements, thereby producing themes. My interpretation came from noticing patterns and finding the common reported terms from the interviews. This is discussed in the impetrations section. The major themes addressing each research question are outlined in the following sections.

RQ1

The major themes within the first research question were (a) knowledge that their work affects others and (b) lack of reminders throughout the single term in the Army. Regarding experiences of job meaningfulness during a single term in the Army, participants' responses focused on these two themes. These themes show the lack of conversation around job meaningfulness during their time in the military from leaders. The theoretical framework shares that meaningfulness is a factor in job satisfaction (Bhatt et al., 2022). The connection of the framework then communicates that meaningfulness in a job is needed for satisfaction. Knowing this information plays a role in the need for organizations to implement a way for employees to discuss meaningfulness, allowing for increased job satisfaction.

Knowledge That Their Work Affects Others

The major theme of the knowledge that their work affects others was noticed throughout the participants' responses. The military culture, specifically the Army culture, was instilled in the participants from the first day of basic training. They learned the military customs, purpose, and direction. These elements and more were taught from Day 1 and were noted through different artifacts such as medals and ranking patches on uniforms, as well as customs and language utilized during their military service term (Nicoară & Pînzariu, 2021). The participants were able to communicate during the interviews that they knew their work affected others down the line. They expressed that meaningfulness was present and experienced at times. The participants did not convey that the work was important to them personally, representing the collective mindset. All participants added that their day-to-day work and training prepared them for the mission, thereby promoting mission readiness. These comments indicated that there was some importance to the work, but participants were unable to self-identify what that importance was personally. This finding aligns with Herzberg's dual-factor theory that the motivators to continue showing up for work existed but could not be pinpointed on an individual level (Herzberg et al., 1959). The motivation seemed to be more present in the context of bigger-picture items, such as letting others down. This could possibly conclude a missing factor of internal motivation while noticing the existence of external motivation. The participants communicated that they showed up not just because they had to but because they knew it was important for their country and their peers. The participants expressed organizational socialization allowing for the values of the military to remain high and the highly structured organization of the military to present with meaning.

Lack of Reminders Throughout the Term

The theme of the lack of reminders of meaningfulness while in the military connects to motivators from Herzberg's dual-factor theory, which are needed for increased job satisfaction. The missing piece of meaningfulness was a pattern in the responses of the single-term soldier participants. The participants' responses regarding a lack of reminders throughout the term indicated that meaningfulness was not discussed during their time in service. Because job meaningfulness is the purpose of work in the eyes of the worker (Bhatt et al., 2022), the participants did not have reminders during their time in service. The lack of purpose would disconnect from the motivators that move a worker toward job satisfaction (Bhatt et al., 2022). Due to these elements lacking within the culture of particular units or job locations, the participants failed to make an ongoing effort to continue with military service long-term. The lack of these elements may have played a role in soldiers not continuing service in the Army and choosing not to reenlist. Moreover, the lack of reminders and talking about the presence of job meaningfulness can lead to a lack of job satisfaction (Thant & Chang, 2021). The achievement in their jobs was not to their full potential, and some did not even know what that was.

RQ2

The major themes related to the second research question were (a) skill set mattered more than rank and (b) it became more of an individualized identity. The participants were able to discuss the meaningfulness observed in their civilian careers. They noticed that there was a shift in meaningfulness through the interactions that

occurred with new coworkers. The different factors, such as relationships and culture in the Army, were no longer present in their civilian careers. Rank within the workplace differs dramatically from that in the military, and the overall identification of one's self changes as well. The ranking system that occurs in the military is not noticed within the civilian workplace, and the participants identified this as a way that allowed them to be more of themselves and open another door of skills sets that they have (see Flack & Kite, 2021).

Skill Set Mattered More Than Rank

A major theme that emerged during the participants' interviews was that the role that rank played in the Army no longer mattered in the civilian workplace. That phenomenon caused the participants to feel that their skill set mattered more than the rank they once held during their time in service (see Flack & Kite, 2021). This theme indicated the need for meaningfulness in the civilian workplace coming from other areas, such as skill sets, rather than the achievement of rank that was important in the Army (see Flack & Kite, 2021). The motivator of skill set moves the worker toward job satisfaction instead of toward dissatisfaction. The motivator was knowing the importance of their skill set and that this skill set could be improved in their civilian workplace. The participants communicated that they felt more of a connection to their role and were able to own the full effort they were putting out. Organizational socialization increases the values and skill sets to assimilate more effectively in the civilian workplace (Cepale, 2021). Understanding through the patterns and themes that there are other influences

playing a role in job meaningfulness could increase job satisfaction and overall motivating factors for the single-term soldier, given the results of this study.

Individualized Identity

The theme that can be seen throughout the interviews with the participants is that during their civilian careers, they felt that they had the ability to be more individualized and that their identities were now changed with that individualization. When the soldiers completed basic training, they learned all about the military culture and how to be a part of the team needed to create cohesion and the identity of being a soldier (Stevenson, 2020). Shifting to a civilian workplace changed this; although workplaces have an onboarding process, they may need to differ for veterans. This idea suggests there is a need to create job meaningfulness again once the soldiers leave the Army and that it is possible to differ from what they learned when they were in the military culture. Their identities that were developed during their Army service are now different, and those identities play a role in the need for meaningfulness to be rediscovered so they may have job satisfaction in their civilian careers (Stevenson, 2020).

The theme that can be seen throughout the interviews with the participants is that during their civilian careers, they felt that they had the ability to be more individualized and that their identities were now changed with that individualization. This idea suggests there is a need to create job meaningfulness again once the soldiers leave the Army and that it is possible to differ from what they learned when they were in the military culture. Their identities that were developed during their Army service are now different, and

those identities play a role in the need for meaningfulness to be rediscovered so they may have job satisfaction in their civilian careers.

RQ3

The major themes for the third research question were (a) close relationships and (b) individualization of the differences needed through the transition. These two themes were central in the results presented in this study concerning that related to the personal wants and needs to continue levels of job meaningfulness (Kleykamp et al., 2021). The participants were able to discuss that they wanted relationships like those that were built in the military and that their single-term soldier status made their needs different throughout the transition and, more specifically, with the SLF-TAP classes.

Close Relationships

One of the major themes that emerged during the discussion and interviews with the participants was concerning the relationships the single-term soldier participants had with other soldiers. Unlike a traditional job setting of an 8-hour work day, soldiers spend increased time with each other during job-related pieces of training, mandatory physical training daily, and during field training or deployments. This time together can range from 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to extended weeks and months. These relationships were noted as something that was lived and something that many felt was hard to explain in words. This was especially true for the soldiers attempting to explain the relationship to a person who had not experienced it. The time spent together can create a significant bond and level of intimacy that does not occur in a traditional job setting. The participants felt these relationships were an integral part of what is needed to

succeed during the military-to-civilian transition. The relationships were able to provide a meaningful connection to the job, as well as a personal connection to themselves. They created a type of relationship that allowed for many encounters to be experienced together and processed mentally to increase positive well-being during their time in service. Organizational socialization theory helps to explain the importance of this concept because these soldiers have learned skills to function effectively within the organization and have now assimilated to be a part of the organization, which is vital to success within the military culture. The learned culture, expectations, behaviors, attitudes, boundaries, and skills that the single-term soldier participants knew in the military were all desires when they transitioned to civilian life (Fisher, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The comfort of the military culture and all it encompassed was sought by the participants in their civilian lives but specifically in the civilian workplace culture.

Individualization of the Differences Needed Through Transition

Another theme that resulted from the discussions with the single-term soldier participants discussed the individualization need. The participants became aware that their experiences were much different than other veterans they interacted with through the SFL-TAP classes. The time spent in military service felt to the participants to be both long and short at the same time. The military culture that they were a part of became a part of them. However, that changed dramatically when they left military service. The single-term soldiers did not experience the same type of growth and development that seemed to be taught during the SFL-TAP classes. A deeper understanding of this need

suggests that transition programs need to be adjusted to suit different populations or sects within the military culture. It could be argued that the single-term soldier population still needs increased development in social, psychological, behavioral, educational, occupational, health, ethics, and civic dimensions to be successful after they transition out of the military.

Implications

The purpose of research is to attempt to create positive social change from the results gained from the study. With the emergent theme of job meaningfulness and its connection to job satisfaction, the potential for positive social change is present. At an individual level, the implications are that the participants of this study may have gained an increased level of awareness concerning job meaningfulness and its lasting effects, and this happened during the interview process, as stated by the participants, as well as the increased conversation about meaningfulness. This increased awareness may allow a state of mindfulness for the participants, potentially allowing for self-reflection to occur. Self-reflection and one's ability to improve this skill can be applied in order to give serious thoughts to one's behaviors, thoughts, attitudes, motivations, and desires, causing positive responses to certain circumstances and events (Valsiner et al., 2007). At an organizational level, the SFL-TAP could be adjusted to include specific topics related to the single-term soldier population and its uniqueness and include a psychological aspect that includes the discussion of job meaningfulness. All participants expressed emotions associated with the requirement of SFL-TAP classes; these emotions ranged from it being a waste of time to learning some excellent skills. This expression included a desire for

change to the program to include more relevant material and relatability to their population, specifically as many felt they differed from others in the program. A potential application for SFL-TAP classes could relate to communication skills, social interactions, and working through psychoeducation on values-driven behaviors (Kaur and Mittal, 2020).

The most prominent implication is the connection to the theoretical framework that was utilized in this study. Combined with Organizational Socialization, Herzberg's Dual Factor Theory allows for a strong foundation of understanding how and why people need job meaningfulness present to have job satisfaction (Flack & Kite, 2021). It presents the combination of understanding the motivating factors and the process by which workers learn and adjusts to a new organization. An increase in the practical application of this framework could allow for the military-to-civilian transition to be better understood and change to be adopted. Knowing job satisfaction characteristics and the structure built in the military could help minimize the negative impact on single-term soldiers' experiences when entering their second career in a civilian workplace.

Limitations of the Study

As with many studies, the current study design is subject to limitations. The first limitation is that the focus of this study was one that only includes soldiers, thus Army veterans only. This creates a limitation because the different military branches are not included, and their experiences are unknown. To fill this gap, future research can extend to other military branches focusing on single-term service members and not just soldiers.

Another limitation of this study was the minimal representation of genders. It is important to understand the different factors and experiences that occur with varying genders regarding single-term military personnel and their transition to the civilian workforce. Although gender was not a focus of this study, the inclusion of gender norms can lead to an understanding of different transition experiences. To assess this limitation of also play a role in a recommendation for future research, the study could have required a certain number of participants based on gender to increase the understanding of the differences and similarities of experiences as it relates to different genders.

Last, another limitation of this study concerns the generalization of the single-term soldier population. Although the sample size proposed was reached, and data saturation occurred, the sample size is still not enough to be able to generalize the results to the entire population of single-term soldiers. A larger sample size, such as in a quantitative study, may allow for a better sense of generalization. With this being a qualitative study and purposefully having a small sample size, this limitation would not be changed for this study. Still, future research could mitigate or minimize this limitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

For recommendations for future research, it is important to address two different types of recommendations. First, the recommendations made are related to the major findings of this study and, second, to future studies. My recommendations that are based on the findings of this study are the importance of discussing job meaningfulness throughout the workplace as it connects to job satisfaction. A recommendation for future studies is centered around continuing research surrounding veteran populations that have

unique characteristics, such as those of the single-term soldier population or, furthermore, female soldiers and those with specific Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). A deeper understanding of this particular population and others is vital.

Recommendations Based on Findings

The results and statements made by the participants point to an issue with the military preparing single-term soldiers for the transition to civilian life and the civilian workforce. It is likely that single-term soldiers need to enter a second career in the civilian workplace following their single term in the military. Therefore, this issue is important with regard to this specific population. The participants were ingrained with the military culture during their time in basic training, and they learned everything they needed to allow them to be successful within that culture. Then the choice is made to end their time in military service, and in doing so, every soldier is required to attend SFL-TAP. The SFL-TAP creates stepping stones, and some of those stones are not necessarily relevant to the single-term soldier. The SFL-TAP does not address the individualization of this population and the psychological effects experienced by them. With the results of this study and input from the participants, there is a clear need for the SFL-TAP classes to include the dramatic loss of the culture and meaningfulness that the soldiers were a part of and had while in the military. The connections made while serving their military term get ripped away, and the SFL-TAP classes do not discuss elements and topics that are relevant to single-term soldiers. As a result, they do not feel a part of or ascribe value to the classes.

When a veteran transitions into a civilian workplace, it can be a culture shock. The organizational socialization that needs to occur may be delayed due to this culture shock, as it is tough losing the tight-knit bond built in the military culture. Taking this transitional period into consideration, workplace discussion on meaningfulness should be a priority to allow for a smoother transition into civilian workplaces. Creating awareness and keeping that level of meaningfulness high, it will allow for job satisfaction also to remain high, creating a positive workplace culture in the civilian workplace and functional transition for the veterans.

Future studies about this population would help understand this unique population of military veterans better, along with other populations within the military. A recommendation is to conduct a quantitative study with a larger sample size to create a broader range of data collection. Specifically, understanding the differences between male and female soldiers or other branches of the Armed forces that share the criteria of single-term service would allow for greater understanding. The relationship between single-term service members and meaningfulness may allow for an even greater understanding of the unique need to continue to provide for themselves and their families, as well as the levels of continued development that are still occurring as the population tend to be younger in age. A quantitative study into any of the topic areas covered in the results of this study would allow for robust data to be collected and, therefore, a greater understanding gained.

Conclusion

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of single-term soldiers and how they experienced job satisfaction through job meaningfulness in their second careers in a civilian workplace. Furthermore, this study sought to understand the desires of this unique population of single-term veteran soldiers. The results of this study are complicated, and each theme plays a role building off of the previous ones, as well as they all relate to each other as a whole. The need for job meaningfulness and, thus, job satisfaction is the overarching theme of the entire study. Job meaningfulness is something that this population needs reminders of because they have learned it in the military culture, then when they leave it, it is something that needs to be rediscovered, but many times they do not know how.

Three research questions were posed for this study, with clear themes developed from each. The first research question produced the themes of (a) knowledge that the work affected others and (b) lack of reminders throughout the term. The participants responded to the interview questions in different ways that were able to capture the themes presented in this study. The second research question produced the themes of (a) skill set mattered more than rank and (b) became more of an individualized identity. Lastly, the third research question presented the themes of (a) close relationships and (b) individualization of the differences needed through the transition.

In conclusion, the participants of this study, and the unique population of single-term soldiers as a whole, deserve a consistent reminder and conversation about meaningfulness in their jobs which could increase their ability to be active and motivated in their daily tasks in their civilian lives.

Understanding this population and how they have different experiences from those that have graciously served longer terms; is needed to continue creating job satisfaction levels in civilian workplaces. This then helps organizations that know job satisfaction is important to run effectively, providing a reciprocated relationship between veterans and the workplace. The hope is that this research study increases opportunities for positive social change for this group of participants and future veterans in different situations. Continued research to create social change will provide the opportunity for informed discussions and, therefore, decisions for those they are affecting.

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Appendix A: Sociodemographic Data Collection Form

All information provided on this form will be kept strictly confidential

Participant Identifier (Researcher Assigned) _____

Branch of Service: _____

Rank at end of contractual term: _____

Calendar Year of end of term: _____

Age at initial Enlistment? _____

Age at end of contract? _____

Combat Deployments: _____

Age: _____ **Ethnicity:** _____

Highest Education: _____

Marital Status: _____

Previously Divorced: _____

Children living with: _____ **Children not living with:** _____

Civilian Occupation: _____

Years at Current Civilian Occupation: _____

Annual Income at Civilian Occupation: _____

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

1. What are some of the reasons you choose to get out of the military after one term?
2. Describe what you believed to be your transferable skills from your military experience prior to joining the civilian workforce.
3. Describe your thoughts and feelings leaving the military but specifically how you felt about leaving the military culture.
4. Describe your thoughts and feelings about the job satisfaction you experienced while in the military?
5. Describe your thoughts and feelings on how the military plays a role in job meaningfulness?
6. Describe your thoughts on job meaningfulness and its importance in the workforce?
7. Describe your level of awareness that your psychological impact could have been attributed to job meaningfulness?
8. How long was it after you left from the military that you joined the civilian workforce?
9. Describe your experiences with gaining employment in a civilian organization.
10. With regard to your military experiences, describe your expectations with joining the civilian workforce.
11. Describe your experiences with the differences between the military culture and the civilian workplace culture.

12. Describe, if any occurred, any challenges or stresses you had assimilating into the civilian workplace culture.
13. Describe how you and your military experiences were respected within the civilian workplace?
14. Describe your thoughts and feelings with how well the transition assistance program was at preparing you psychologically for the civilian workforce.
15. How did you cope with any negative emotions you experienced leaving the military?

Appendix C: Conscription Letter

Conscription E-Mail:

To: [Participant's Name],

My name is Bethanie Hiramoto, and I am a Doctoral Candidate and student at Walden University, studying Industrial and Organizational Psychology. I am currently conducting a qualitative research study on "Single-term soldiers and Job satisfaction through Job meaningfulness," and your participation is needed. I am respectfully inviting you to participate in this imperative research study if you meet all of the following criteria:

1. Previously active-duty Soldier U.S. Army
2. Single-term soldier (did not willfully sign a reenlistment contract)
3. Currently working in a civilian organization
4. Complete and sign an informed consent form which states the participant engaged in the study voluntarily and at their own free will (signed at the time of the interview in-person or via email)

Should you meet the above-listed criteria and you would like to participate, you would be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that would last no longer than 60 minutes. Interview questions will concern your experiences surrounding your retirement from military service, your transition to civilian life/work, and your experiences working in a civilian organization. You may stop or withdraw your participation at any time. The interview will take place face-to-face in a previously agreed upon private location, over video conferencing, or over the telephone. Your

participation in this study will be kept confidential. No names or identifying information will be stored with the collected data, but instead, numbers will be assigned to participants for anonymity. All collected information and data will be stored in a double password-protected file that only the researcher will be able to access. You may contact the researcher with questions about the study or participation at any time.

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me by telephone or email. Thank you very much, in advance, for your consideration!

Respectfully,

Bethanie Hiramoto

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University: Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

You are respectfully invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Bethanie Hiramoto. I am a current Ph.D. student at Walden University, studying Industrial and Organizational Psychology. I am currently conducting a qualitative research study for my doctoral degree, and I would greatly appreciate your help with your participation in my imperative research study. The topic being researched is "Single-term soldiers and Job satisfaction through Job meaningfulness." You are being recruited for this study because you match the essential criteria of being a single-term soldier and are presently working a second career in a civilian organization. I am inviting you to become a participant in the study should you meet all of the following criteria:

5. Previously active-duty Soldier U.S. Army
6. Single-term soldier (did not willfully sign a reenlistment contract)
7. No more than ten years since completing the contract of service
8. Currently working in a civilian organization

This form is a part of the process known as "informed consent," and it allows research participants to understand this research study prior to making the decision to participate.

The present research study is being conducted by Bethanie Hiramoto, a researcher and doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Information:

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the experiences of single-term soldiers and the loss of job meaningfulness and its impact on job satisfaction in soldier's next civilian job after leaving the Army. The goal is to provide greater insight into the unique population of single-term soldiers, regardless of MOS, after three years of service have been completed, and the experiences of single-term soldiers of transitioning and experiencing the negative adjustment that comes with losing job meaningfulness and, thus job satisfaction. With increased insight into this population, challenges can be identified and potentially addressed. Addressing these then identified challenges can help to make programs, like SFL-TAP, utilize the information and in applicable way to help the unique population of single-term soldiers.

Procedures:

Should you decide you would like to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Take part in a semi structured interview with the researcher, which should last no longer than 60 minutes. Interview questions will concern your experiences surrounding your term in the Army, your transition to civilian life/work, and your experiences working in a civilian organization.
- Meet for the interview, which will take place face-to-face in a previously agreed upon private location, over video conferencing, or over the telephone.
- Provide proof of military service, retirement of specified years, and proof of retiring as a commissioned officer (DD-214 or discharge papers).
- Agree to be audio recorded.

Voluntary Participation in the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the option to decide whether to accept the invitation to participate. You will not be judged or treated differently for nonparticipation in the study. If you decide to join the study and decide later, you do not want to participate; you can change your mind at any time. You may cease or withdraw your participation at any time without fear of reprisal in any way. The researcher reserves the right to stop an interview at any time for any reason, as well. Your identity and identifiable information will be kept completely confidential and is protected by the restrictions allowed by the law. Any information that will be published that could be identifiable will only be published with prior explicit consent from the participant. No names will be used on records or notes, but instead, numbers will be assigned to participants and utilized to separate them. All collected pieces of information will be kept in a double password protected file that only I, the researcher, will be able to access. If at any time the study design or how the data will be utilized changes, all participants will be informed immediately, and additional informed consent may be requested.

Benefits and Risks of Participating in the Study:

Participating in this research study may come with some slight psychological discomfort, such as becoming saddened or feeling unpleasant, as it will include questions about a past time in their lives, as well as lived experiences, and entering the civilian workforce. Participating in this study does not pose any physical risks, such as any to your safety or welfare. A minimal amount of risk comes with your participation in this study.

Potential benefits of this study include gaining insights into the experiences of the levels of job satisfaction and job meaningfulness. Gaining insights will lead to adding to the current research on single-term soldiers specifically. The findings of the study will be made available to each participant after the study has been concluded.

Compensation:

Participants will not be financially compensated for their participation in this study.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. The researcher is only allowed to share your identity or contact information as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court-ordered (very rare). The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the researcher is required to remove all names and identifying details before sharing; this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by using codes instead of names on data, storing names separately from the collected data, and double-password protection of data. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, required by the university. After five years the data will be destroyed by shredding all paper documents obtained and deleting all electronic recordings and files, and then deleting those files from the deleted file.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions prior to signing this form, you may ask them at the time of the interview. If you have questions after the interview has concluded, you may contact the researcher, Bethanie Hiramoto at Bethanie.hiramoto@waldenu.edu, at any time. If you would like to speak to someone privately about your participant rights, you may contact the Research Participant Advocate at Walden University at (612) 312-1210 or at irb@mail.waldenu.edu. The approval number for this study is **11-17-21-0752039**. The approval number was issued by Walden University, and it will expire on **November 16, 2022**.

You will be given a copy of this signed informed consent form to take with you.

Obtaining Informed Consent:

If you meet the criteria and you believe you understand the study enough to decide to participate, please indicate your consent to participate by signing the lines below.

Printed Participant's Name: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date of Consent Given: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____