

MILITARY VETERAN CAREER TRANSITION COACHING EXPERIENCES:
NAVIGATING THE SHIFT FROM MILITARY SERVICE TO CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT

by

Miguel A. Ingle

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

March 2024

MILITARY VETERAN CAREER TRANSITION COACHING EXPERIENCES:
NAVIGATING THE SHIFT FROM MILITARY SERVICE TO CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT

by

Miguel A. Ingle

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

March 2024

APPROVED BY:

Ralph (Mike) Ogburn, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Gilbert Franco, Ph.D., Committee Member

Abstract

Shifting from a structured military culture is regarded as a critical juncture in the lives of military veterans. Veterans face career adaptation, identity conflict, and social integration challenges separating from the military, yet current military transition programs fail to address these challenges. Research on veterans' transition has overlooked how career transition coaching benefits veterans' reintegration into civilian careers, leaving a gap in understanding veterans' challenges and successes with career transition coaching. Addressing veterans' transition challenges is crucial for developing programs that facilitate their successful integration into civilian careers. This multiple-case qualitative study employed interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to address this gap by investigating the experiences of 11 U.S. veterans who participated in career transition coaching programs during their separation. The research questions explored the influence of aligning career goals with personal values on the effectiveness of career transition coaching for veterans, framed within role and social identity theories. Through semi-structured interviews, four experiential themes emerged: identity conflict, redefining purpose, understanding and articulating military skills, and social and community integration. The findings emphasize the need for personalized career transition coaching that supports personal growth, professional development, and social adaptation. This study calls for research and practice into strategies to improve post-military career outcomes and underscores the role of psychologists, career consultants, VA and DoD programs, and community organizations in supporting improved transition outcomes.

Keywords: career transition, coaching, veterans, identity conflict, interpretive phenomenological analysis, purpose, role theory, skills articulation, social integration.

© Miguel A. Ingle, 2024

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, my steadfast support, and a veteran whose journey embodies the essence of sacrifice, resilience, and unparalleled strength. Your service to our country is a testament to the kind of courage and commitment that many aspire to, but few achieve. Beyond the uniform, your unwavering belief in the potential within me has been the guiding light on a path I might never have braved alone. You saw a future for me that was beyond my imagination. Your insistence, born out of an unshakeable faith in my abilities, propelled me to embark on this journey. You recognized the potential in me that I was hesitant to see, and I am eternally grateful for that. Our learning journey, marked by trials and victories, has inspired my research. While a symbol of my academic achievement, this dissertation is imbued with the essence of your resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering support. Though it bears my name, this accomplishment is ours as we have been on this journey together.

Acknowledgment

This dissertation is a testament to my academic pursuits and acknowledgment of the individuals who have shaped its direction and success. First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to the U.S. Veterans who contributed to this research. Your readiness to disclose your experiences with career transition coaching as you transitioned from military to civilian employment has been invaluable. Your stories are not just data points but profound narratives of courage, adaptation, and strength, illuminating this research with real-world significance and depth.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Piferi; your guidance has enriched my academic journey and set a high standard of excellence that I aspire to emulate.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Ogburn, I owe a debt of gratitude that words can scarcely convey. Your expertise, patience, and unwavering support have been the cornerstone of my dissertation journey. Your insights and reassurance were influential in refining my research focus and methodology, ensuring that this dissertation contributes meaningfully to our understanding of career transition for veterans.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Franco and Dr. Winn, whose roles as committee members have been integral to my work's rigorous examination and enhancement. Your constructive feedback, scholarly expertise, and encouragement have significantly contributed to the depth and quality of my research.

This dissertation reflects the collective efforts, wisdom, and support of everyone mentioned and many others who have touched this experience with their encouragement. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to learn from and grow with all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
Introduction	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement	6
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Questions.....	7
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study.....	8
Theoretical Foundations of the Study.....	10
Definition of Terms	12
Significance of the Study	13
Summary.....	14
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
Overview	16
Description of Research Strategy	16

Theoretical Framework	17
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts	31
Biblical Foundations of the Study	45
Summary	49
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD	51
Overview	51
Research Design	51
Participants	52
Study Procedures	54
Instrumentation and Measurement	56
Data Analysis	60
Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations	61
Summary	62
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	64
Overview	64
Descriptive Results	65
Study Findings	67
Group Experiential Themes	76
Evidence of Quality	92
Summary	95
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	97
Overview	97
Summary of Findings	97

Discussion of Findings	99
Implications	101
Limitations	103
Recommendations for Future Research	104
Summary	106
REFERENCES	108
APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL	135
APPENDIX B: EMAIL/PHONE SCRIPT	137
APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT LETTER	138
APPENDIX D: VETERAN CAREER TRANSITION COACHING SCREENING... ..	139
APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET	140
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	143
APPENDIX G: SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT.....	145
APPENDIX H: REFLECTIVE RESEARCH JOURNAL EXCERPTS.....	146

List of Tables

Table 1 66

Table 2 67

Table 3 72

Table 4 75

List of Figures

Figure 1 69

Figure 2 71

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Career transition coaching has proved its efficacy as a valuable instrument for professionals aiming to change careers, develop leadership competencies, and acclimate to new jobs (Cheesebrough et al., 2020). Studies have revealed that the coaching approach demonstrates the potential for U.S. veterans embarking on the journey to reintegrate into civilian work life since it provides needed support and counsel to overcome challenges associated with changing career paths (Bartee & Dooley, 2019; Beech et al., 2017; Bond et al., 2022b; Davenport et al., 2022). According to Bond et al. (2022a) and Edwards et al. (2022), more than 200,000 soldiers transition from the military to civilian work annually. Remarkably, Vogt et al. (2018) posited noteworthy variances in transition outcomes across four domains, focusing on occupational stability. The authors highlighted the significance of understanding individual retired soldiers' experiences during the transition into civilian professions.

The efficiency of transition goals, plans, and success (GPS) programs for veterans is underscored in many studies (Bartee & Dooley, 2019). Bartee and Dooley (2019) illustrated career coaching's potential to enhance veterans' shift to civilian life in their work. In the same way, Becker et al. (2022) explored veterans' transition via career development, stressing the role of person-environment fit in warranting an effective career change. In their study, Beech et al. (2017) examined the impact of coaching in aiding the transition from military life, accentuating the role of tailoring coaching to the distinctive encounters and requirements of the forces. Nevertheless, Bond et al. (2022c) carried out a randomized controlled study exploring the efficacy of an employment program for transitioning soldiers, depicting improved outcomes in employment and mental health dimensions.

Background

Career transition refers to a significant change in a person's work role. According to Porter et al. (2023), the number of people changing careers in today's society is increasing. Corporate downsizing, layoffs, and restructuring are leading causes of career changes (Porter et al., 2023). During career transitions, people often participate in self-reinvention or reframe their qualifications and skills to adapt their expertise to new roles or industries (Porter et al., 2023). When transitioning to a new career, individuals must understand and effectively convey their skills to potential employers (Stull et al., 2020). According to Porter et al. (2023), an individual's occupational identity, self-esteem, and competencies will help them transition effectively.

The U.S. government is committed to serving and honoring past and current military personnel. Drawing inspiration from the second inaugural address by President Lincoln in 1865, the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs formulated its mission, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan" (Daniels, 2017, p. 131). As a result, transition programs have steadily increased to meet the demand for change in career from military to civilian life (Government Accountability Office, 2022). The unique challenges posed by the Afghanistan and Iraq wars have further emphasized the need for robust support of veterans during their transition from service (Daniels, 2017). Specifically, more than 1.5 million post-9/11 soldiers have transitioned from the service, and over one million more service members are projected to change from the military into civilian life several years from now (Daniels, 2017). Daniels (2017) added that traumatic experiences affect the ability of service members to transition following service in Afghanistan and Iraq.

An estimated 44 percent of Operating Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operating Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) veterans described their transition from

military to civilian life as challenging., compared to about 25 percent who fought in other missions (Daniels, 2017). Stull et al. (2020) described the military-to-civilian transitioning process as complex and, at times, overwhelming since it means relearning and committing to new approaches to interacting outside of the vastly prearranged, rigorous military culture. Demographic profiles of the military community have shown that most military members join service young (Cassidy, 2014), complicating the transition process during adulthood. Cassidy (2014) found that retired soldiers face readjustment challenges transitioning from a structured military to civilian life due to significant lifestyle changes. Therefore, it is essential to consider that leaving the military means leaving a way of life.

Various veteran groups, particularly those who participated in combat missions and younger military personnel, are categorized as highly likely to encounter transition difficulties (Ahern et al., 2015; Porter et al., 2023; Roberts, 2015). Additionally, the groups are highly susceptible to developing mental health issues. Even though most veterans expect coming home to be a “return to normal,” the experience of re-entering civilian life leaves them feeling alienated and isolated (Ahern et al., 2015, p.5). Irrespective of the outreach efforts, benefits, and services provided by the VA that help soldiers to transition to the mainstream labor market, the veterans struggle to obtain the necessary support, as the agency remains fixated on protracted issues linked with the demand of providing timely help and support to the soldiers (Roberts, 2015). Currently, existing transition programs offer services that align with the demands of the civilian job market and avoid a military culture design. As such, many veterans exhibit discomfort because the programs do not emulate the military culture that accounts for the impact that serving in the military has on a person’s ability to readapt (Porter et al., 2023). Government Accountability Office (2022) posits that the Department of Defense could be missing the

opportunity to provide veterans with the help and support they need during the initial stages of transitioning from the military. Furthermore, Bilmes (2021) underscored the need to establish programs that provide a comprehensive approach to helping transitioning soldiers.

Transitioning from military life has long been perceived as an intricate and multifaceted process characterized by many challenges and opportunities (Stull et al., 2020). When entering the civilian labor market, veterans bring a wealth of skills, expertise, and experiences garnered during the service, which could prove invaluable assets. Nonetheless, shifting from a diverse and highly competitive civilian workforce requires a strategic approach that warrants successful integration. Studies highlight the numerous challenges experienced by veterans during transitioning. Example studies include coping with culture shock, translating military skills to civilian roles, and handling potential mental health issues that may emerge during reintegration (Shankle et al., 2023; Stull et al., 2020). Bahtic et al. (2020) found that the difficulty in communication among veterans could lead to underemployment or dissatisfaction in their new fields.

In response to these drawbacks, the career transitioning concept has acquired prominence as a potential solution to enhance the successful reintegration of veterans into civilian employment. Career transition coaching provides a structured and personalized approach, offering veterans guidance on converting their military experiences into marketable skills, adapting to civilian workplace culture, and navigating the job search process (Terblanche et al., 2018). Regardless of the emergent interest in this field, there remains a shortage of in-depth research investigating the experiences of military veterans who have undergone career transitioning coaching.

Biblical Research and Perspective

Even though the Bible does not highlight the modern concept of career coaching as we understand it today, it entails passages that elucidate the importance of seeking guidance and wisdom from others. For example, Proverbs 11:14 asserts, “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). As such, the verse depicts the need to seek advice, which entails a fundamental aspect of career coaching. Equally, Proverbs 15:22 says, “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). According to the scripture, seeking input from individuals with knowledge and experience can lead to successful results, including career planning. Proverbs 19:20 says, “Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). This relatable verse stresses the significance of being receptive to guidance and learning from others, a significant component of engaging in career coaching.

Biblical teachings reinforce the need to seek counsel, wisdom, and mentorship. The principles of the abovementioned passages apply to the career coaching framework. In the biblical context, career coaching supports individuals in their vocational journey and work-related behaviors. Career coaching biblical perspectives might encompass assisting individuals in bringing into line their professional aspirations with their faith, values, and Bible teachings. Beyond seeking guidance and wisdom, a biblical perspective could help professionals discern their calling based on divine principles, find equilibrium between personal and career life, and uphold ethical conduct in their chosen careers.

Problem statement

Transitioning from a rigorous military culture is regarded as a critical juncture in the lives of military veterans, even though it faces various hurdles that can impede their successful integration into the mainstream job environment (Bahtic et al., 2020). Vogt et al. (2018) stressed the need to comprehend the individual experiences of transitioning veterans. Past studies have explored the efficacy of transition programs and robust support systems established to improve soldiers' welfare during career change undertakings (Shankle et al., 2023). While these studies mentioned by Shankle et al. (2023) highlighted the potential benefits of transition programs, there remains a research gap in understanding their long-term impact and specific factors contributing to their success. This research gap underscores the importance of further research into career transition coaching tailored for veterans. Transition career coaching has materialized as a valued approach to assist veterans in their transition (Tabernacle et al., 2018). The ability of transition career coaching to help professionals change careers includes adapting to new environments and developing leadership skills (Cheesebrough et al., 2020).

Regardless of possessing valuable skills and experiences acquired during service, veterans usually need help efficiently translating these traits into terms that resonate with civilian employers (Shankle et al., 2023). In the process, they might experience underemployment, lack of fulfillment in their new careers, and job satisfaction. The stark contrast between the dynamic and diverse nature of the civilian market and the structured military environment exacerbates the challenges of this transition. As a result, the military-to-civilian career transition coaching concept could offer amicable solutions to the problem by providing the necessary guidance, tools, and strategies.

While career transition coaching demonstrates promise as a support mechanism, previous studies (Barnett et al., 2022; Bartee & Dooley, 2019; Becker et al., 2023; Beech et al., 2017) have shown a noticeable gap in research that explores the actual experiences of military veterans who have experienced career coaching during their transition. The current studies (Beech et al., 2017; Corrie & Lawson, 2017; Ebner, 2020; Parker & Arthur, 2004; Porter et al., 2023; Terblanche, 2022; Terblanche et al., 2018) tend to concentrate on broader aspects of veteran transition or coaching in non-military contexts since they lack the granularity needed to understand the specific challenges and successes veterans encounter during career transition coaching. By assessing the nuanced perspectives of veterans who have experienced coaching, this study unravels the underlying dynamics, drawbacks, and successes that arise during this critical period. The study aims to enhance career transition coaching and interventions for military veterans pursuing sustainable civilian careers.

Purpose of the study

This multiple-case qualitative interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) study explored and analyzed the experiences of U.S. military veterans who underwent career transition coaching as they navigated the complex process of shifting from military service to civilian employment.

Research Questions

Three research questions acted as a foundational guide for the study, aiming to capture a comprehensive view and understanding of the veterans' experiences with career transition coaching:

RQ1: How do U.S. veterans describe their experience with career transition coaching?

RQ2: How do U.S. veterans describe how career transition coaching impacted their experience adapting from military to civilian careers?

RQ3: To what extent does the alignment of career goals with personal values and beliefs influence the success of career transition coaching for U.S. veterans?

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

This study unearthed the experiences of military veterans who underwent career transition coaching during their separation from military service to the civilian workforce. The participants were purposefully selected to provide data on these experiences. However, the qualitative methodology used for collecting data through semi-structured guided interviews has challenges (Ruslin et al., 2022). It was necessary to address drawbacks and limitations to enhance the reliability of the study.

This study operated under several assumptions. Researchers acknowledge that eliminating bias in interviews is challenging, and it is beneficial for the researcher to maintain specific epistemological assumptions regarding their interactions (Ruslin et al., 2022). Diefenbach (2009) noted that interviewees may intentionally try to deceive the interviewer. However, this study assumed participants responded honestly and accurately to the questions and prompts outlined in the semi-structured interview, offering genuine insights into their experiences with career transition coaching. Phenomenological studies typically draw from participants' recollections to remember and explore past experiences (Lauterbach, 2018). As such, this study assumed that participants possessed a high degree of self-awareness and memory recall to precisely describe their experiences with career transition coaching and its effect on their transition from military to civilian careers. Fisher (2019) wrote that in professional coaching, including career transition coaching, coaches collaborate with individuals to enhance

their personal and professional efficiency. Consequently, this study assumed that career transition coaching programs were consistent regarding their quality and efficacy and that any outcome variations resulted from individual differences instead of substantial differences in coaching interventions.

This study has its limitations. One concern is the potential for limited generalizability. The findings of the study may not universally apply to all military veterans. Veteran experiences may be affected differently due to factors such as length of service, military rank, occupation, and personal circumstances. Yamagata and Miura (2022) noted that people often misrepresent past experiences, resulting in discrepancies between actual experiences and their recollection, a phenomenon known as retrospective bias. Thus, retrospective bias is another potential limitation of this study, where participants may not have accurately recalled the details of their coaching experiences due to their current perceptions and emotions, leading to potential inaccuracies. Kim et al. (2021) discussed how recruitment challenges arise from various factors.

Consequently, this study's generalizability regarding career-changing success was limited due to insufficient representation of geographical diversity in the sample, limiting the study's documentation and analysis of career transition locations and employment regions. Recent studies (Crawford et al., 2019; Fitipaldi & Franks, 2022; Sun et al., 2020) illustrated the significance of geographic diversity in research and its implications for the generalizability of the study findings. The lack of geographic diversity in this sample led to an incomplete understanding of how regional differences impacted career transitions for veterans. Finally, privacy concerns may have discouraged some veterans from participating in the study.

Theoretical foundations of the study

The theoretical frameworks used in this study are role theory (Merton, 1957) and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1978).

Role Theory

The impetus behind investigating military veterans' career transition coaching experiences anchors on an intricate interplay of psychological constructs and theoretical frameworks. Role theory is a pertinent theory that draws from role-person mergers, suggesting individuals may resist leaving established roles even when faced with advantageous options (Turner, 1978). Merton (1957) is credited with the origins of role theory, referring to the social position people hold. During transitioning, professionals usually develop a deep-seated sense of identity linked to their previous roles (Content Engine LLC, 2022). The role theory explicates the psychological complications of relinquishing established routines, roles, and expectations associated with military service and adapting to civilian career demands (Romaniuk & Kidd, 2018).

Further expanding on this, role theory suggests that individuals hold multiple roles concurrently, each with distinct behaviors, expectations, and norms (Biddle, 1986). As veterans shift from military to civilian life, they navigate a change in roles, often marked by contrasting norms and behaviors (Cooper et al., 2018). The military role, defined by discipline, hierarchy, and camaraderie, can starkly differ from the more individualistic nature of many civilian roles (Watson, 2008). This transition can lead to role conflict, where ingrained military behaviors and values may not align with civilian expectations, resulting in stress and identity challenges. Recognizing the intricacies of role theory provides valuable insights into the obstacles veterans face and can guide interventions to support their successful re-entry into civilian careers.

Conversely, digging into the experiences of military veterans as they transition from military service to civilian employment clutches the potential to provide solutions for uplifting and supporting veterans, as stated in Galatians 6:2: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982) and in Hebrews 13:6, “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). By understanding the experiences of veterans transitioning from military to civilian roles, this study contributes to designing effective interventions addressing the psychological difficulties highlighted by role theory, which aligns with the biblical call for mutual care and support.

Social Identity Theory

Another theoretical perspective that conveys the significance of assessing veterans’ experiences when re-entering the civilian labor market is social identity. Social identity theory highlights veterans’ challenges in re-establishing a new social identity as they transition into civilian employment (Flack & Kite, 2021). The theory depicts the hurdles experienced when transitioning from a well-defined military identity to forging a new role within the civilian workforce. Social identity theory, devised by Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s (Brown, 2019), was developed in response to the challenges posed by individualistic approaches to understanding human behavior. The justification behind the theory is to underscore the importance of social context and group membership in influencing individuals’ thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (McKinley et al., 2014).

Social identity theory posits that individuals do not perceive themselves as individuals but associate their identity with their social group affiliation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The theory infers that group processes and social identity are critical in determining attitudes, behavior, and

intergroup associations. Awareness of how social identity theory influences behavior helps provide insights into group behavior dynamics, forming social categories, and intergroup relations (Jansen & Delahaij, 2020). Social identity theory plays a critical role in highlighting various dimensions, such as in-group favoritism, out-group derogation, and the impact of group membership on individuals' self-esteem and behavior (McKinley et al., 2014).

Social identity theory establishes a framework to comprehend the multifaceted association between individual identity and social group dynamics. This process is vital since it influences the preservation of self-concept and reverence, as well as heightened self-assurance in prevailing intuitions by offering support through consensus (Harwood, 2020). Not startlingly, the aspiration to cultivate positive in-group status is motivated by individual relevance of the specific in-group to an individual's identity such that the superior the level of identification one has developed with an in-group, the more enthused an individual will safeguard the status and group's interest (Stryker & Serpe, 1982).

Definitions of terms

1. A Career coach refers to an individual charged with the mandate to assess an individual's skills, experience, and educational level to suggest what can work when finding employment with another employer or a different industry (Parker & Arthur, 2004).

2. Career transition is when an individual shifts to a different work setting or role, taking in another objective or realigning to another space (Coppola & Young, 2022).

3. Career Transition Coaching is a structured and personalized process aimed at helping individuals effectively navigate the shift from one career phase or context to another. It entails guidance, support, and skill development to assist individuals in aligning their skills, aspirations, and experiences with new opportunities (Terblanche et al., 2018).

4. Military veterans refer to individuals who have undergone training, engaged in military operations, and gained numerous skills and experiences in the military (Burdett et al., 2012).

5. Role Theory is a sociological and psychological theory that explores how people define themselves and others via their roles and responsibilities, influences one's identity, and how transitioning between roles can impact the sense of self in an individual (Anglin et al., 2022).

6. Social Identity Theory is a psychological theory that posits that individuals do not perceive themselves as individuals but associate their identity with their social group affiliation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Significance of the study

There are substantial contributions to research and theory on career transition coaching for veterans transitioning from military service to civilian work life. More specifically, this study filled a critical gap in the literature by highlighting an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of veterans who have undergone career transition coaching. This investigation not only enriches the comprehension of how coaching operates in the context of veteran transitions but also contributes to the broader field of career coaching by providing critical insights into practical strategies and veteran-specific challenges. The study findings expanded theoretical frameworks around career adaptation, coaching effectiveness, and vocational identity development, integrating the context of military-to-civilian transition.

Furthermore, the study has practical and substantial implications. By unraveling veterans' experiences during career transition coaching, the study provides valuable insights for practitioners, coaches, and firms involved in veteran support services. The findings can guide the

development and refinement of coaching programs tailored to veterans' unique needs, enabling career coaches to deploy effective strategies that address the distinctive challenges veterans encounter during their transition. Moreover, the findings may elucidate policy proposals to improve veteran reintegration programs, leading to increasingly targeted and impactful support mechanisms. Also, the findings can empower veterans to make informed decisions regarding engaging in coaching services, helping them to take proactive steps towards attaining sustainable and fulfilling civilian careers.

Overall, the significance of this study extends beyond academia as it impacts theory development, policy formulation, coaching practice enhancement, and ultimately, the well-being and fruitful reintegration of military veterans into civilian employment. The study will contribute to fostering a supportive environment that respects and expedites the valuable contributions of veterans in the civilian workforce.

Summary

The chapter introduced the research topic focusing on the effectiveness of career transition for professionals and U.S. veterans transitioning from military to civilian work life. The section highlighted the challenges veterans experience during this transition, the mounting number of veterans reintegrating into civilian life, and the existing gaps in transition programs. It highlighted the background context of career transition, the rise in its significance due to various factors, and the critical role of occupational identity in the success of this transition.

This chapter also highlighted the U.S. government's commitment to supporting retired soldiers. The career transition coaching concept is a potential solution to the ills faced by veterans. Additionally, the chapter incorporated social identity theory and role theory to improve insights regarding veterans' experiences when transitioning into the mainstream workplace.

Some study limitations acknowledged in the chapter include subjectivity, retrospective bias, and challenges in recruiting geographically diverse participants. The chapter closes by stressing the significance of the study in contributing to policy improvements, theory development, coaching practices, and the successful integration of veterans into the civilian labor market.

Chapter 1 introduced the study, delved into its background, and established the problem statement. As we transition into Chapter 2, we will begin a synthesized review of the literature related to career transition coaching, focusing on role and social identity theories, providing a foundation for the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Social identity theory and role theory shape the theoretical framework in the systemic review of literature in search of understanding the relationship between shifting social identities and role changes as veterans transition from military to civilian work life. The chapter will review past studies and analyze the findings to establish how career transition coaching can help the transition from military service to civilian employment.

The literature review also incorporates a biblical perspective with passages providing insights into principles of social identity, role theory, and transition. These biblical concepts and teachings frame the argument supporting the psychological concepts found in themes surrounding the study of career transition coaching.

Description of Search Strategy

I identified appropriate databases with comprehensive collections of scholarly literature in psychology, education, sociology, military studies, and business through the Jerry Falwell Library at Liberty University. The databases used for this study were APA PsycArticles, APA PsycInfo, Business Source Complete, ERIC, Military & Government Collection, and Sociological Abstracts through ProQuest. The filters used included full articles available online, scholarly, and peer-reviewed articles. Boolean operators (AND, NOT, OR) were used to refine the search and narrow the results.

I delimited the search to English-language articles, books, and dissertations published between 2018 and 2023. I used the time frame parameters to reflect recency regarding career transition coaching and to keep the scope of the study manageable. I also used landmark studies repeatedly referenced to review influential ideas about career transition coaching, veterans'

transition, role theory, and social identity theory. In each database, multiple search terms and phrases generated relevant published literature. The search terms and phrases used to capture the critical terms of the study included *military veteran*, *career transition*, *career coaching*, *transition experience*, *civilian employment*, *career transition coaching*, *veterans career transition*, *transitioning from the military*, and combinations/variations thereof. The biblical research process included using biblical concordances to capture critical biblical words and phrases related to *work*, *career*, *service*, *transition*, and *identity*. I used the Bible Gateway digital tool to search multiple translations and to conduct interlinear studies.

Theoretical Framework

The change in roles veterans experience when transitioning from military to civilian employment can significantly impact their social identities. Navigating this role change and the accompanying identity shift is a crucial focus of the career transition coaching experience (Terblanche, 2022). Veterans can find support navigating the interplay between changing roles and shifting social identities through career transition coaching. This study used role and social identity theories to understand how career transition coaching can facilitate this transition, reduce conflicts, and enhance veterans' success in the civilian employment sector.

Role Theory

According to Anglin et al. (2022), the role is the central concept of role theory. Anglin et al. (2022) defined roles as behavioral expectations associated with individuals based on their position in a social group. Merton (1957) wrote that roles refer to people's social position as part of a social structure with expected behaviors and defined obligations. Societal expectations, norms, and the individual's interpretation of these roles can influence roles (Nigam et al., 2022).

Because role theory is a perspective in sociology and social psychology that considers everyday activities to be an act of socially defined categories or roles, roles are considered a set of norms, behaviors, and responsibilities that an individual adopts in their interactions with society through socialization (Secco et al., 2022). In addition to role theory's key concept of role, as mentioned by Anglin et al. (2022), role theory includes additional concepts, such as role conflict occurring when a person expects to fulfill the duties of multiple roles that are incompatible with declared expectations of their job or position (Maden-Eyiusta, 2021). Role exit is another concept of role theory referring to the process of leaving a role, and it relates to a change and loss of status (Gellweiler et al., 2019).

Role Theory Propositions

Biddle and Thomas (1966) claimed that a critical assumption in role theory is that individuals have life roles that affect their behavior and perception of situations. Role theory suggests that an individual's actions and attitudes are guided by their roles (Merton, 1957).

Role Expectations. Role theory proposes that expectations held by an individual and other people drive human behavior (Chaichian, 2021). These expectations define the behaviors viewed as appropriate and inappropriate for each role (Nigam et al., 2022). In the military, roles and expectations are often clearly defined, learned, and passed down to successive cohorts (Tkachuck et al., 2022). Upon transitioning to civilian life, these expectations may need to be clarified, more varied, or valued differently and may cause confusion or stress (Campbell, 2023). Direct communication and assertiveness are often highly valued in military roles but may be considered too aggressive in some civilian roles (Mael et al., 2022).

Role Strain and Role Conflict. Role theory assumes that a person in different roles has different expectations (Jia et al., 2020). Having multiple roles and expectations can lead to role

strain and conflict because a person may struggle to handle the demands of different roles (Kuntsche & Kuntsche, 2019), for example, being a parent, an employee, a spouse, and a student. Veterans may experience role strain as they try to reconcile their previous identity as service members with the new civilian role. Carpenter and Silberman (2020) acknowledged that one-third of veterans struggle with civilian societies and careers.

Role Performance. Role theory suggests that social context and interactions shape role performance and how role performance influences an individual's personality and skills (Anglin et al., 2022). Veterans bring skills and experiences from their military service to their new civilian roles influenced by their military training (Turner & Moran, 2023). Understanding how veterans can translate and adapt their skills to a civilian context may be critical for civilian role performance.

Role Theory Applications

Familiarity with our roles enhances our capacity to cope and maintain a healthy level of well-being (Thomas, 2018). A recent study in role theory explored the connection between gender role differences and well-being among entrepreneurs (Hmieleski & Sheppard, 2019). The study's findings by Hmieleski and Sheppard (2019) described the role theory by exploring how gender differences interact with agentic and communal personality features of entrepreneurs concerning subjective well-being and new venture performance. The authors argued that role congruity theory postulates that individuals receive more favorable assessments when their characteristics align with the social roles typically linked to their gender (Hmieleski & Sheppard, 2019). The results demonstrated a 'Yin and Yang' dynamic in entrepreneurship, in which masculine (agentic) features such as creativity are increasingly beneficial for women

entrepreneurs, while feminine (communal) features like teamwork are increasingly advantageous for men entrepreneurs.

In a different study, George et al. (2022) critically explored the study of role transitions, especially the movement between sequentially held roles, via an integrative review of cross-disciplinary empirical articles. The authors contended that while former seminal works may have defined attributes linked to role transitions, the attributes have usually been left unconnected and unmeasured. Instead, contemporary scholars tend to focus on the lived transition experiences of individuals; thus, to address the fragmented nature of the field, George et al. (2022) proposed a shift to an experience-based framework for studying role transitions. This framework structures itself around three key aspects: the various types of transition-related movements (psychological, physical, behavioral, and relational), the recognition of the person-in-network, and the holistic consideration of individuals during transitions across their non-work and work-life spheres, where one's social environment impacts transitions. The study postulated three drawbacks for management researchers to embrace in this transition to an experience-based view:

- investigating the impacts of work and non-work transitions on outcomes relevant to organizations
- expanding the scope of transition movements beyond the psychological aspect
- assessing the reciprocal effect between individuals' transitions and their social networks.

George et al.'s findings relate to the study conducted by Nordenmark (2004). In Nordenmark's study, the author focused on exploring the impact of participating in various social roles on the well-being of individuals, particularly assessing the applicability of role expansion and role stress theory (Nordenmark, 2004). Western societies mainly endorse the notion that individuals should participate in numerous social activities and take on numerous

social roles, supposing that it benefits people. On the other hand, serving multiple roles can lead to heightened complexity and impending conflicts in meeting numerous demands. Preceding research has yielded mixed results concerning the impacts of multiple roles on well-being, with scholars suggesting both positive and negative effects. Nordenmark (2004) utilized longitudinal data from 9000 randomly selected Swedes and reported that the number of social roles and an increase in social roles increases the risk of experiencing lingering illness, insomnia, and dependence on consistent medication for lingering illness. The study concluded that having multiple social roles supports the role expansion theory since it correlates to increased individual well-being.

In another study, Lynch (2007) placed increased focus on understanding the difficulties of role enactment in the milieu of modern, pluralistic cultures, where people often juggle numerous roles simultaneously. Whereas traditional methods perceive roles as bounded and alienated by behaviors, values, or norms, the reality is that individuals seldom group their daily lives in such discrete approaches. For instance, household obligations may require individuals to fulfill numerous roles. Furthermore, roles may require individuals to switch between various role identities, such as being both a subordinate and a supervisor in the event of a mid-level manager. The study assumed a socio-cognitive approach in exploring how individuals agree to the diversity of roles and manage the simultaneous and successive performance of these numerous roles. Lynch (2007) merged the role theory and social cognition to provide insights into the intricacies and encounters experienced by people in traversing the difficulties of their roles in modern society.

Dierdorff et al. (2010) illustrated the application of role theory in understanding how employees' role expectations relate to their involvement in citizenship behaviors at work. The

study expanded the role perceptions concept to encompass the beliefs of individual employees regarding the significance of having numerous tasks and employee qualities essential for effective role performance, which they termed “role expectation.” Dierdorff et al. (2010) developed a role theory framework to guide their expectations. The study, which entailed data collection from 198 employees, supported the role theory as it revealed that workers’ role expectations concerning prosocial requirements in their positions, specifically behaviors that positively contribute to the organization, significantly impacted their involvement in citizenship behaviors. Dierdorff et al. (2010) also established that social and job-setting factors influenced the association of workers’ role expectations and their engagement in citizenship behaviors. As elucidated, role theory highlights that the roles and expectations related to them shape the performance and behavior of individuals in an organization.

A study by Anglin et al. (2022) explored the application of role theory perspectives in management research. Based on the article, role theory examines how societal roles impact individual behaviors and how observers perceive these behaviors within the context of these roles. The authors described the increasing relevance of role theory in today’s context, particularly with continuing debates on police reform and landmark legal decisions distressing LGBTQIA employment rights. It recognized the growing adoption of role theory in numerous research domains, such as HR management, entrepreneurship, and strategic management. The findings of the study stipulated that the role theory perspective in management studies can help to identify and improve an individual’s roles and identity, career lifecycles, ethics, and other-related behavior.

As elucidated above, role theory highlights people’s challenges and misfortunes during significant life transitions. Also, role theory provides individuals with coping strategies to

navigate these changes efficaciously. Connaughton and Cline (2021) contended that when transitioning to adulthood, the role theory aids in understanding the societal and cultural expectations linked to this life stage. By identifying the role expectations associated with adulthood, it becomes easier for individuals to understand better the responsibilities assigned to them and the expected behaviors, as this allows a smooth transition into this new phase of life. Furthermore, the application of the role theory extends to occupational transition.

Moreover, researchers have also applied role theory to occupational transitions into retirement and the challenges associated with adjusting to new expectations, responsibilities, and behaviors. In particular, Bordia et al. (2020) explored the intricate process of retirement transition, stressing the role of identity dynamics within its evolving phase. The authors postulated that retirement is a protracted adjustment process, highlighting research scarcity on how retirees conquer this transition, principally regarding the impact of pre-retirement role identities. The study utilized a qualitative approach and identified pre-retirement role identity profiles in both work and non-work aspects. The authors examined how pre-retirement identities influence the retirement transition, providing insight into the nature of identity work during this phase and the diverse pathways followed by retirees. The study emphasized the dual nature of pre-retirement identities, serving as enhancers of adaptive coping, sanctioning retirees to embrace new roles and cope with exploring and adopting new identities. Bordia et al. (2020) depicted valuable contributions to understanding the intricate interplay between role identities and retirement transition. Therefore, understanding the role shifts during retirement helps highlight the potential sources of identity struggles or stress that retirees may encounter and enhances the adaptation of effective coping mechanisms to deal with these modifications. As

highlighted, role theory can help individuals adapt to new roles and responsibilities, thus leading to improved life satisfaction and overall well-being.

Role Theory Rationale

The rationale behind role theory emanates from recognizing that humans occupy numerous societal roles, which considerably impact their attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (Orazem et al., 2017). The concept seeks to recognize how individuals steer and accomplish the expectations and responsibilities linked to dissimilar social roles. Role theory offers critical insights into the challenges of human behavior and social interactions by probing the changing aspects and impacts of roles. In particular, the theory admits that societies have social structures with predefined expectations, roles, and norms (Mobbs & Bonanno, 2018). Roles comprise a set of obligations, behaviors, and responsibilities linked with particular positions within social groups or institutions. In addition, role theory acknowledges that individuals develop a significant share of their identity from their occupied roles.

The theory exemplifies that individuals gain a sense of accomplishment and validation when they fulfill their roles successfully, thus contributing to their self-esteem and identity. On the other hand, role conflict or strain could impose challenges in self-identification and may exacerbate the well-being of individuals (Hmieleski & Sheppard, 2019). Nevertheless, role theory highlights that social interactions and the expectations that individuals and others seize shape role performance. Understanding the changing aspects of role performance aids in highlighting how individuals alter their behavior to meet role expectations and how social feedback influences these actions.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory focuses on different ways individuals develop their sense of identity and belonging because of their affiliation to particular groups. In the milieu of military veteran career transition coaching, social identity theory can aid in explaining the issues faced by retired soldiers when they decide to transition into civilian life because they possess a robust social identity in the civilian employment sector, where they exhibit a sense of disconnection. Veterans establish a strong group identity during service characterized by shared experiences, values, and a distinct culture (McKinley et al., 2014). The transition from the military can translate to a loss of the group identity and the related social support, triggering feelings of isolation and trouble coping in a new environment. In this scenario, military veterans may struggle with categorizing themselves within the civilian labor market as their job skills and experiences may fail to align with civilian job roles and expectations. The categorization process can influence their self-perception and how others perceive them. The veterans' tendency to compare themselves with others in the civilian job market may negatively affect their self-confidence and capacity to steer the civilian job market.

Social Identity Theory Propositions

Social identity theory suggests various key propositions relevant to career transition. These propositions provide insights into how social and group identities play a significant role in veterans' experiences transitioning into civilian employment.

Social categorization. Based on social identity theory, individuals classify themselves and others into social groups based on shared similarities and characteristics (Currie et al., 2010). Retired soldiers have a unique social identity linked to their profession. The identity entails shared values, experiences, and a sense of belonging. While transitioning into civilian life,

Caamal (2017) asserted that it could prove problematic for veterans to categorize themselves within the civilian workforce and develop a sense of belonging.

Social identification. Social identity theory implies that people classify themselves based on their membership to a particular social group once they categorize themselves as part of it. More specifically, the social identification of military veterans plays a vital role in influencing their self-concept and attitudes. In the context of military career transition, veterans may encounter a shift in their social identification due to the challenges of adjusting to a new identity and an attempt to integrate within a new labor market.

Social comparison. Social identity theory underscores that individuals participate in social comparison processes as they start comparing and contrasting their group to others. The comparison is vital since it establishes a positive social identity by auspiciously differentiating one's group from others. As a result, military veterans could compare their experiences, skills, and values to those of civilians during the transition process. McCommon (2019) claimed that proper coaching could offer the required support by aiding veterans in understanding how to present their military know-how and expertise in a way that civilian employees will value.

Social Identity Theory Applications

Social identity theory has been used to study a military population and plays a significant role in explaining the hurdles veterans encounter in redefining their identities and abandoning the military. The study by Crenshaw (2020) focused on applying identity theory in career transition contexts, particularly for Army veterans. The study challenges the traditional approach of career transition that predominantly accentuates teaching the mechanics of outplacement and onboarding. Regarding the identity theory, which posits the reflexive nature of identities and the process of identity editing for self-concept stability, Crenshaw (2020) explored the experiences

of Army veterans experiencing career transitions. The findings illustrate that a successful career transition entails acquiring new skills and citizenship behaviors and adjusting an individual's identity to fit the new work environment. The study suggests the Career Identity Matrix (CIM) as a framework to enable Human Resource Development (HRD) to mold career transition processes to individuals, acknowledging the significance of identity work in the transition journey.

In a similar study, Baay et al. (2014) assessed the relationship between social identity, work motivation, and job searching among labor market entrants, centering on the moderating role of personality. The study utilized the social identity framework to examine whether the perception of work norms within a social context impacted work motivation and job-searching behavior. Baay et al. (2014) hypothesized that the social context might increasingly influence certain people based on their personality traits. Based on insights drawn from 591 Dutch vocational training students, the researchers established that perceiving more positive work norms in one's social context was linked to higher intrinsic motivation. In turn, the intrinsic motivation predicted greater engagement in preparatory job search behavior and stronger job search intentions. Notably, the research proposed that contextual factors influence work motivation and job searching, which relies on individual personality traits.

Ouwerkerk et al. (2018) carried out two studies that explore the desire and adversity of others as an emotive reaction to news regarding out-group hardships and report that consistent with social identity theory and intergroup emotion theory, affective in-group identification increases pleasure at the misfortune of others regarding an out-group misfortune. The findings shed light on the stages of identity adjustment encountered by veterans during the transition process. The study participants articulated a growing awareness of their military membership's substantial role in shaping their individuality. When recruiters enlist military members, they

initiate a change process that helps these members establish a strong bond and understanding of military values, which in turn fosters the development of a sense of identity shared with colleagues in the service (Ouwerkerk et al., 2018).

In another study, Rusell and Rusell (2018) examined the relationship between social identification with the Veterans Service Organization (VSO) and numerous outcomes among military veterans. The study utilized the social identity theory to evaluate how VSO membership and engagement relate to the social isolation of veterans, the perceptions of military service benefits to society, and overall well-being. The authors denoted that physical attendance at VSO events and strong identification with a firm is associated with decreased social isolation. Furthermore, veterans who attend and strongly identify with the VSO encounter reduced social isolation levels.

On the other hand, Flack and Kite (2021) focused on military transitions into society among Australian defense force veterans. The study assesses the connection between soldierly identity, social connectedness, and subjective well-being during the transition. Flack and Kite (2021) used a multidimensional military identity construct to investigate how the various facades of Army identity relate to social connectedness and, consequently, well-being and psychological distress. The authors report that certain aspects of the military identity, such as positive regard for the military, lead to increased social connectedness. Equally, other military identity facets, such as seeing the military as family and strong interdependence with colleagues in the service, are deleteriously associated with social connectedness. Flack and Kite (2021) proposed that fostering the protective aspects associated with being in the service while handling inhibitory aspects may enrich the social connectedness and well-being of veterans transitioning into non-combatant life.

Sierra and McQuitty (2007) applied social identity theory to explore how attitudes and emotions impact consumer behavior, particularly among nostalgia purchases. The researchers examine how nostalgia feeling affects the preferences for products that evoke nostalgic responses. Through a structural equation model, Sierra and McQuitty (2007) grounded their analysis in social identity theory. They established that desire for the past and attitudes regarding it simultaneously impact consumers' intentions to purchase nostalgic items. Sierra and McQuitty (2007) depicted the role of social identity and emotional connection in impacting consumer preferences and offered insights into the marketing impact of nostalgic consumer behavior.

In a similar study, Chiang et al. (2016) applied social identity theory to events and festivals as social gatherings within the leisure and tourism industries. With the help of the theory, Chiang et al. (2016) examined the interconnected link between numerous mental stages encountered by event visitors. The study also explored the ensuing impacts on revisit intention and electronic word-of-mouth. Chiang et al. (2016) reported that fundamental and hedonic values influence the visitor's social identity, which, as a result, impacts their self-esteem.

In addition, Meca et al. (2021) investigated the link between numerous identity dimensions, such as personal, military, and U.S. identities, and mental health outcomes among U.S. military veterans during their transition period. These authors examined how commitment, centrality, and affirmation in identity dimensions are associated with mental health symptoms and substance abuse. The results found that personal identity commitment and U.S. affirmation are associated with decreased substance use and post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxiety, and depression. Nonetheless, a sense of identity derived from serving in the Army correlates with higher post-traumatic stress symptoms. These results underlined the intricate role of identity in the well-being of veterans during the transition process and emphasized the need to conduct

longitudinal research to understand the dynamic association between identity and the well-being of veterans as they face this momentous life change (Meca et al., 2021). Conversely, social identity theory emboldens approaches that enhance open dialogue regarding veterans' experiences, reducing stigma and creating an inclusive retirement that values the identities and contributions of veterans.

Social Identity Theory Rationale

Given that veterans experience a significant shift in their social roles and identities when returning to civilian employment, the application of social identity theory was highly relevant in this study. The theory provides a rigorous framework for understanding how people define themselves based on various social groups and how such identities impact behaviors and interactions (McKinley et al., 2014). In the milieu of military veteran career transition coaching experiences, social identity theory can demonstrate how veterans negotiate their military and civilian identities during the transition. The social identity theory can aid in unraveling veterans' perceptions of work norms, their job search behaviors, how it shapes their work motivation, and the overall adjustment to civilian employment (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Therefore, integrating the theory into this study permitted an in-depth analysis of the intricacies inherent in military veteran career transitions, shedding light on the distinct challenges and opportunities veterans encounter while navigating the substantial life change.

Furthermore, awareness of how social identity theory influences behavior helps provide insights into group behavior dynamics, forming social categories, and intergroup relations (Jansen & Delahaij, 2020). Social identity theory plays a critical role in highlighting various dimensions such as in-group favoritism, out-group derogation, and the impact of group membership on individuals' self-esteem and behavior (McKinley et al., 2014; Tajfel & Turner,

1986; Trepte & Loy, 2017). Social identity theory establishes a framework to comprehend the multifaceted association between individual identity and social group dynamics.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The Career Development Process of Veterans

According to Robertson and Hayden (2018), career development refers to obtaining self-awareness, making positive career decisions, and adequately grasping career opportunities and requirements. In addition, career development entails making a professional choice and assessing it before its implementation. In the military context, veterans should strive to make informed decisions when transitioning into civilian work life since veterans encounter distinct problems, including major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), vagrancy, substance abuse, and financial problems (Robertso & Hayden, 2018). Veterans' career needs vary while transitioning to civilian work life since they may enter society and the mainstream labor market at different ages and career stages with varying quests (Singh, 2019).

Various studies have explored veterans' challenges during their career development process as they transition from the military into the mainstream employment sector. A study by Hunter-Johnson and Al-Asfour (2021) stressed that veterans encounter higher stress levels due to the perceived transition between two distinct worlds, and they usually face stigmatization and misunderstandings within the civilian workforce. The authors utilized the workforce adjustment theory to highlight the difficulties retired soldiers encounter during the transition, the plans to enhance the diversity and annexation of retirees and their career pursuit in the mainstream job market.

In another study, Hunter-Johnson et al. (2020) argued that despite the motivation and resilience of veterans, they face various hurdles during the transition period, affecting their

ability to secure employment, participate in their roles, and find job satisfaction within the civilian sector. To address the highlighted issues, Hunter-Johnson et al. (2020) proposed the significance of strategies that enhance inclusion, diversity, and better alignment of veterans' skills with civilian job requirements and interventions from an HRD perspective to effectively recruit, engage, develop, and satisfy veterans employed within the civilian employment sector.

In a similar study, Gonzalez and Simpson (2021) proposed a conceptual model that integrates diversity and person-environment fit perspectives to comprehend the integration process of military retirees into the civilian workforce. The researchers argue that the diversity standpoint aids in understanding retirees as a unique social group and their inclusion in workplaces. On the other hand, the person-environment fit perspective explores the compatibility between veterans and their work environments, bearing in mind organizational demands and the needs of veterans. The conceptual model applied aims to guide future empirical research on societal reintegration, career development, and overall well-being as they transition into civilian organizations.

Relatedly, Greer (2017) explored the higher unemployment rates among female veterans compared to their male colleagues. The study underlined the significance of tackling this issue from an HRD perspective. Greer (2017) discussed the barriers to employment encountered by women veterans and proposed strategies to overcome these hurdles. This study established that veterans seeking to transition into civilian employment and the need to fulfill their needs could compel them to seek higher education, use different resources towards their career development, and engage in career consulting.

Even though past studies stress the need for skill transfer to veterans' new jobs, limited studies explore what is requisite to support former service members when they begin working in

different roles and organizations (Smith, 2021). In this study, Kirchner and Minnis (2018) proposed that organizational career development support is vital for promoting the career behaviors of veterans. The authors suggested that the human resources (HR) department should develop training programs to help HR managers and employers acquire competency that will allow them to learn about the military culture, particularly the military norms, the chain of command, and military identity through rational and behavioral dimensions. As illustrated, employers could gain from military cultural competency training, enabling them to understand how military culture impacts civilian organizational culture, as this will enhance diversity management in organizations.

A study by Mael et al. (2022) found that veterans exhibit a high degree of work ethic since they possess increasingly intrinsic work morale and seem to relish their functions more. Veterans are also open and ready to execute their assigned roles and responsibilities in different working shifts since they seek to improve their skills (Mael et al., 2022). After leaving the military, they become more stress-tolerant and adept at identifying minor errors (Mael et al., 2022). Despite the occasional clash of personalities, veterans were better at teamwork than civilians (Mael et al., 2022). Veterans embrace team commitment, while civilians are individualistic and rigid to change (Mael et al., 2022). Organizations that welcome the recruitment of veterans could record positive outcomes in their general well-being. Due to veterans' work ethic and high discipline, they appear more accepting of protocol, policies, and the legitimacy of authority (Mael et al., 2022). The authors claimed that people regard veterans as highly accountable and avoid confrontations with authority. Those serving as executives portray a high degree of ethical standards. While serving in the military, soldiers face difficult

decision-making moments and thus develop their capacity to make hard decisions when it matters the most (Mael et al., 2022).

Experiences and Challenges of Veteran Career Transitions

When transitioning to civilian careers, military veterans encounter various experiences and hurdles. Shue et al. (2021) explored transitioning veterans' needs and challenges by conducting qualitative interviews. During this study, four major themes emerged:

- the significance of adequate preparation for the transition
- the loss of structure linked with leaving the military
- the implication of numerous factors during the transitioning process
- the need for veterans to establish a whole new personality in the outside world

Shue et al. (2021) challenged career transition coaches to identify the prevailing challenges, address them, and allocate adequate resources to support the transition process.

On a related note, Eaves et al. (2023) stressed the distinct traits veterans bring to the job market, such as experience, self-insight, and sound judgment. Eaves et al. (2023) posited that recruiting veterans can aid in solving labor shortages and improve the job market with the wisdom gained from leadership roles in highly stressful military environments. The study illustrates the need to understand why veterans experience challenges transitioning into business careers and discuss misconceptions regarding hiring veterans while advocating for acknowledging their valued abilities and perspectives.

Relatedly, Jensen (2022) explored how the recruited post-9/11 Army retirees fit their leadership skills and experiences in the corporate world. The findings from the qualitative study highlight that when it is easy to transfer some skills, others need adaptation. Additionally, Jensen (2022) stipulated that the self-reliance of veterans is recognized as a skill that directly transfers,

while other skills, such as humility, communication, loyalty, and mission-focused, require adaptation. The study added that strategies such as networking and mentorship programs could complement the skills and expertise of veterans and guide them to replicate them in corporate contexts (Jensen, 2022).

Numerous studies have established that transitioning military retirees into general society is a momentous life event that compels military veterans to face challenges (Keeling et al., 2018; Kukla et al., 2015). Keeling et al. (2018) conducted focus group discussions with military veterans accessing housing and employment support services to understand organizational, community, and atypical barriers. The study's findings reported that organizational and societal obstacles experienced by veterans encompassed limited accessibility to transition programs, alleged discrimination, and undesirable encounters with social services. Moreover, individual barriers involve a need for inventiveness in planning and trouble adjusting to working with citizens (Keeling et al., 2018). The study depicted the need to address these barriers through pragmatic, policy, and practice interventions.

Additionally, a mixed-method study by Kukla et al. (2015) aimed to provide the work reintegration experiences of veterans with mental ailments. The findings demonstrated that compared to those who did not serve in combat, veterans who served in battle exhibited more work barriers, particularly health-related ones. In Kintzle and Castro's chapter (2018), the authors explored the military transition theory to understand factors that guarantee effective civilian workplace transition. The study demonstrated that finding employment remains one of the most significant obstacles for military veterans. The findings underline the need for comprehensive support programs, policy changes, and research to enhance successful employment transition for veterans.

When assimilating into society, culture shock is a significant challenge veterans face (Cooper et al., 2018). Cooper et al. (2018) asserted that culture shock refers to disorientated emotions, discomfort, and misperception experienced when exposed to a new and unfamiliar cultural environment. The military-civilian cultural gap makes it challenging for civilian employers to perceive the various roles and training functions in the Army, and this unfamiliarity makes it challenging to evaluate how a veteran's experience in the military may be transferable to a position in the mainstream workforce (Smith, 2018). At the same time, Army retirees and employers may tussle to decipher military skill and involvement into comparable civilian credentials (Manning, 2019). Keeling et al. (2018) established that military communication frequently uses acronyms, nuances in vocabulary and colloquialisms, and direct command-oriented exchanges. Communication mismatch and misunderstanding can result in feelings of nullification, imposing hurdles with identity, social relationships, self-esteem, and belongingness (Keeling et al., 2018). Notably, observers often characterize the mainstream work environment by self-sufficiency, eccentricity, and ingenuity, which may appear to retirees as a portrayal of a lack of self-control, as they are accustomed to an atmosphere with a well-defined hierarchical structure (Yang et al., 2021).

Koenig et al. (2014) conducted qualitative interviews with retired soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan to determine the disorientation that military veterans face when transitioning into civilian life. The authors challenged healthcare providers to equip themselves with knowledge regarding the medicinal, mental, and societal difficulties associated with the readjustment process, particularly the reverse culture shock. The study by Koenig et al. (2014) proposed the need for culture-centered communication to assist veterans in integrating their positive aspects of military and civilian identities and ensure proper integration.

In a different study aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of military culture through first-hand accounts of veterans, McCormick et al. (2019) reported the misalignment of values and expectations such as discipline, mission focus, teamwork, and a strong sense of duty since civilian workplaces prioritize values such as autonomy, individualism, and profit-driven goals. Military veterans also reported a culture shock while communicating with non-military-connected persons and cultural changes post-military services.

Cooper et al. (2018) used Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework to examine the transition from the Army to civilian life. The authors highlighted significant differences between the Army and civilian life, stressing the cultural legacy of military life and its influence on post-transition outcomes. Moreover, utilizing social theories such as habitus, capital, and field highlighted insights into the intricate cultural transition veterans experience (Cooper et al., 2018). As illustrated, veterans face challenges such as disorientation, reverse cultural shock, cultural changes, and conflicting values. The authors present the need to recognize and understand the cultural backgrounds and veterans' experiences to provide adequate support and services tailored to their needs. Some recommended strategies to ensure successful cultural transitions for veterans include culture-centered communication and integrating military culture into healthcare and support provisions (McCormick et al., 2019).

Workplace Dynamics and Skills Transition

Workplace dynamics is another critical aspect that influences the effective transition of military veterans to civilian employment. The Army exhibits a clear hierarchical structure, while civilian workplaces depict more fluid and informal hierarchies (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2021). As a result, military veterans may find it challenging to traverse the less-defined lines of authority and decision-making in civilian organizations (Keeling et al., 2018). Veterans are required to

adjust their expectations in civilian workplaces and, at the same time, utilize their expertise, experiences, and collaboration to survive the workplace settings. On the other hand, the military portrays hierarchical and centralized decision-making processes with a clearly defined chain of command and particular protocols (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021).

In comparison, civilian workplaces possess participatory decision-making processes as various workforce members generate input (Higate et al., 2019). Therefore, veterans need to adapt their approach to decision-making by actively participating in discussions, collaborating with colleagues to reach a consensus, and considering diverse perspectives. Compared to civilian workplaces, the military conveys a strong sense of teamwork, shared mission, and camaraderie, making it challenging for them to cope with different working styles, team structures, and levels of collaboration in civilian workplaces (Higate et al., 2019).

In addition, Becker et al. (2023) have established that military veterans must refine and adapt their communication styles to align with the expectations at civilian workplaces. Since veterans interact with direct and authoritative language during their service, they take time before adapting to more informal and open-ended civilian communication (Yanchus et al., 2018). As a result, veterans need to develop practical communication skills, such as articulating ideas clearly and adapting their communication style to various audiences and communication.

Veterans' skill transition to civilian work life is critical during the transition process. Even though veterans have wide-ranging skills and expertise gained throughout the period they served in the military, veterans could encounter challenges in conveying and aligning these skills with the expectations and requirements of civilian employers (LePage, 2020). The challenge of translating military skills and experiences could impede veterans in job searching and successful transition. LePage (2020) argued that military service equips veterans with a wide-ranging set of

skills that are usually unique and specialized to particular roles and responsibilities. These skills include problem-solving, technical expertise, adaptability, discipline, resilience, teamwork, and effective leadership. McDermott (2007) posited that civilian employers may need to become more familiar with the specific terminologies and nuances linked to these skills, making it difficult for veterans to execute their capabilities effectively.

Studies have established that the military exhibits unique terminologies and terms that may not directly align with the civilian job descriptions and requirements (Cooper et al., 2018). Moreover, while military skills are deemed extremely valuable and applicable to civilian work environments, veterans may experience the perception that their practices are not directly relevant or transferable (Olenick et al., 2015). The lack of understanding among veterans on how their skills and experiences can benefit civilian workplaces could lead to overlooking or underutilizing these valuable skills, further complicating the skills translation process. Also, there is a broad perception gap between military retirees and civilian proprietors on the value and applicability of military skills (Olenick et al., 2015). For instance, employers may lack awareness of the breadth and depth of skills acquired during military service, while veterans may underestimate their abilities or struggle to articulate their experiences (Olenick et al., 2015). Practical communication skills and educational initiatives can help bridge this gap and promote the recognition of the value veterans contribute to the civilian workforce.

Career Transition Coaching and Career Coaching Programs

Career transition coaching can serve as a valuable resource during the transition period. Studies have reported that career coaching and the development of training programs can induce positive experiences due to personalized guidance and support (Corrie & Lawson, 2017). Coaching programs can help bridge this cultural gap and support veterans in traversing the

complexities of the civilian job market. Career transition coaching can benefit military veterans with personalized guidance tailored to their needs and goals. Beech et al. (2017) asserted that transitioning from the Army to the mainstream job market entails adapting to new cultural values, norms, and expectations.

However, Fleming (2018) suggested that career transition coaching can assist military veterans in conquering this cultural shift by offering insights into the civilian workplace and developing new communication and interpersonal skills. Career coaches could guide veterans to understand workplace dynamics as this could help them understand the contrasting differences in organizational structures, communication styles, and decision-making processes. Coaching programs can address the varying cultures between the Army and civilians while facilitating a swift transition and increasing the chances of veterans toward successful integration into the civilian labor market.

Numerous studies explore the latent transformative culture in enabling the efficacy of executive coaching, thus enhancing deep and prolonged changes during career transitions, and leading to clients' career optimism and career security. In their study, Corrie and Lawson (2017) probed the application of transformative learning in executive coaching to encourage the development of a coached individual and enhance their work environment. The study scrutinized transformative learning's potential to increase the efficacy of executive coaching, stressing the need for further research on the subject. Corrie and Lawson (2017) recommend that integrating transformative learning principles into coaching practices could improve outcomes for coaching professionals and clients.

In a similar study, Terblanche et al. (2018) emphasized transformative transition coaching during senior career transitions. The author stresses the need to implement a flexible

learning process that supports thoughtful and lasting changes in perspectives and worldviews. By incorporating transformative learning and transition coaching framework, individuals will demonstrate profound changes, and the framework will increase their likelihood of success when transitioning to current and future roles. Ebner (2020) examined the contribution of career coaching in molding the optimism of clients who decide to venture into a new career field. The researcher utilized the Career Resource Model to explore the resources that will enable individuals transitioning to develop a career identity through self-clarity of their goals and attaining job security. The findings underlined the perspective of transformative learning and career coaching in supporting individual and professional growth during career transitions.

Other studies have demonstrated that career transition coaching can enhance job-seeking skills such as interview preparation, resume writing, and networking (Graham et al., 2015). Coaches can offer guidance on resume writing and aid in showcasing the skills and experiences of military retirees, making it easy for civilian employers to understand the candidates (Graham et al., 2015). Career transition coaching can also encompass the provision of interview coaching as it will help veterans to confidently articulate their achievements, strengths, and transferable skills during job interviews. According to Samuel et al. (2019), improving various skills places job applicants in a better position to compete in the civilian job market and secure opportunities that align with their expectations and goals.

Similarly, Beech et al. (2017) postulated that retired soldiers can experience emotionally challenging times moving from military to civilian life and employment. For this reason, career transitioning coaching offers a supportive and non-judgmental space for veterans to express their fears, concerns, and uncertainties. Furthermore, career transition coaches can offer emotional support that can aid veterans in building resilience, managing stress, and boosting their self-

confidence (Beech et al., 2017). Veterans acquire the assurance and motivation to overcome obstacles through personalized coaching sessions. These sessions enable them to take proactive steps in job searching and pursue fulfilling civilian careers (Terblanche, 2022).

Other studies have established that career coaching programs can provide individuals with increased access to valuable networks and resources. Sherman and Larsen (2018) conducted a study centered on family-focused interventions and resources utilized by Army retirees and their families in their journey of acquiring a new life different from military life. The authors pinpointed the challenges experienced by military families, including separation, combat exposure, and reintegration stressors. The study discusses family psychoeducation as a strengths-focused model of care integrated with manualized programs and online platforms that can support veterans and their families during the transition. Thus, career coaches could ensure the availability of free online resources, as illustrated in the study, to aid community providers in improving their military culture competence and assisting transitioning military families.

In a different study, Westwood and Israelashvili (2023) highlighted the strident differences between civilian and military cultures and the problems veterans encounter, especially those who served in combat units. The study introduced the Veteran's Transition Program (VTP), explained how it addresses the transitional needs of veterans, and reframed help-seeking as a sign of strength. The VTP program, when executed properly, will assist with addressing trauma-related impacts of military service and thus help with the successful transition of veterans to everyday functioning civilian lives. Garcia Zea et al. (2023) highlighted the significance of emotional intelligence (EI) in the military domain as the study proposes that EI training and interventions can enhance the capacity of individuals to adjust and manage the psychosocial associated with military work. The authors emphasize the role of HRD in molding

veterans, supporting their career development, and successfully integrating them into civilian life (Garcia Zea et al., 2023). These studies by Garcia Zea et al. (2023) and Israelashvili (2023) underlined the essence of career transition coaching for military veterans and their families. As illustrated, facilitating successful transitions, and supporting the welfare of retired soldiers during their transition to civilian life can be improved by leveraging the strengths of military culture, providing family-focused interventions and resources, and developing EI. Therefore, career transition coaching should strive to address these challenges to enhance the overall adjustment of veterans and, at the same time, assist them in succeeding in their post-military careers.

Numerous studies have established the significance of reducing barriers and aligning program offerings with the needs and preferences of veterans. Morgan et al. (2020) examined barrier reduction strategies intertwined in programs utilized by post-9/11 Army retirees. The findings reported that 84 percent of veterans admitted to using programs with at least one barrier reduction component, such as increased access to programs, tangible supports, motivation to change, and decreased stigma (Morgan et al., 2020). The findings added that Veterans from the most junior enlisted ranks, who are at higher risk, were less likely to use barrier reduction components. Perkins et al. (2019) explored retired soldiers' use of programs and services experiencing career transition. The authors established that about 67 percent of veterans used at least one program, mainly seeking assistance with educational and employment advancement.

Shankle et al. (2023) carried out a qualitative study that explored Ohio veterans' priorities and veterans' health stakeholders during the transition to civilian life. The authors highlighted challenges to transition to civilian life, including difficulties in accessing resources and inadequate preparation for transition. Also, Shankle et al. (2023) reported that military veterans experienced financial and education barriers while transitioning to civilian work life and mental

health disorders such as PTSD and stigma. Based on these findings, the authors underlined the significance of reducing barriers and aligning programs with the needs and preferences of veterans during the transition process (Morgan et al., 2020). Specifically, these studies support providing tangible support, addressing stigma, increasing access to support programs, and supporting motivation to change (Perkins et al., 2019; Shankle et al., 2023). It is vital to align program offerings with veterans' precedence, address misalignments, and cater to the needs of veterans from diverse positions and circumstances. In the process, social service providers, policymakers, and healthcare professionals can better support transitioning veterans and enable an effective reintegration into civilian life.

Okolie et al. (2020) examined how career training with mentoring (CTM) programs serve in Nigerian higher education institutions to inspire learners' career development and employability. The authors drew on interviews with highly qualified and experienced experts from six Nigerian public universities and 20 industries within the same political zones selected via purposeful sampling technique. Okolie et al. (2020) interviewed 33 experts (21 senior academics and 12 industry executives) to understand key concepts and information regarding CTM programs in involved institutions. The authors stressed the need for effective CTM programs that offer learners career guidance and coaching services. The results of this study underscored the need for efficient CTM programs that offer career guidance and coaching services (Okolie et al., 2020).

In another study, Fischer et al. (2015) discussed the significance of family programs in supporting post-deployment readjustment and reintegration into civilian life. Veterans and their families expressed their desire and support for programs that offer information, support, practical skills, and mutual understanding. On the other hand, Ziencik (2020) explored the efficacy of the

Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) in enabling the transition from the military to higher education. The qualitative case study approach deployed in the study helped to probe the experiences of service members who participated in TAP. The study established that TAP equips military personnel with the appropriate tools and information to make informed decisions for their transition.

Reburiano (2019) investigated the transition of retired soldiers to the federal civil service, predominantly their integration and retention within the labor force. The author utilized Schlossberg's transition theory to identify the drawbacks ex-military members face in civilian life. Reburiano (2019) acknowledged that the transition process is complicated and thus proposed the need to support veterans in acquiring their professional careers. Morant (2018) demonstrated relatable findings to Reburiano (2019) by examining the learning encounters of procured military staff transitioning into civilian work. The study reported that self-directed learning could offer the needed support in the transition process and enable veterans to cope well with their new tasks and environment. Morant (2018) added that quality training programs tailored to meet veterans' needs could inspire veterans to focus on achieving success and resilience after getting jobs in the federal civil service.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

Various biblical passages and teachings guide this study on military career transition coaching experience and speak to the principles of social identity (Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 3:26-28, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27), role theory (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), and transition (Genesis 12:1). The idea that individuals play various roles in society has a basis in the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul describes the church as a body with many parts, each playing a unique role. Jesus' words parallel role theory paralleled in Matthew 20:28, where He stated,

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). The verse validates Jesus’ multidimensional role as a Savior, Servant, Teacher, and Healer and serves as an example for military veterans transitioning to civilian life that successfully managing multiple roles is attainable.

The Bible underscores the significance of finding our identity in God regarding identity. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982, Ephesians 2:10). The idea of finding our identity in Christ is further established in Galatians 3:26-28 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). The social identity theory has biblical parallels in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 where Paul describes the church as one body with many parts. Just as the body is many parts, individuals in society have distinctive identities and members individually (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). Paul’s lesson parallels military examples where unique ranks, roles, and units contribute to a collective identity and military mission. Nevertheless, veterans must redefine their social identities when transitioning to civilian life (Shankle et al., 2023).

Transition is a vital aspect of a veteran’s journey. The Bible highlights that transitions are challenging and can lead to intense personal growth and fulfillment of God’s plan. In Genesis, God called Abram to leave his country and father’s house, leading to Abram’s evolution into Abraham, the progenitor of nations (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982, Genesis

12:1). In the context of a veteran's transition back into civilian life, Ecclesiastes 3:1 could provide comfort and perspective, reminding veterans that their transition is part of their journey and that each moment has a specific purpose. "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:" (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). Ex-servicemembers' transition can be an opportunity to start anew; just as they may have experienced changes in their identity and lifestyle when they joined the military, leaving military service could also involve changes. Through 2 Corinthians 5:17, which speaks of personal transformation and rebirth in Christ, veterans can know that their past experiences do not entirely define who they are in the present and future. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982).

Veterans who feel lost or unsure about their path after the military can find comfort in Isaiah 43:18-19. "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). These verses encourage forgetting past difficulties and focusing on the new things God is doing. The metaphor of a "road in the wilderness" and "rivers in the desert" conveys the idea of making a way where there seems to be none and could be seen as a reassurance that God is working in the veteran's life, even if they are not immediately aware of it.

Like Abraham, whom God told to leave his familiar surroundings and step into the unknown, veterans also leave behind the familiar life of military service and step into a new unknown and civilian life. Though challenging, the scriptures highlight that such transitions are integral to personal growth and fulfilling God's plan. They also convey that God is present throughout these transitions, guiding and providing for those who trust Him.

These biblical principles and verses helped shape the spiritual foundations of this study by providing a guiding framework to explore how veterans transition from their military roles to civilian careers and adjust their identities in the transition process. While the Bible does not mention career coaching as a psychological construct, passages highlight seeking wisdom from others.

Finally, various passages and principles in the Bible set foundations that could describe the career development of military veterans when transitioning to civilian work life. A significant principle outlined in the Bible and applicable to the study is the value and dignity of work. In Genesis 1:26-26, God creates humans in His image and likeness and offers them the mandate to work and steward the universe. The chapter portrays the intrinsic worth of work and the significance of finding meaningful employment. Also, the scripture posits the need for guidance and wisdom in making better career decisions. In Proverbs 3:5-6, the scriptures inspire people to trust in the Lord and seek his leadership and guidance in all their ways. The verse applies to veterans as they navigate the intricacies of transitioning into civilian work life and making decisions concerning their career paths.

Moreover, (1 Peter 4:10-11) highlights the biblical principle of serving others using our talents and skills, which resonates with veterans' desire to contribute positively to society and significantly impact their careers. As a result, veterans will seek to treat others accordingly as they would want them to serve in ways recommended by the Bible. The scriptures offer numerous principles and passages that could guide people seeking to advance their careers and serve in their best form. By acknowledging the numerous biblical foundations highlighted in the paper, the study can offer valuable insights and guidance that align with the principles and values of the Bible with work and career development.

Summary

Researchers can understand the challenges experienced by military veterans when transitioning to civilian roles through the lenses of role theory and social identity theory. Role theory posits that individuals experience conflict and strain when attempting to navigate the expectations of various roles, a concept relevant to veterans who must balance their previous military roles with their new civilian roles. On the other hand, social identity theory examines the impact of group membership on an individual's self-concept and behavior. Veterans, having developed a robust social identity during service, can find the loss of their identity distressing during their career transition, as supported by McKinley et al. (2014). Both theories underscore the complexities of veterans' career transitions, emphasizing the need for supportive frameworks and understanding.

Veteran career development in civilian organizations is multifaceted, requiring veterans to comprehend new career opportunities, gain deeper self-awareness, explore different vocational avenues, and make informed decisions. Veterans' career requirements differ based on age, career stage, and life objectives. Training programs can be instrumental in the transition phase, aiding employers in understanding military culture and managing diversity. Moreover, a literature review highlights the importance of understanding career transition challenges to ensure veterans can effectively transfer their military skills to civilian roles. The challenges experienced by veterans range from personal barriers like combat-related health issues to difficulty adjusting to new workplace dynamics, as noted by researchers like Smith (2021), Cooper et al. (2018), and Yang et al. (2021).

It is pertinent to note the parallels between the theories discussed in the literature and biblical principles related to veteran career transition coaching. Scriptures such as Corinthians

12:12-27, Galatians 3:26-28, and Genesis 12:1 hint at societal roles, identity in God, and the transformative nature of transitions. Career transition coaches can harmonize these biblical principles with their coaching methods to support veterans. Effective career transition coaching programs can offer veterans tailored guidance, emotional support, networking opportunities, and essential job-seeking skills. This research sought to understand the lived experience of veterans who underwent career coaching during their transition to civilian employment. The following chapter outlines the methodology for investigating the journey from military service to civilian employment. Chapter 3 delves deeper into the research process, providing research design, participant information and selection, sampling, and collection of data methods.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

The methodology chapter illustrates the techniques and processes undertaken to commence the research, obtain, analyze, and finalize the study. The primary components of this section entail study design, which presents the entire study approach to used collect information. This subsection entails how the population was selected to help with data collection accuracy. The chapter highlights the tools used to collect and analyze data collected. A description of the underlying ethical concerns, the correctness of the data, and the study's information will preempt the ethical issues I encountered, and the course of action taken. The reproducibility of the survey techniques creates a concrete comprehension of the research scope. The approach will allow other examiners to replicate and improve the survey in subsequent research activities.

Research Design

In this qualitative study, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design explored the lived experiences of military veterans who have undergone career transition coaching during their shift from military service to civilian employment. Phenomenology was chosen for its ability to delve into the essence of participants' experiences and perceptions, enabling a deeper understanding of the transitional journey. A phenomenological investigation examines the shared interpretations of multiple individuals regarding their firsthand experiences of a particular idea or event (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, phenomenological research design explores the essence and meaning of human experiences and the lived experiences of individuals to uncover the underlying structures and patterns that define those experiences (Flynn

& Korcuska, 2018). The research design was fundamental in studying how veterans interpret the world and their career transition coaching perspectives.

The phenomenological research design explores the depth of human encounters and viewpoints, providing a gateway into a person's understanding of their lived experiences. Flynn and Korcuska (2018) contended that this approach enables researchers to uncover the fundamental patterns, frameworks, and intricate details that shape these encounters. The approach allows researchers to investigate complicated, peculiar, and highly intimate subjects such as emotions, transitions, and viewpoints. The flexible and methodical essence of phenomenology allows researchers to navigate via diverse perspectives while upholding an unswerving analytical structure. In due course, the phenomenological research design closes the divide between individual experiences and more expansive insights, providing a thoughtful and all-encompassing inquiry into the human phenomenon.

Participants

Campbell et al. (2020) emphasized that including individuals with unique perspectives is crucial for sample strategies, especially given the study's objectives. Thus, participants who met specific characteristic criteria were selected using purposive sampling: military veterans with three or more years of service, varying ranks, and military branches who underwent career transition coaching during their transition from military service to civilian employment. Participants must have had completed career transition coaching and military service within the past five years. Participants were excluded from the study if they currently serve in the military.

Recruitment

A recruitment strategy integrating snowball sampling with social media techniques was employed. Empirical research supports social media recruitment as an effective tool that uses

ongoing research posts and direct messaging techniques (Gelinas et al., 2017). Snowball sampling is an established technique for engaging participants who might not be familiar to the researcher (Leighton et al., 2021; Marcus et al., 2017). In qualitative research, this method involves initial contacts referring the researcher to potential participants rather than the researcher recruiting directly (Leighton et al., 2021).

Participants were recruited through veterans' organizations distributing the study's invitation and recruitment details (see Appendix C) via email, social networks, and social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook promoting the study. U.S.-based organizations identified in assisting veterans' transition from the military were American Corporate Partners (ACP), Hiring Our Heroes, Bunker Labs, Hire Heroes USA, and Veterati (Military-Transition, n.d.). Career transition coaching providers were contacted through email or phone (see Appendix B) and asked to share the study details with their clients for participation. Providers identified via search engines include Militaryhire.com, Careertransitiondevelopment.com, and Beyondlimits-consulting.com.

Sampling

Considering the homogeneity of the population and ensuring a diverse range of experiences for this study, a minimum of 10 participants were sought for interviews. Noon (2018) suggested no correct sample size for IPA research yet, recommended 4-10. Similarly, Hennink and Kaiser (2022) discussed how appropriate sample sizes in qualitative research are "less about numbers (n's)" (p. 9) and more about the depth and richness of the data, providing a detailed understanding of the studied phenomenon. Moreover, Sim et al. (2018) noted that recommendations for phenomenological studies are to be between 3-10 participants and 5-8 participants of homogeneous samples. In addition, Hennink and Kaiser (2022) found that

saturation occurred “between 5 and 24 interviews” (p. 6). This criterion-based selection provided insight into how coaching experiences varied based on individual backgrounds and circumstances.

Ethical Considerations

By upholding ethical principles, researchers establish trust and respect, fostering an environment where participants feel safe to share their experiences openly and candidly (Pietilä et al., 2020). Participants in this study needed to be at least 18 and be selected to participate after screening, after which pseudonyms were assigned to maintain participants’ confidentiality. Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix A) certified compliance with ethical standards. All collected data remained confidential and password-protected for digital files and in a locked drawer for printed files. I will keep all research-related records for at least three years following the research’s completion (Protection of Human Subjects, 2023) and then destroy them.

Study Procedures

This study’s procedures explored the experiences of 11 veterans who underwent career transition coaching during their shift from military service to civilian roles. After IRB approval, recruitment was sought through outreach to organizations providing transition support or career transition coaching to veterans using the contact information on their websites. I contacted the following organizations: American Corporate Partners (ACP), Hiring Our Heroes, Bunker Labs, Hire Heroes USA, Veterati, Militaryhire.com, Careertransitiondevelopment.com, and Beyondlimits-consulting.com. The goal was to ask the organizations to share the recruitment letter (see Appendix C) with their followers, email subscribers, or clientele through social platforms or email.

Interested individuals were instructed through the recruitment letter to complete a screening survey (see Appendix D) with the provided Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or Quick Response (QR) code. The screening survey determined eligibility and a notification was sent to my Liberty University-provided email address upon completion by the participant. The information sheet (see Appendix E) was emailed to eligible participants using their screening form-provided email address. Selected participants were sent a private URL to the Liberty University-provided bookings application to schedule an interview.

Participants selected their preferred interview date and time from the available slots on the calendar and chose between a telephone or video conference for the interview session. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes using the interview guide (see Appendix F). Importantly, semi-structured interviews use a guide with questions tailored to research goals, offering a flexible structure for each conversation differing from unstructured interviews and the closed-ended questions found in Likert type, yes/no, or multiple-choice surveys (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

Analysis and Interpretation

I made audio recordings of the interviews using a digital voice recorder application. Parameswaran et al. (2020) noted that digital instruments let researchers simultaneously view or hear the recordings and annotate the transcript. I sent transcriptions of the recorded conversations to the participants for their review and feedback, a process known as member checking in qualitative research to preserve validity (Candela, 2019). Data Analysis using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to identify patterns, themes, and insights was done and concluded in the context of the research problem and existing literature. IPA emanates from phenomenological principles emphasizing individuals' experiences within their personal and

societal environments (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Finally, the data was validated for biases, inconsistencies, or sources of error through member checking, reporting the findings in a structured manner, and reflection. Research-related records will be kept for at least three years following the research's completion (Protection of Human Subjects, 2023) and then destroyed.

In summary, the study procedures consisted of (a) acquiring IRB approval, (b) recruitment, (c) participant screening, (d) interview scheduling, (e) data collection, (f) data transcription, (g) member checking, (h) data analysis, (i) data interpretation, (j) validating the findings, (k) reporting, and (l) reflection.

Instrumentation and Measurement

According to Roberts (2020), the researcher and the questions proffered are crucial when gathering data through qualitative interviews. The person conducting the interview is not just a passive observer but actively participates, skillfully interacts with the interviewee, and understands their influence on the entire procedure and its results (Roberts, 2020). In this context, the interviewer and the interview transform into a research instrument.

The Role of the Researcher

I acted as the primary instrument, gathering, examining, and synthesizing the data to describe the participants' experiences comprehensively. I maintained the participants' confidentiality and set aside my previous experience, focusing solely on identifying themes from the participants' responses.

The Recruitment Letter

The recruitment letter (see Appendix C) was a formal invitation from me, a doctoral candidate in psychology at Liberty University's School of Behavioral Sciences. The letter's aim was to recruit military veterans to study their transition to civilian employment after participating

in a career transition coaching program. The letter outlined the research's purpose, eligibility criteria, methodology, confidentiality assurances, and the participation process. The letter provided links to the screening survey (see Appendix D) and concluded with my information.

Participant Screening Form

The screening form (see Appendix D) was a tool to determine the participants' eligibility based on military service-related criteria and transition coaching experiences. The form required participants to provide personal facts, demographic information, military service details, and specifics about their transition coaching. The form had mandatory questions marked with asterisks, ensuring all necessary information was collected.

The Interview Guide

The interview guide (see Appendix F) contained questions focused on veterans' experiences after participating in career transition coaching during their transition from military service to civilian employment. The guide aimed to gather comprehensive insights into the experiences, challenges, and outcomes during veterans' moves from military service to civilian employment.

The guide contained 15 questions addressing different aspects of the transition experience. The questions explored the veterans' perceptions of the coaching process, their challenges, the influence of their military attributes, changes in their expectations, and the impact of external factors like faith, social networks, and available resources. Additionally, the questions aimed to gauge the influence of military culture on their transition, their views on their civilian

careers post-coaching outcomes, and any recommendations they had for enhancing the coaching process.

The guide addressed the primary topics of the research while providing a clear framework for interview discussions and was not meant to be adhered to rigidly. The goal was to delve into the research topic by gathering consistent data from every participant. This guide also assisted participants in understanding the topics they should consider, as discussed by Kallio et al. (2016).

Rigor and Validity

Employing a structured approach to collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data allows researchers to back up their findings, warranting their persuasiveness and reliability (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). This study reinforced its rigor and trustworthiness by sharing individual transcripts with respondents for review and validation (member checking). According to Harman (2022), member checking enhances the data analysis' credibility. Furthermore, I was conscious of my biases and viewpoints throughout the research process. Steadfast dedication to rigor and trust enhances qualitative research's impact, making it invaluable for understanding human experiences across stakeholders, practitioners, policymakers, and academia. (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016).

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research methods like IPA must maintain a sense of trustworthiness to be deemed credible (McGaha & D'Urso, 2019). Ensuring trustworthiness in this study warranted an all-encompassing representation of participants' narratives in all their strengths and weaknesses. McGaha and D'Urso (2019) noted that recognizing the significance of language in human experiences, measuring meaning instead of opinions from experience, and acknowledging

cognition determine IPA research trustworthiness. This approach enhanced a profound and holistic understanding of the subject matter. The supporting ethical considerations were seamlessly integrated into this framework, highlighting my regard for the participants' rights and their steadfast commitment to an impartial exploration.

Dependability

Dependability in IPA research is underscored by having a transparent method of data collection and analysis (Dabengwa et al., 2020). My study prioritized dependability through clear objectives and transparent data collection. I used defined criteria to select veterans and a semi-structured interview guide. I recorded every interview and transcribed them verbatim. I systematically coded and analyzed the data, revisiting the data for accurate interpretations. After determining themes, I sought participant feedback for validation. I documented every step to represent veterans' experiences authentically.

Confirmability

Harman (2022) stated that a study achieving confirmability standards is deemed trustworthy. I enhanced confirmability using bracketing, an essential aspect of phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I set aside biases to prioritize participants' experiences. I documented assumptions and biases in the reflective journal (see Appendix H).

Validity

Researchers use member checking by asking participants to acknowledge or reject the researcher's interpretation of the data to ensure validity in IPA research (Harman, 2022; McGaha & D'Urso, 2019). Similarly, Pringle et al. (2011) wrote that IPA researchers should provide a credible interpretation with consistent accounts aligning with the participants' words to ensure

validity. To achieve validity, I employed member checking, practiced reflexivity, and provided coherent accounts of the participants' experiences.

Data Analysis

Graneheim and Lundman's (2004) qualitative analysis methodology was employed to analyze the interview data. This method systematically identified, organized, and interpreted patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis consisted of several iterative stages: familiarizing, initial coding, and theme review. I audio-recorded the interviews and finalized data analysis using MAXQDA 2022 (version 22.8.0), a tool that recent studies (Faizi & Moradian, 2022; Gholami et al., 2022; Koka et al., 2021) have used in qualitative research to strengthen the reliability and rigor of their findings.

Familiarization entailed immersion in the data to understand participants' narratives comprehensively. Each interview was cautiously transcribed and thoroughly reviewed multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of its content. After data familiarization, initial coding was used to organize the data. Initial coding is the generation of initial codes to label and categorize meaningful data segments (Williams & Moser, 2019). Grouping related codes identifies overarching themes (Campbell et al., 2021). It is worth mentioning that Campbell et al. (2021) highlighted that what is now referred to as "generating (initial) themes" (p. 2017) was formerly termed "searching for themes" (p. 2017).

Theme review ensured that themes accurately represented participants' experiences and helped understand each theme's central idea, confirming their uniqueness (Williams & Moser,

2019). Defining themes that captured the essence of the responses was done to uphold the research objectives while eliminating the possibility of bias.

By iterative coding and categorizing data, thematic analysis uncovered the underlying meanings and shared experiences inherent in participants' responses (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This approach effectively captured the nuances and complexities of the qualitative data, facilitating the identification of anticipated and experiential themes. As a result, the thematic analysis provided a structured framework for organizing data while remaining open to unexpected insights, making it a robust method for generating comprehensive and meaningful interpretations from interview narratives. Moreover, Castleberry and Nolen (2018) pointed out that qualitative research frequently uses thematic to certify its systematic and comprehensive nature.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations

This study focused on veterans' experiences who used career transition coaching during their transition from military to civilian roles. The choice to study this population was deliberate, as the unique challenges and experiences veterans face during this transition are distinct from those of civilians (Becker et al., 2022; Cassidy, 2014; Shepherd et al., 2020; Stull et al., 2020). Additionally, the study did not explore other forms of transition support, such as mentorship or vocational training, but solely emphasized the role of career transition coaching. This delimitation provided a concentrated understanding of the impact of coaching on veterans' transition experiences. The rationale behind this choice was to shed light on a specific

intervention (career transition coaching) that has the potential to facilitate smoother transitions for veterans, thereby aiding stakeholders in making informed decisions about its implementation.

Assumptions

The assumption was that participants in this study provided honest and accurate accounts of their experiences. Given the topic's personal and potentially sensitive nature, the assumption was that veterans had the knowledge and insight to reflect upon and articulate their experiences with career transition coaching. Furthermore, the presumption was that the coaching sessions were conducted by professionals with adequate training and expertise in the field, ensuring that the experiences captured represented standard career transition coaching practices.

Limitations

Despite the study's rigorous design, inherent limitations need acknowledgment. One significant limitation was the potential for social desirability bias; participants may have responded with answers they believed were expected or favorable rather than their genuine experiences (Larson, 2019). The stigma of seeking help or wanting to portray their transition as successful could have influenced this bias. Additionally, the study's findings might be limited in generalizability as they pertain specifically to veterans who have used career transition coaching. They may only apply to those who transitioned with such support.

Summary

Chapter 3 focused on the methodology employed to understand the experiences of military veterans transitioning to civilian employment through career transition coaching. The chapter began with an overview, emphasizing the importance of study design, ethical considerations, and the reproducibility of the research techniques. The research employed an interpretative phenomenological design, aiming to delve deep into the essence of the

participants' experiences during their career transition. This study's design effectively captured military veterans' depth of and nuanced transitional journey. References such as Flynn and Korcuska (2018) highlight the significance of phenomenology in understanding intricate human experiences.

The chapter further detailed the participant selection process, emphasizing the importance of including individuals with unique perspectives. Purposive sampling targeted military veterans with specific criteria, such as a minimum of three years of service and having undergone career transition coaching in the past five years. Recruitment strategies involved a combination of snowball sampling and social media outreach. Ethical considerations were paramount, ensuring participants' confidentiality and willingness to participate. The study procedures were meticulously outlined, from acquiring IRB approval to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The role of the researcher was pivotal, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument in gathering and analyzing data. The chapter concluded with delimitations, assumptions, and limitations, emphasizing the importance of the scope, validity, and reliability of the study.

Chapter 4 delves deep into the outcomes obtained from the research process. The chapter begins by summarizing the study's objectives and data collection techniques. The chapter then provides an in-depth look at the descriptive results. The core findings, structured by research questions, are presented in detail, offering insights into the qualitative results.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

This chapter details the findings of this study. This multiple-case qualitative interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) study aimed to explore and analyze the experiences of military veterans who underwent career transition coaching as they navigated the complex process of shifting from military service to civilian employment. The study's commitment to provide an in-depth description and understanding of these experiences was achieved by exploring the experiences of 11 U.S. veterans who transitioned from military to civilian roles using career transition coaching.

To reach this specific group, I emailed organizations providing career transition services to veterans, requesting them to distribute the recruitment letter (Appendix C) to their client networks. Interested individuals then completed the screening survey (Appendix D), and those meeting the inclusion criteria received a scheduling URL and the information sheet (Appendix E) via email. Individual interviews were audio-recorded and lasted approximately 60 minutes. I then transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim and forwarded the transcripts to the participants for their review, allowing them to verify their responses for accuracy. I then coded, themed, and iteratively analyzed them using the MAXQDA software application. The digital data, including electronic mail, personal information, audio-recorded content, and screening surveys, were organized and stored on a password-protected computer. Participants' confidentiality was maintained using assigned pseudonyms. The interview guide, detailed in Appendix F, was created by a comprehensive literature review and shaped by three pivotal research questions.

These research questions served as a foundational guide for the study, aiming to capture a comprehensive view and understanding of the veterans' experiences with career transition coaching:

RQ1: How do U.S. veterans describe their experience with career transition coaching?

RQ2: How do U.S. veterans describe how career transition coaching impacted their experience adapting from military to civilian careers?

RQ3: To what extent does the alignment of career goals with personal values and beliefs influence the success of career transition coaching for U.S. veterans?

This chapter further discusses the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and an overview of the participants' demographics. The chapter then details the thematic findings, supported by interview transcriptions for justification. Lastly, chapter 4 concludes with the summarized results and main points presented throughout the chapter.

Descriptive Results

Participation in the study was open to a homogeneous group of participants, and the criteria for their screening and selection were outlined in chapter three. According to Smith et al. (2009), the appropriate sample size for an IPA study varies as it prioritizes in-depth individual experiences of a phenomenon. Typically, bold design studies select participants from homogeneous groups and analyze a phenomenon from multiple viewpoints to gain a thorough and varied understanding (Smith et al., 2009). Nineteen respondents expressed interest in this study; however, only 14 fulfilled the inclusion criteria. Among these, three could not commit to an interview, resulting in 11 U.S. military veterans enrolled as participants, which demonstrated to be adequate for data saturation. Their diverse experiences yielded no new themes after a thorough analysis.

As shown in Table 1, the military and demographic characteristics of the sample consisted of predominately male participants (8 out of 11, 72.7%), with a smaller portion of female participants (3 out of 11, 27.3%). The participants' ages ranged from 31 to 48 years, representing various military branches: 5 from the Army, 3 from the Navy, 2 from the Marine Corps, and 1 from the Air Force. Their years of service ranged from 11 to 28, with ranks from non-commissioned to senior officers. All participants had transitioned from the military for 1 to 5 years during the study. To protect the participants' privacy, I replaced genuine names with assigned pseudonyms throughout the study.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Military Background

Participant	Age	Gender	Military branch	Service years	Rank	Years since transition
Othello	31	Male	Army	11	Non-Commissioned Officer	2
Ophelia	41	Female	Navy	16	Mid-Level Officer	3
Iago	48	Male	Marines	22	Senior Officer	4
Lear	48	Male	Army	28	Senior Officer	1
Claudius	42	Male	Navy	15	Mid-Level Officer	5
Portia	47	Female	Marines	23	Senior Officer	2
Falstaff	31	Male	Army	12	Non-Commissioned Officer	1
Duncan	42	Male	Air Force	17	Mid-Level Officer	3
Prospero	39	Male	Navy	12	Junior Officer	5
Viola	34	Female	Army	12	Non-Commissioned Officer	4
Sebastian	37	Male	Army	14	Mid-Level Officer	1

Note. Participant pseudonyms are used for anonymity.

The interview questionnaire revealed that transitioning from military to civilian roles had an intense psychological impact on the respondents. A common theme among all participants was the experience of an identity crisis stemming from the loss of their military rank or role. This

shift often led to a significant, sometimes disorienting, psychological adjustment as they confronted the reality of independently seeking employment. This realization and the accompanying challenges catalyzed the participants to seek specialized guidance. Table 2 showcases selected quotes that reflect the participant’s motivations and experiences in seeking career transition coaching highlighting the importance of personalized guidance, the need for support in exploring career options, and the challenges involved in successfully transitioning from military to civilian life.

Table 2

Reasons Participants Chose to Seek Career Transition Coaching (N = 11)

Reason for interest	Example quote (Participant)	Frequency, <i>n</i> (%)
Facilitating a successful transition	<i>“I was transitioning from the military to a civilian career, and the job market felt like a whole new world.”</i> (Portia)	6 (54.5)
Need for guidance and support	<i>“The thought of having to interview made me nervous, and I needed to know how to present myself effectively.”</i> (Viola)	3 (27.3)
Career exploration and clarity	<i>“I felt lost and didn’t know what my next move should be. I needed someone to help me figure out what I was passionate about.”</i> (Iago)	2 (18.2)

Study Findings

The research findings for this study were derived from IPA methods suited for exploring how individuals make sense of their personal and social worlds (Smith et al., 2009). I used the MAXQDA software application to analyze the interview data using IPA to characterize the subjective experiences of veterans with career transition coaching. MAXQDA is valued for its versatility in facilitating and streamlining interpretive and thematic analysis in IPA studies (Alonso et al., 2021; Saillard, 2011). Within the MAXQDA software, I listened to and read each

transcript multiple times to familiarize myself with the respondents' descriptions. I then made the initial noting by highlighting interesting or significant statements by the respondents. I identified and recorded codes relevant to career transition coaching and developed experiential themes. This detailed examination of personal experiences emphasizes an idiographic approach (Smith & Osborn, 2015). I subsequently conducted a cross-case analysis to identify recurring patterns, culminating in finalizing thematic titles. This process focused on uncovering the psychological essences and conceptual understandings inherent in the data.

The study's findings indicate that veterans perceive career transition coaching as critical in their shift from military to civilian roles, appreciating its personalized and empowering approach and addressing unique challenges like cultural barriers and well-being. Participants in the study reported that career transition coaching significantly aided their shift from military to civilian careers by fostering an essential identity and role change, enhancing confidence and self-efficacy, and supporting both skill transfer and the psychological and social facets of adapting to new professional and social environments. The study emphasizes that aligning veterans' career aspirations with their faith and values through transition coaching is key to achieving fulfilling and successful career changes in harmony with their self-identity and life objectives.

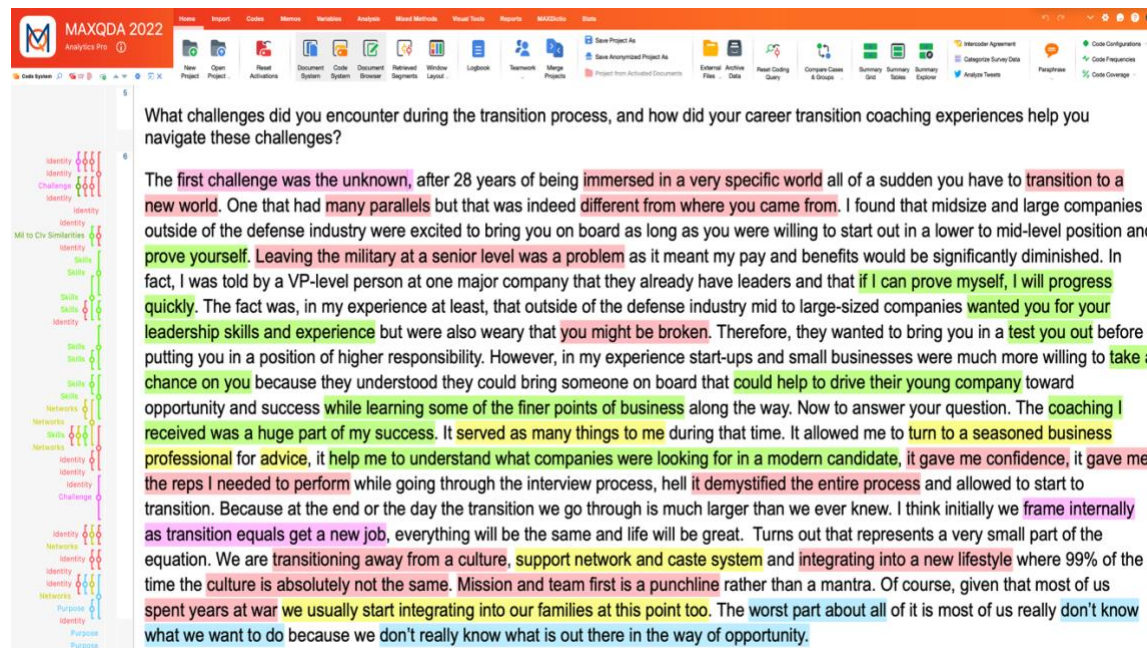
Relevant Codes

In investigating the impact of career transition coaching on veterans transitioning from military to civilian careers, I analyzed participants' descriptive experiences to identify key patterns and themes. The process commenced with thoroughly examining the qualitative data (interview transcripts), allowing me to generate initial codes reflecting significant aspects of the veterans' transition experiences. Figure 1 depicts the iterative coding process to refine these initial codes into coherent themes. The study identified four group experiential themes through

the relevant codes and research questions: (a) identity conflict, (b) redefining purpose, (c) understanding and articulating military skills, and (d) social and community integration.

Figure 1

Iterative Coding Process for Analyzing Veterans' Career Transition Experiences



Note. This figure illustrates one coding-process iteration used to refine initial codes into coherent themes to ensure accurate thematic narrative representation from participants.

Experiential Themes from Qualitative Descriptions

Identity Conflict. The theme of identity conflict emerged from codes such as feelings of loss, uncertainty about civilian roles, nostalgia for military life, struggle with civilian identity, and missing the sense of belonging and structure provided by the military. These codes collectively illustrated the profound internal conflict veterans experienced as they navigated the complex process of leaving their military identity behind to assimilate into civilian life. This transition marked a significant psychological adjustment, highlighting the challenge of losing a

previously well-defined social identity and sense of self and the need for support in developing a new identity.

Redefining Purpose. Codes such as the search for new meaning, setting new career goals, aligning career aspirations with personal values and faith, aspiration for fulfilling work, and the desire for a new role contributing to society outside the military coalesced into the theme of redefining purpose. This theme underscored the veterans' journey toward discovering a new sense of purpose post-military service. It emphasized the critical role of career transition coaching in helping veterans find work that resonates with their values and aspirations, facilitating a more meaningful and fulfilling life post-service.

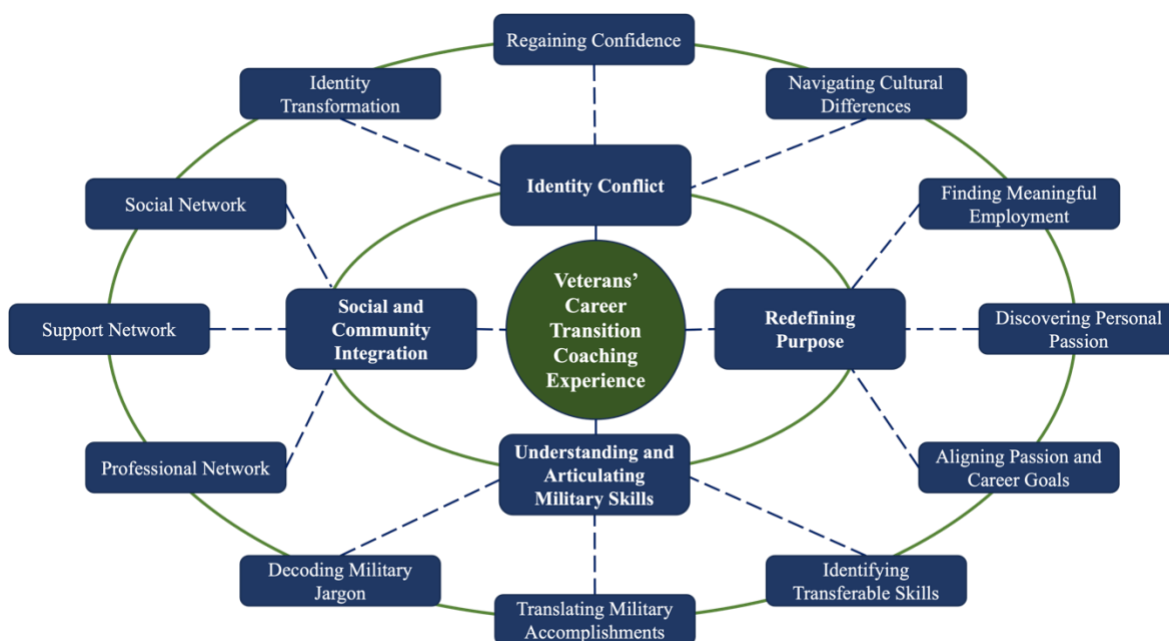
Understanding and Articulating Military Skills. The transition to civilian work roles was marked by challenges in understanding and articulating military skills, as captured by codes like difficulty translating military skills to civilian jobs, recognizing transferable skills, and the need for coaching on resume writing and interview preparation. This theme highlighted the gap between veterans' valuable military experiences and the civilian job market's requirements. The role of transition coaching became evident in bridging this gap, aiding veterans in effectively communicating their skills and experiences in terms relevant to civilian employers.

Social and Community Integration. Finally, the theme of social and community integration emerged from codes related to adapting to civilian workplace culture, building new professional networks, learning civilian communication styles, and navigating social interactions outside the military. This theme captured the essential social and community adjustments required for veterans to integrate successfully into civilian professional environments. It pointed to the importance of coaching in supporting veterans' development of new social identities and skills necessary for building new professional and personal relationships in their civilian lives.

The transition from codes to themes in this study involved an iterative process of grouping related observations and insights into broader categories that reflected the overarching experiences and challenges faced by veterans during their career transition. These themes provided a structured understanding of the transition experience, highlighting the significant impact of career transition coaching in facilitating a successful adjustment to civilian life. Through this analysis, the study illuminated the multifaceted nature of the career transition process for veterans, underscoring the importance of addressing identity conflicts, redefining purpose, articulating military skills, and integrating socially and communicatively for a holistic transition experience. Consequently, Figure 2 emerges as a crucial visual tool moving from a broad thematic analysis to a detailed exploration of individual themes. It captures the interconnected group experiential themes and subthemes, illustrating the synthesis of findings and the dynamic relationship between career transition coaching and veterans' growth.

Figure 2

The Subjective Experience of Veterans with Career Transition Coaching



Note. Group experiential themes (inner circle) and subthemes (outer circle).

Themes by Research Questions

The study, building on the understanding developed from the transition of codes to themes, explores these themes through the lens of the research questions. This examination further elucidates how each theme aligns with the veterans' experiences, providing a deeper insight into how career transition coaching contributed to their adaptation to civilian employment. Table 3 presents the themes and their associated subthemes by research questions.

Table 3

Group Experiential Themes and Subthemes by Research Questions

Research question	Themes	Subthemes
RQ1: How do U.S. veterans describe their experience with career transition coaching?	Identity conflict	Identity transformation
		Regaining confidence
	Redefining purpose	Navigating cultural differences
		Finding meaningful employment
RQ2: How do U.S. veterans describe how career transition coaching impacted their experience adapting from military to civilian careers?	Understanding and articulating military skills	Discovering personal passion
		Aligning passion and career goals
		Identifying transferable skills
		Translating military accomplishments
RQ3: To what extent does the alignment of career goals with personal values and beliefs influence the success of career transition coaching for U.S. veterans?	Social and community integration	Decoding military jargon
		Professional network
		Support network
		Social network

Research Question 1 (RQ1)

This research question examined U.S. veterans' perceptions of career transition coaching, emphasizing their transition's psychological and emotional facets. The first identified theme under RQ1, identity conflict, including subthemes: identity transformation and regaining confidence, highlights veterans' struggles with the loss of military identity and challenges in

regaining self-confidence in civilian life. Additionally, the subtheme of navigating cultural differences reflects the difficulties encountered in adapting to civilian workplace cultures, which were decidedly different from the military experiences of the participants.

The second theme under RQ1, redefining purpose, encompasses finding meaningful employment, discovering personal passions, and aligning these passions with career goals. This theme suggested that career transition coaching helped veterans find jobs and careers that resonated with their identity and aspirations. Overall, RQ1 revealed a complex emotional and psychological journey for veterans, where career transition coaching played a crucial role in navigating identity challenges and redefining their purpose post-military life.

Research Question 2 (RQ2)

RQ2 investigated the impact of career transition coaching on veterans' shift from military to civilian careers and discovered the theme of understanding and articulating military skills, which included subthemes: identifying transferable skills, translating military achievements, and decoding military jargon. These aspects underscored the challenge veterans faced in conveying the value of their military experience to civilian employers. The theme highlights veterans' perceived rich skillsets and experiences, which were often under-communicated in civilian job contexts. Decoding military jargon emphasized the communication divide between military and civilian sectors. Overall, RQ2 found the crucial role of career transition coaching in helping veterans present their military background effectively in the civilian job market.

Research Question 3 (RQ3)

RQ3 explored how aligning career goals with personal values affected the success of career transition coaching for U.S. veterans. The focus was on social and community integration, including three networks: professional, support, and social. The participants indicated that

successful career transition coaching was judged by job outcomes and how well they integrated into their new professional and social environments. The importance of professional networks for career success, support networks for emotional and practical aid, and social networks for broader civilian life integration were highlighted. The importance of these networks stressed the complex nature of career transition, emphasizing the need to align career objectives and personal values for a comprehensive and successful shift from military to civilian life.

Table 4 presents a qualitative exploration of the experiential themes and subthemes shared by participants transitioning from military to civilian life, enriched by illustrative quotes. These themes and subthemes offer a comprehensive view of the complex, multifaceted nature of transitioning from military to civilian life, as articulated through the participants' voices.

Table 4

Group experiential themes and subthemes with illustrative quotes.

Theme	Subthemes	Illustrative Quotes (Participant)
Identity conflict	Identity transformation	<i>“In the military, your identity is intertwined with your role and the uniform you wear. In the civilian world, I had to find out who I was outside the uniform, like shedding old skin.” (Falstaff)</i>
	Regaining confidence	<i>“Getting out into the civilian world was like learning to walk, I was starting from the bottom again and had to regain my confidence in my ability to do things without orders.” (Iago)</i>
	Navigating cultural differences	<i>“I spent my entire adult life in the military, with soldiers, and now I had to act differently, when in Rome, as the saying goes.” (Sebastian)</i>
Redefining purpose	Finding meaningful employment	<i>“I felt like serving was contributing to the big picture, I had a mission. I mean, making money for a company is cool and all, but does it really matter?” (Lear)</i>
	Discovering personal passion	<i>“I knew what I didn’t want to do but, I’m kind of still trying to find out what I really want to do, I didn’t have that freedom before.” (Viola)</i>
	Aligning passion and career goals	<i>“I felt lost and didn’t know my next move. I needed help figuring out what I was passionate about to find a good job.” (Ophelia)</i>
Understanding and articulating military skills	Identifying transferable skills	<i>“I needed help translating my military skills and experience. (Portia)</i>
	Translating military accomplishments	<i>“I’ve been to combat, I’ve done and seen some stuff you know, like, I didn’t know if it meant anything in the civilian world.” (Duncan)</i>
	Decoding military jargon	<i>“Like, I remember one recruiter talking to me about my role, profession, and wellness programs, and I knew billet, MOS, and PT so, at that time, I didn’t know what she was talking about.” (Sebastian)</i>
Social and community integration	Professional network	<i>“Networking tips from my coach were vital. I connected with other veterans in civilian roles, which opened job opportunities.” (Prospero)</i>
	Support network	<i>“...there was a lot like that song, Jesus take the wheel... we prayed on it quite a lot, my wife and I.” (Othello)</i>
	Social network	<i>“We moved to a new place, no family, no friends, no connections, it’s rough finding a job without a circle of trust, you know?” (Othello)</i>

Group Experiential Themes

Identity Conflict

The qualitative analysis of participants' experiences in the context of career transition coaching highlighted the intricacies of shifting from military to civilian careers. Participants expressed the challenge of losing their defined military identity and embracing a new civilian identity. According to the participants, career transition coaches were pivotal in this process, offering practical guidance on career aspects like navigating job interviews and facilitating a deeper introspective journey. They supported veterans in processing the psychological challenges of leaving structured military life and redefining their personal values, skills, and interests for civilian roles. Thus, the coaching experience was instrumental in career change and enabling participants to redefine their identities, marking a transformative phase in their lives.

Identity Transformation

Participants described a multifaceted identity transformation experience during their transition to civilian life as they engaged with their career transition coach. They felt that transitioning from the military was not only a change in the profession but a profound shift in self-perception and societal role. Several participants described their experience as a metaphor, likening leaving their military uniform behind to parting with their identity. Participant Lear, a 48-year-old former Army senior officer with 28 years of service, offered profound insights into his journey of identity transformation, sharing extensive self-reflection throughout the interview.

“Transitioning from military to civilian life is more than a career change; it’s an identity evolution. You’re not just swapping uniforms; you’re redefining who you are in a world that operates on different rules.” (Lear)

For participant Ophelia, a 41-year-old former Navy mid-level officer with 16 years of service, the struggle with not being in uniform meant leaving who she was behind and transforming into something new. Her career transition coach provided guidance, framing it as an opportunity to transform that identity into something new and equally meaningful in the civilian sector.

“The uniform was just the outer shell of who I really was. Taking that off meant I was no longer complete and had to be someone else.” (Ophelia)

Regaining Confidence

The journey of regaining confidence emerged as a critical subtheme under the broader umbrella of identity conflict. Participants recounted feelings of uncertainty and diminished self-assurance as they navigated the transition from military to civilian employment. The role of career transition coaching in this context was crucial in rebuilding their confidence, as it provided a structured approach to understanding and valuing their military experiences in new civilian contexts.

Participant Sebastian, a 37-year-old former Army mid-level special operations officer with 14 years of service, encapsulated the regaining confidence sentiment. He described his initial foray into the civilian job market as daunting, feeling undervalued and misunderstood. His career transition coach played a pivotal role in reframing his military skills in a way that was both comprehensible and valuable to civilian employers.

“My mental and emotional state was one of fear that I couldn’t find a job. My coach helped me take a chill pill” (Sebastian)

Similarly, participant Claudius, a 42-year-old former Navy mid-level officer, reflected on his struggle with confidence, particularly during job interviews. He felt his military background was a hindrance rather than an asset until his coach intervened.

“At first, I thought my military experience was a setback in the civilian world. I thought civilians interviewing for the same job had the advantage.” (Claudius)

These narratives underscore the pivotal role of career transition coaching in helping veterans regain confidence. The coaches provided a critical bridge in translating military skills to civilian terms and bolstering the veterans’ self-belief. This process was essential for participants to view their military experience as an asset, facilitating a smoother and more confident transition into civilian employment.

Navigating Cultural Differences

The final subtheme within the group experiential theme of identity conflict, was navigating cultural differences and prominently featured in the narratives of the military veterans transitioning to civilian employment. This theme was particularly salient among participants who had spent significant years in service, deeply ingraining military culture into their professional personas. Career transition coaching emerged as a crucial facilitator in bridging the cultural divide between military and civilian work environments.

Participant Duncan, a 42-year-old former Air Force mid-level officer with 17 years of service, articulated the challenge of adjusting to a civilian communication style, which was less hierarchical and more collaborative than what he was accustomed to in the military.

“In the Air Force, communication was straightforward and structured. In my current job, I had to learn the nuances of a more indirect and inclusive communication style. My

transition coach did mention I would need to adapt to this new way of interaction by asking people how their day was going before I talk to them about work stuff.” (Duncan)

Similarly, Ophelia and Lear reflected on their struggle to understand the less formal and more fluid professional interactions in the civilian sector.

“Coming from a Navy background, where formality was ingrained in us, adapting to a casual corporate culture was initially disorienting. My coach played a big role in guiding me through these unspoken norms and helping me find my footing.” (Ophelia)

“I didn’t even know what company culture was; I didn’t know each organization had a different organizational culture; it blew my mind that I could find a job where I could be ok based on culture fit.” (Lear)

These experiences accentuate the role of career transition coaching in assisting veterans with the cultural adaptation required in civilian workplaces. Coaches provided insights and strategies to navigate these new social and professional landscapes, enabling veterans to reconcile their military identities with their emerging civilian roles. This support was crucial for successfully integrating into civilian employment, allowing them to leverage their unique military experiences while adapting to a different cultural environment.

Redefining Purpose

A central narrative in the experiences of military veterans transitioning to civilian employment was a sense of redefining their purpose. This theme encapsulates the veterans’ journey towards finding new meaning and direction in their post-military lives. Under this overarching theme, three critical subthemes emerged: finding meaningful employment, discovering personal passion, and aligning passion and career goals.

Finding Meaningful Employment

For several participants, finding meaningful and fulfilling employment was a significant aspect of their transition. Participant Viola, a 34-year-old former Army non-commissioned officer with 12 years of service, expressed the importance of this aspect, while Othello, a 31-year-old former Army non-commissioned officer with 11 years of service, highlighted the emotional aspect of this search:

“After leaving the Army, I didn’t just want a job for the sake of having a job. I wanted something that felt meaningful, where I could make a difference just like I felt I did in the military.” (Viola)

“Finding a job that spoke to me and gave me a sense of purpose was something I was looking for during my transition. It wasn’t just about the paycheck; it was about feeling that I was contributing to something bigger.” (Othello)

Discovering Personal Passion

The subtheme, discovering personal passion, reflects the veterans’ journey towards understanding and pursuing their interests. Participant Prospero, a 39-year-old former Navy junior officer with 12 years of service, shared his experience:

“In the Navy, my path was defined. Transitioning to civilian life gave me the opportunity to explore what I truly enjoyed and was passionate about. I had to really dig deep to figure that out with my coach and mentors.” (Prospero)

Participant Falstaff, a 31-year-old former Army non-commissioned officer with 12 years of service, echoed this sentiment:

“The transition was a chance for self-discovery. It was about figuring out what I loved doing and what was important to me rather than what was important to the Army.”
(Falstaff)

Aligning Passion and Career Goals

The final subtheme, aligning passion and career goals, involves veterans integrating their newfound passions with their professional aspirations. Sebastian and Claudius, a 42-year-old former Navy mid-level officer, shared similar experiences and described this alignment:

“My transition coach told me how my desire for helping others could translate into a civilian career in non-profits. It took me a while to realize that it could be an option because I didn’t know there were actual jobs in that.” (Sebastian)

“I like cooking, which was a hobby in the Navy, it became the focal point of my career search. Aligning my cooking passion with my career goals led me to apply to the CIA as it’s called, the Culinary Institute of America.” (Claudius)

These narratives illustrate the critical role of redefining purpose in the transition process for military veterans. Finding meaningful employment, discovering personal passions, and aligning these passions with career goals were not just steps in a process but part of a larger journey towards self-fulfillment and identity reconstruction after military service.

Understanding and Articulating Military Skills

Participants unanimously emphasized this theme as a vital element of the transition phase, crucial for effective integration into the civilian workforce. Participants believed they possessed robust skills and experiences; however, articulating these in a civilian context was challenging. A significant hurdle in this process was discerning which military skills and achievements could be relevant and transferable to civilian employment. Addressing this challenge involved decoding military-centric language, jargon, and colloquialisms. Participants described how their career transition coaches assisted in navigating this challenge. One

participant (Lear) addressed this group experiential theme and its subthemes in his response to how his military attributes influenced his experience with career transition coaching.

Lear acknowledges the challenges in recognizing how military skills could align with traditional business roles:

“My coach did his best to help me understand where he thought my skills had parallels to business and how I could emphasize those.” (Lear)

This statement reflects the veteran participants’ difficulty in identifying which aspects of their military experience were applicable and valuable in civilian employment, a key component of the subtheme of identifying transferable skills. The quote also delves into the subtheme of translating military accomplishments. Lear initially struggled to articulate his military experience in a way that resonated within the civilian business context:

“To complicate this further, I did not want to transition into the defense industry, I wanted to be in traditional business, and I didn’t have the traditional civilian skills that business was looking for.” (Lear)

This struggle highlights a common experience among the veteran participants who had significant achievements in the military but found it challenging to express these in terms that were meaningful and recognized in the civilian job market. His response continued to express the challenge of communicating military experiences in the civilian context. Translating military skills and accomplishments often involved moving beyond military-specific language and terminology, a crucial aspect of decoding military jargon. The quote continues with a powerful reflection on the transition process:

“But the truth is I didn’t get it until I worked at a startup and had to use what I knew while also learning on the job. Then after walking the walk, I started to comprehend just how many parallels there really were.” (Lear)

This part of the narrative underscores the experiential nature of fully understanding and articulating military skills in a civilian environment. It also highlights the veteran’s role in assisting others with similar transitions:

“Since then, I have shared those experiences with transitioning veterans when connected with them.” (Lear)

This sharing of knowledge and experience is vital in helping other veterans navigate the complex path from military to civilian employment. Finally, the response concludes by echoing the group’s experiential theme of understanding and articulating military skills:

“We are much better suited for the transition than we know, but it takes time to understand the operating environment and put the pieces together.” (Lear)

The statement relates to the concept of decoding military jargon within the broader context of transitioning from the military to civilian employment in that the suggestion can be seen as a reference to the need for veterans to familiarize themselves with the civilian workplace culture, which includes understanding the language and communication styles used in this new environment. Decoding military jargon was a part of this process for the participants, who were often accustomed to a specific set of terminologies and communication styles in the military, which may not directly translate to the civilian sector. Thus, understanding the *operating environment* also involves learning how veterans must adapt their communication style and language for a civilian audience.

Identifying Transferable Skills

This subtheme centers on participants recognizing their military-acquired skills – leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and strategic thinking – as transferable to civilian roles. However, the challenges resided in identifying these skills as transferable and relevant to the type of role they sought in civilian employment. Participants reported that this process necessitated introspection and the assistance of their coaches, who assisted in reframing their military experiences as valuable for their new professional paths. Participants Portia and Iago, both former Marines, senior officers, and with over two decades of service, each reported their experience identifying transferable skills:

“I don’t know if I was indoctrinated or drinking the Kool-Aid, but I thought my leadership skills were enough, and I could jump into a VP role or something like that and just lead. My coach told me that was an applicable skill but needed to be combined with a hard skill depending on the industry, and I began to see how much my technical skills played a role in accentuating my soft skills.” (Portia)

“I began to re-write my resume based on what (name of coach) said because all I was focusing on was my leading, problem-solving, and things like that. Everyone could claim that, but there was no measurable thing identified in my resume other than I led a bunch of Marines to do a lot of hard tasks, so I can do that here also, and it wasn’t cutting it or relevant for any job.” (Iago)

Translating Military Accomplishments

Participants expressed a profound journey of emotional challenges and psychological distress in that they felt their military accomplishments were undervalued and misunderstood. The subtheme of translating military accomplishments was a significant challenge expressed by

participants. Participant Claudius, a 42-year-old mid-level officer and veteran of the Navy, expressed his experience this way:

“The complexities of the missions I led managing teams under high-pressure situations seemed to lose their essence when I tried to explain it in civilian terms. It was hard to convey the depth of my responsibilities in a way civilian employers understood. The weight of war-time duties felt heavier than when I read them on paper.” (Claudius)

This quote accentuates a dual challenge for veterans: firstly, the intrinsic difficulty in translating highly specialized military roles into civilian job equivalents, and secondly, the struggle to communicate the depth and value of these accomplishments in a civilian context. Despite these challenges, participants shared strategies that helped translate their military accomplishments. Transition career coaching was frequently mentioned as a pivotal aid in the process. Coaches assisted veterans in identifying and translating their military accomplishments. For instance, Prospero reflected,

“My coach helped me see that my experience in logistical planning wasn’t just about mobbing supplies. It was about strategic planning, efficiency, and team management. She helped me translate these in terms of business language.” (Prospero)

Translating military accomplishments revealed a complex interplay of practical, cognitive, and emotional challenges veterans face. The findings suggested that effective career transition coaching support should focus on the mechanical aspects of the transition and the process’s emotional and psychological dimensions.

Decoding Military Jargon

Military jargon was a recurring theme for veterans when trying to understand and articulate their military skills. Military jargon for the participants comprised various technical

terms, lexicons, and specific phrases deeply ingrained in their daily communication with other service members. Participants expressed that while this vernacular was second nature within the military, it posed a barrier in civilian interactions. Sebastian stated:

“I didn’t realize how much my resume was filled with military jargon until my coach pointed it out to me. It was like I was speaking another language. My coach helped me rewrite it to be universally understood; for instance, we changed, commanded a platoon to say, managed a team of 40 personnel.” (Sebastian)

Sebastian’s statement showed the initial lack of awareness about how military jargon permeated veterans’ communication styles and how it could lead to misunderstanding or lack of appreciation for their skills in the civilian job market. The process of decoding military language expressed by the participants was not just about simplifying language but also about finding equivalent expressions in the civilian sector that accurately conveyed the veterans’ skills and experiences. Participants found that career coaching played a crucial role in being more conscious of military-specific language and reducing frustration and undervalued feelings.

Social and Community Integration

The group experiential theme of social and community integration emerged as a critical element in the experiences of military veterans transitioning to civilian employment through career coaching. This study revealed how participants’ successful integration into civilian roles was significantly influenced by their involvement in three key networks – professional, support, and social. The involvement in these networks was intertwined with confidence in their ability to adapt their military skills and identities to the norms and expectations of civilian workplaces.

Professional Network

The subtheme of professional networks revealed a complex interplay of challenges and opportunities for veterans. Participants described how establishing a professional network outside the military was daunting and essential. Participant Lear framed the challenge this way:

“The discussions were broad and covered everything from who I was to what I wanted to do and how to get there. This included doing multiple personality assessments, developing a value proposition, resume development, interview preparation, and exposure to his and the foundation’s networks.” (Lear)

This sentiment was echoed by other participants, underscoring the importance of establishing professional networks before separating from military service:

“...if you’re this 18-year-old and now 38, or commissioned at 22 and now you’re 42, right, whatever, that network doesn’t exist...” (Iago)

However, participants also reported that career transition coaching provided them with strategies to navigate these professional landscapes effectively.

“I felt like I was wandering around – my coach shared his professional network, but most of it was not relevant to what I wanted to do, or the available jobs were not there. He did show me ways to talk to those I did know and how to leverage linked-in search tools to connect with others, this was a useful strategy, and it made a web of connections that I was actually able to use.” (Viola)

This coaching aspect helped them leverage their unique skills and experiences, resonating with the findings of Smith and True (2014), who highlighted the importance of tailored career guidance in successful veteran transitions.

Support Network

Regarding support networks, participants frequently mentioned the significance of having a system of emotional and practical support during their transition. Participants described that emotional support from peers and family members played a crucial role in their successful reintegration. Participant Duncan provided a compelling account of his experience with a faith-based support network. He detailed how this specific form of support was not just beneficial but essential for maintaining his well-being and a positive emotional state.

“Well, I’m a Christian, can I share that with you? I have a group that prays for me and for my family. We all pray whenever we get together, men’s group and bible study, that type of stuff. It’s a big part of what gives me strength and keeps me accountable to do my part. My coach, who’s a believer, we pray after our sessions. It’s probably more important, my support group is, than networking. This is for my state of mind, you know, for my peace in letting go and trusting things will be as they need to be.” (Duncan)

From a biblical perspective, the importance of support networks in successfully reintegrating veterans into civilian life is not only a practical or psychological necessity but also a reflection of the Christian values of community, mutual support, and the shared responsibility to uplift and bear one another’s burdens. This concept is echoed in Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, which states, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.” (*Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982). This scripture underscores the value of companionship and support, a theme that resonates with the experiences of the study’s participants. For example, Participant Othello emphasized his nuclear family’s critical role in his support network, illustrating how these personal connections were instrumental in his transition process.

“I mean, there was a lot like that song, Jesus Take the Wheel. Oh yeah, I mean, we moved to a completely new place, no family, connections, no friend connections, we literally went into a place where we were trying to run away from the military right, look, you know, we prayed on it quite a lot, my wife and I. I found myself having to accept a certain degree of uncertainty about where God is leading me. While I’m not entirely comfortable with this process and often struggle to understand it, I’ve come to realize that there must be a reason I’ve been brought back to this place.” (Othello).

The veterans’ narratives in this study regarding a support network emphasized the critical role support networks play in facilitating the complexities of transitioning from military to civilian roles. This emphasis on the necessity of support networks was pronounced even in receiving career transition coaching, underscoring the idea that while professional guidance is beneficial, holistic support from these networks remains crucial for navigating this significant life change effectively.

Social Network

The participants prominently highlighted the significance of social networks in the transition from military to civilian life, further enriching the theme of social and community integration. These networks, extending beyond professional and support circles, played a vital role in the veterans’ reintegration process. Participant Lear’s experience exemplifies this, as he noted:

“Social networks connected me with various personalities who were willing to offer advice/mentorship/coaching. Including veterans who had successfully transitioned into various industries, seasoned business professionals, and senior government leaders. All of whom were willing to share their time with a transitioning veteran. In some way, all these interactions

contributed to my successful transition as the information shared with me sped up my learning curve and expanded the network I could call upon.” (Lear)

Lear’s sentiment was echoed by other participants, who found value in the diverse perspectives and experiences within their social networks. Participant Viola reflected on the emotional and informational support she received:

“Joining community groups and attending social events really opened doors for me. It wasn’t just about finding job opportunities, but about understanding the civilian way of life. I met people who had been in my shoes, and they guided me through this maze. It’s more than just networking; it’s about building relationships that nurture you as a person.” (Viola)

Similarly, Participant Portia highlighted the unexpected benefits of social interactions:

“At first, I underestimated the power of just talking to people outside my usual circle. My coach insisted so, engaging in conversations at recruiting events, job fairs, and even church gatherings led to insights and opportunities I never would have found otherwise. It’s these informal chats that sometimes gave me the best advice and the most surprising connections.” (Portia)

In summary, the role of social networks in the transition of military veterans to civilian life was multifaceted, offering practical assistance in job opportunities, emotional support, and a deeper understanding of civilian culture. These networks served as a bridge, helping veterans navigate and thrive in their new environment.

Theme Summary

The analysis of the narratives and reflections provided by the participants in this study of military veteran career transition coaching experiences offers a comprehensive understanding of

the multifaceted journey from military service to civilian employment. The group experiential themes identified were identity conflict, redefining purpose, understanding and articulating military skills, and social and community integration; each encompassed a range of subthemes that collectively described experiences of transformation and adaptation as recounted by the participants.

Identity conflict materialized as veterans struggled with adjusting their self-perception during the shift from military to civilian roles, involving significant self-redefinition. More than a professional change, it represented a significant journey of self-redefinition and identity transformation as delineated in social identity theory (Davis et al., 2019). The transition of U.S. veterans to civilian life, particularly in redefining their purpose, was a complex process that involved various aspects, including emotional, social, and professional challenges. Thus, the theme of redefining purpose emerged through coaching as veterans searched for new meaning and direction after service, including finding meaningful work and aligning personal passions with career goals. As documented in previous research (Hart & Thompson, 2016; Patterson et al., 2019; Westwood et al., 2010), transitioning programs, including coaching, significantly assisted veterans in redefining their purpose post-military service.

Understanding and articulating military skills addressed veterans' difficulties in translating their military skills to civilian contexts, encompassing skill transferability and language decoding. These findings echo Griffin and Gilbert's work (2015), which noted the difficulties veterans face in translating military skills to civilian job markets. Finally, social and community integration highlighted the importance of professional support and social networks in supporting veterans' successful civilian life transition, providing job opportunities and emotional and cultural support. This theme aligned with the findings of Willer et al. (1993), who

accentuated the importance of social networks in productive activities, such as employment, in the integration process. Similarly, Ware et al. (2007) further underscored how the role of societal networks promotes a sense of connectedness and citizenship, which participants in this study disclosed.

Evidence of Quality

In this qualitative IPA study, meticulous attention was paid to ensure the trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of data collected from 11 U.S. veterans about their experiences with career transition coaching during their shift from military service to civilian employment. The study's adherence to rigorous quality assurance procedures and validity is detailed below.

Trustworthiness

This study's trustworthiness was ensured through intentional methodologies and ethical practices. Utilizing snowball sampling, as highlighted by Gay et al. (2012), the research involved organizations providing transition services to veterans in distributing recruitment letters, recruiting relevant participants, and enhancing credibility. Additionally, ethical compliance was rigorously maintained by securing approval (see Appendix A) from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring the study adhered to the approved high ethical standards throughout its execution.

Credibility

In this study, credibility was upheld through strategies that enhanced the authenticity of its findings following the principles outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2013), which involved ensuring the truthfulness of data. The study utilized audio-recording of interviews and verbatim transcription (see Appendix G), a practice that supports accuracy in capturing participant

responses. Crucially, member checking was employed, wherein participants reviewed their interview transcripts for accuracy, aligning with the guidelines recommended by Creswell and Guetterman (2019), Lichtman (2023), and Merriam and Tisdell (2016;2015). This member-checking process reinforced the data's accuracy and ensured participants' perspectives were faithfully and authentically represented. Such attention to methodological rigor, ethical conduct, and participant involvement in data verification fortified the study's credibility, ensuring its findings were credible.

Dependability

This study demonstrated dependability by adhering to the principles outlined by Miles et al. (2014). The research process was consistent, marked by defined objectives and a transparent approach to data collection. Selection criteria for veterans were explicitly outlined, and I used a semi-structured interview guide to safeguard data gathering. Every interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim, upholding a high standard of accuracy. Systematic coding and data analysis were conducted, carefully revisiting the data to ensure accurate interpretations. The study further strengthened its dependability by incorporating participant feedback for theme validation, a method that aligns with the recommendations of Lichtman (2023) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016;2015) for replicability and adherence to best practices. Each step of the study was thoroughly documented, ensuring that the process could be replicated in future research and that the findings remained consistent and contextually applicable, as advocated by Lincoln and Guba (2007) and Dabengwa et al. (2020). This meticulous approach ensured that the study authentically represented veterans' experiences, thus achieving a high level of dependability.

Confirmability

The study's confirmability was ensured through various methods. It followed Harman's (2022) guidelines and used bracketing (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to reduce researcher biases, focusing on genuine participant experiences. A reflective journal (Appendix H) documented assumptions and biases, promoting reflexivity and transparency as recommended by Miles et al. (2014). Triangulation of data from multiple sources, as advised by Patton (1999) and principles from Denzin and Lincoln (2013) and Lincoln and Guba (2007), further strengthened confirmability by verifying that the findings truly represented participants' perspectives. These steps collectively guaranteed the study's credibility, reliability, and independent verifiability, aligning with the high standards of confirmability in qualitative research. Each veteran's interview transcript review ensured the accuracy of their perspectives, adding an authenticity layer to the study and confirming the participants' true reflections in the transcripts.

Validity

This study's validity was established through methodological rigor and comprehensive documentation. Implementing member checking, as advocated by Harman (2022) and McGaha & D'Urso (2019), allowed participants to affirm or challenge the researcher's interpretations, ensuring the findings authentically represent their experiences. The research process gained integrity through consistent alignment with participants' narratives, as Pringle et al. (2011) recommended, and reflexivity (see Appendix H) to maintain objectivity. The involvement of a dissertation chair and committee offered an impartial assessment, enhancing the study's validity through meticulous evaluation and feedback. A record of every aspect of the research, from raw data to synthesis processes, fostered transparency and replicability. Lastly, the study acknowledges the significant role of the researcher's perspective, as highlighted by Creswell

(2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016;2015), using non-participant observation and ongoing self-reflection to mitigate bias. Collectively, these strategies assure a credible, richly detailed, and reliable contribution to qualitative research literature.

This qualitative IPA study followed established quality assurance procedures, including member checks, triangulation, adherence to recognized criteria, and thorough documentation. This comprehensive approach underscores the study's dedication to presenting a credible, dependable, and confirmable understanding of the transition from military service to civilian employment through career transition coaching.

Summary

In this study on military veteran career transition coaching experiences, key findings revealed that veterans expressed significant benefits from career transition coaching, facilitating their adjustment from military to civilian employment. The study's findings indicate that veterans describe their experience with career transition coaching as critical in their shift from military to civilian roles. The emphasis on personalized and empowering coaching experiences aligns with the veterans' descriptions of their coaching experiences. This personalization is crucial in addressing each veteran's unique challenges, including cultural barriers and emotional well-being, which are central to their experiences with career transition coaching.

The impact of career transition coaching on adapting from military to civilian careers is significant, as described by the participants. The coaching facilitated a crucial identity shift and role transition, as understood through social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1978) and role theory (Merton, 1957). Enhanced confidence and self-efficacy, key outcomes of effective coaching, are vital for veterans to develop a new social identity and adapt to civilian

roles. The study highlights that coaching not only aids in skill transferability but also supports the psychological and social aspects of transitioning into a new career and societal role.

As reported by veterans, aligning career goals with personal values and beliefs was a significant factor in the success of career transition coaching. The study underscores the importance of this alignment, resonating with the principles of role theory. When career transition coaching aligns with a veteran's values and beliefs, it enhances career satisfaction and facilitates a more meaningful and successful transition. This alignment was crucial in ensuring that veterans' new career roles and identities were congruent with their self-perceptions and life goals.

In conclusion, the study's findings, interpreted through the perspective of social identity theory and role theory, provide comprehensive insights into the experiences of U.S. veterans with career transition coaching. The findings address the research questions by highlighting the importance of personalized coaching, the impact of coaching on adapting to civilian careers, and the crucial role of aligning career goals with personal values and beliefs. These insights contribute to the existing literature and offer practical implications for enhancing career transition support for military veterans. Chapter 5 will summarize the study's findings, discussing them in the context of existing literature. The chapter will also draw conclusions, explore the implications of the research, examine its limitations, and suggest directions for future research and practice in this field.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

This study was initiated to explore and analyze the experiences of military veterans who undertook career transition coaching as they transitioned from military service to civilian employment. This chapter serves as a synthesis of the research findings. It begins with a summary of the key findings, followed by a discussion of the findings, comparing them with existing literature to contextualize how veterans experience career transition coaching. The chapter then outlines the practical, theoretical, and policy implications, discussing how the insights gained can inform the development of effective transition programs and influence veteran support policies. Next, the chapter acknowledges the study's limitations, evaluates the research's scope and applicability, and makes recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with a succinct summary of the study, reinforcing its contributions to understanding veterans' career transitions and the potential benefits of targeted career transition coaching interventions.

Summary of Findings

This study derived key findings from four themes and 12 subthemes developed through participants' interviews, which aligned with three research questions guiding the study. Table 3 presents the themes according to the research questions. By examining these themes in connection with the research questions, the study provides in-depth insights into the role of career transition coaching in assisting veterans as they adapt to civilian employment. The findings emphasized the complexity of the career transition process and highlighted the necessity for personalized, comprehensive support systems.

RQ1: Experience with Career Transition Coaching

U. S. veterans described career transition coaching as vital for navigating the shift from military to civilian employment. They highlighted the importance of personalized guidance in overcoming cultural barriers and enhancing their emotional well-being. The coaching was crucial for identity shift and role transition, fostering confidence and self-efficacy and aiding in the psychological and social adjustments needed for successful career transitions.

RQ:1 Thematic Findings

Identity Conflict. Veterans faced challenges in shedding their military identity and assimilating into civilian life, requiring support to develop a new sense of self.

Redefining Purpose. Participants embarked on a journey to find new meaning and direction in their post-military careers, seeking roles that resonated with their values and aspirations.

RQ2: Impact on Adapting from Military to Civilian Careers

The impact of career transition coaching was significant in facilitating the veterans' adaptation to civilian careers. Coaching provided essential support in translating military skills to civilian job markets and navigating the civilian work culture. Career transition coaching played a pivotal role in helping veterans articulate their skills and achievements in a manner relevant to civilian employers, bridging the gap between military experiences and civilian career requirements.

RQ2: Thematic Findings

Understanding and Articulating Military Skills. Veterans struggled with translating their military skills to civilian contexts, highlighting the need for career transition coaching in communicating their experiences in terms relevant to civilian employers.

RQ3: Aligning of Career Goals with Personal Values and Beliefs

Aligning career goals with personal values and beliefs was identified as a critical factor for the success of career transition coaching. Veterans emphasized that coaching those who respect and integrate their personal values and beliefs into the career planning process leads to more fulfilling and successful career transitions. This alignment was key to ensuring that veterans' new careers aligned with their self-identity and life goals.

RQ3: Thematic Findings

Social and Community Integration. Successful integration into civilian life was facilitated by building new professional networks and adapting to civilian workplace cultures, underscoring the importance of social connections in the transition process.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings illuminate U.S. military veterans' multifaceted challenges and experiences during their transition to civilian employment, underscoring career transition coaching's essential role. This research reveals a complex interplay of psychological, social, and personal dimensions by exploring identity conflict, redefining purpose, articulating military skills in civilian terms, and aligning career goals with personal values. These findings emphasize the necessity for personalized, comprehensive support systems that address the practical aspects of career transition and the psychological and emotional adjustments required for successful integration into civilian life.

The themes of identity conflict and the struggle for role transition resonate with the role theory discussed by Anglin et al. (2022) and Merton (1957), highlighting the veterans' experiences of role strain like those posited within role theory. The emphasis on social identity shifts aligns with McKinley et al.'s (2014) findings on the importance of social identity for

veterans, affirming social identity theory's relevance to understanding transition challenges. The significance of aligning career transitions with personal values echoes the biblical and psychological literature's emphasis on purposeful work and identity, suggesting a convergence between theoretical and spiritual understandings of transitions (Brown, 1995; *Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, 1982, Genesis 12:1).

This study introduces the novel insight that career transition coaching can significantly ameliorate role strain and identity conflicts, a perspective not extensively covered in the previous literature. The research adds a new dimension by linking the psychological adjustment process with biblical transition principles, offering an integrated view not commonly found in existing literature on veterans' career transitions. The study illustrates how veterans' career transitions can be viewed through a lens that combines psychological theories with spiritual principles by integrating the findings with the biblical foundations in Chapter 2. The alignment of career goals with personal values and beliefs, as well as the emphasis on identity reconstruction and finding a new purpose, mirrors the biblical narratives of transition and purpose.

The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role and social identity theories by applying these frameworks to the context of military-to-civilian career transitions. It extends role theory by demonstrating how career transition coaching can mitigate role conflict and strain, offering practical strategies for managing the complexities of role transitions. Similarly, by highlighting the role of coaching in navigating social identity shifts, the study enriches our understanding of social identity theory in the context of significant life changes.

This study bridges the gap between psychological theories and biblical principles, offering a comprehensive understanding of military veterans' career transition processes. It advances the theoretical discourse by providing empirical evidence of the efficacy of career

transition coaching. Additionally, it enriches the spiritual understanding of work and transition, thereby contributing to developing more effective, values-aligned support systems for veterans.

Implications

This study provides insights for enhancing veterans' transitions to civilian careers, emphasizing the importance of collaboration across sectors such as psychology, veteran support services, and organizational development. It highlights the need for support from psychologists, career consultants, VA and DoD programs, and community organizations to improve transition outcomes. Industrial/Organizational psychologists could play an essential role in this endeavor by facilitating such a multidisciplinary approach, which may aid the nearly 200,000 transitioning veterans annually in reintegration and enhance the broader community and workplace environments.

Research/Theory

Theoretically, this study enriches social identity and role theory by detailing the multifarious psychological journey of identity transformation and role transition experienced by veterans. This exploration provides a deeper understanding of veterans' challenges in redefining their social roles and identities upon entering civilian life. Moreover, the research contributes to the discourse on skill transferability, highlighting veterans' difficulties articulating their military experiences within civilian job markets and suggesting avenues for enhancing career development and transition theories.

Practice/Consulting

Practically, the findings underscore the necessity for personalized coaching that addresses both the tangible aspects of career transition, such as resume writing and interview skills, and the psychological adjustments, including identity crises and rebuilding confidence. These findings

highlight the role of psychologists and career consultants in developing interventions to facilitate veterans' adaptation to civilian life. Additionally, the insights from the study can guide Veterans Administration (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) programs to improve their support structures, ensuring that veterans' career goals align with their values and beliefs for a holistic transition experience.

For Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychologists, the study's implications extend to organizational integration, career development support, psychological well-being, and policy advocacy. I/O psychologists can develop cultural competency training and lead organizational change initiatives to foster inclusive environments that value veterans' unique backgrounds and skills. Career coaching programs and mentorship schemes designed by I/O psychologists can facilitate veterans' professional development and ease their social integration into civilian workplaces. The study recognizes the psychological impact of career transition and advocates for tailored mental health services and resilience training to support veterans' adjustment. Furthermore, these findings can help position I/O psychologists to conduct research that informs best practices and policy development for supporting veterans in the workplace and advocating for organizational policies that enhance veterans' career development and well-being.

Community Organizations

Churches and non-profit organizations are also identified as crucial in supporting veterans' transition through community integration opportunities and emotional support networks, reinforcing the significance of these networks in veterans' reintegration. These entities can play an important role in the reintegration process, offering veterans a sense of belonging and practical support. For example, community organizations may facilitate social reintegration

through events, gatherings, and volunteer opportunities, helping veterans build social networks and strengthen community ties.

Limitations

This study encountered limitations that reiterate and extend the initial considerations outlined in the delimitations, assumptions, and limitations sections. These limitations are crucial for understanding the scope and applicability of the study's findings. The limitations underscore the necessity for cautious interpretation and application of the study's findings.

Restated Limitations

The study exclusively concentrated on veterans' experiences with career transition coaching, excluding other forms of support such as mentorship or vocational training. While this allowed for a detailed exploration of the coaching's impact, it also limited the study's ability to compare the effectiveness of different transition support mechanisms. Additionally, the study assumed that participants provided truthful and accurate reflections of their experiences. The potential for participants to alter their responses to appear in a more favorable light is acknowledged as a limitation. This bias could skew the authenticity of the data collected, impacting the study's findings, reliability, and validity. This assumption is a common limitation in qualitative research, where the depth of insight relies on the participants' willingness and ability to self-report honestly and introspectively (Larson, 2019; Lauterbach, 2018; Yamagata & Miura, 2022).

Newly Identified Limitations

Factors such as branch of military service, rank, length of service, and the type of civilian roles pursued post-transition could significantly influence the coaching experience. Consequently, these factors represent limitations to the extent that the study's findings can be

generalized across all veterans, as the transition experience may vary significantly based on these individual characteristics and choices. Additionally, the study's design did not allow for examining the longitudinal impact and long-term effects of career transition coaching on veterans' employment outcomes and satisfaction. The cross-sectional nature of the research provides a snapshot in time, which may not capture the full extent of the coaching's benefits or challenges over the longer term.

Without exploring alternative support mechanisms in parallel and the comparative effectiveness of coaching, the study cannot conclusively determine the relative effectiveness of career transition coaching compared to other forms of support. This limitation restricts stakeholders' ability to make fully informed decisions regarding implementing transition support services. Correspondingly, the study assumed a standard practice of career transition coaching without delving into variations in coaching methodologies and their potential differential impacts on veteran outcomes. The effectiveness of coaching could significantly vary depending on the approach, duration, and intensity of the coaching provided, which the study did not explore.

Finally, the psychological readiness of veterans for the civilian workforce and how this readiness interacts with the effectiveness of career transition coaching was not examined. Psychological factors, including resilience, military identity, psychological trauma, and mental health challenges, could significantly influence the transition process and the perceived value of coaching.

Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations of this study highlight areas for future research to explore, including longitudinal studies, comparative analyses of different support mechanisms, and the exploration of psychological factors influencing transition success. These recommendations aim to address

gaps in the current study, expand understanding, and enhance support for veterans during their transition.

Future research should compare the effectiveness of career transition coaching with other transition support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs, vocational training, and educational opportunities. Comparative studies can help identify the most beneficial support types or combinations for veterans transitioning to civilian roles. Investigating the long-term effects of career transition coaching on veterans' employment outcomes, job satisfaction, and overall well-being would provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of coaching services. Longitudinal research could track veterans over several years to assess the lasting benefits or challenges post-transition.

Future studies should explore the role of psychological readiness, military identity, and mental health in the transition process. Understanding how these psychological and cultural factors interact with career transition coaching can offer deeper insights into tailoring support services to meet individual veterans' needs effectively. Incorporating the feedback and perspectives of employers who have hired veterans can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of career transition coaching from the employer's viewpoint. These insights could include understanding employers' perceptions of veterans' preparedness for civilian roles and the value added by coaching to the transition process.

Investigating the barriers that prevent some veterans from accessing career transition coaching, including awareness, availability, cost, and perceived stigma, could inform strategies to make these services more accessible and acceptable to a broader range of veterans. By addressing these recommendations, future research can significantly enhance the transition

support provided to veterans, ensuring they are better prepared for and supported in their civilian employment endeavors.

Summary

This study offers significant insights into the experiences of U.S. military veterans transitioning to civilian employment, underscoring the crucial role of career transition coaching in facilitating this process. Through detailed interviews, the research unveils the complexity of the transition, divided into themes related to the experience with career transition coaching, the impact of adapting from military to civilian careers, and the alignment of career goals with personal values and beliefs. Veterans described the coaching as essential for navigating cultural barriers, enhancing emotional well-being, and aiding in social identity and role transitions. The findings highlight veterans' challenges in shedding their military identity, redefining their purpose, and translating military skills to civilian contexts. Moreover, aligning career goals with personal values for a successful transition is emphasized, indicating that coaching tailored to veterans' values yields more satisfying results.

This study underscores the multifaceted implications of facilitating veterans' transition from military to civilian life, both theoretically and practically. It expands on social identity and role theory by examining veterans' identity transformation and role transition, highlighting the crucial role of career transition coaching in reducing role strain and identity conflicts. It advocates for personalized coaching that caters to the tangible and psychological aspects of career transitions, suggesting a collaborative approach involving psychologists, career consultants, and programs by VA, DoD, and community organizations to bolster support. Specifically, Industrial/Organizational psychologists are identified as vital for veterans' reintegration into civilian workplaces through cultural competency training and mental health

services. Equally, community organizations play a key role in emotional support and integration. The study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive support system for veterans, offering a framework for enhancing future transition efforts by addressing practical and emotional challenges.

The transition from military to civilian life is not merely a change of jobs but a profound identity shift. This study suggests that career transition coaching is a critical facilitator in this identity reintegration, offering practical career advice and a conduit for psychological adjustment and social support. This study demonstrates that career transition coaching is an indispensable bridge for U.S. veterans, facilitating a more seamless and successful transition from military service to civilian employment.

REFERENCES

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *JAACP: Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358-1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Ahern, J., Worthen, M., Masters, J., Lippman, S. A., Ozer, E. J., & Moos, R. (2015). The challenges of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans' transition from military to civilian life and approaches to reconnection. *PLOS ONE*, 10(7), e0128599. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0128599>
- Alonso, C., Brandão, C., & Gonçalves, S. P. (2021). Como a pandemia COVID-19 afetou o setor da restauração em Portugal - análise temática qualitativa com o apoio do MaxQDA. *New Trends in Qualitative Research*, 9, 312-319. <https://doi.org/10.36367/ntqr.9.2021.312-319>
- Anglin, A.H., Kincaid, P. A., Short, J. C., & Allen, D. G. (2022). Role theory perspectives: Past, present, and future applications of role theories in management research. *Journal of Management*, 48(6), 1469–1502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221081442>
- Baay, P. E., Van Aken, M. A., van der Lippe, T., & De Ridder, D. T. (2014). Personality moderates the links of social identity with work motivation and job searching. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01044>
- Bahitic, M., Prikshat, V., Burgess, J., & Nankervis, A. (2020). Go back to the beginning: Career development and the challenges of transitioning from the military to civilian employment. *Career Development and Job Satisfaction*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.90647>
- Barnett, A., Savic, M., Forbes, D., Best, D., Sandral, E., Bathish, R., Cheetham, A., & Lubman, D. I. (2022). Transitioning to civilian life: The importance of social group engagement

- and identity among Australian defence force veterans. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 56(8), 1025–1033. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00048674211046894>
- Bartee, R. L., & Dooley, L. (2019). African American veterans career transition using the transition goals, plans, success (GPS) program as a model for success. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 5(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v5i1.122>
- Becker, K., Bish, A., Abell, D., McCormack, M., & Smidt, M. (2022). Supporting Australian veteran transition: Career construction through a person-environment fit perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2022.2077127>
- Becker, K., Bish, A., McCormack, M., & Abell, D. (2023). Reconceptualizing identities: veterans' perspectives on career transition challenges. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 34(2), 155–176. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21472>
- Beech, N., Gold, J., & Beech, S. (2017). Military lives: Coaching transitions. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 41(5), 434–449. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ejtd-02-2017-0010>
- Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent developments in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12(1), 67–92. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.12.080186.000435>
- Biddle, B. J., & Thomas, E. J. (1966). *Role theory; Concepts and research*. Wiley.
- Bilmes, L. J. (2021). The long-term costs of United States care for veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. *Economics*, 113, 54-66.
https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/lbilmes/files/costs_of_war_bilmes_long-term_costs_of_care_for_vets_aug_2021.pdf
- Bond, G. R., Al-Abdulmunem, M., Drake, R. E., Davis, L. L., Ressler, D. R., Meyer, T., Gade, D. M., Frueh, B. C., & Dickman, R. B. (2022a). Transition from military service: Mental

- health and well-being among service members and veterans with service-connected disabilities. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 49(3), 282-298. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11414-021-09778-w>
- Bond, G. R., Al-Abdulmunem, M., Drake, R. E., Davis, L. L., Ressler, D. R., Meyer, T., Gade, D. M., Frueh, B. C., & Dickman, R. B. (2022b). Evaluation of an employment intervention for veterans transitioning from the military: A randomized controlled trial. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 210(5), 321-329. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000001472>
- Bond, G. R., Al-Abdulmunem, Drake, R. E., M., Ressler, D. R., & Gade, D. M. (2022c). A randomized controlled trial of an employment program for veterans transitioning from the military: Two-year outcomes. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 49(6), 1072-1083. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-022-01208-z>
- Bordia, P., Read, S., & Bordia, S. (2020). Retiring: Role identity processes in retirement transition. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 41(5), 445-460. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2438>
- Brown, D. (1995). A values-based approach to facilitating career transitions. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 44(1), 4-11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1995.tb00524.x>
- Brown, R. (2019). The social identity approach: Appraising the tajfellian legacy. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(1), 5-25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12349>
- Burdett, H., Woodhead, C., Iversen, A. C., Wessely, S., Dandeker, C., & Fear, N. T. (2012). “Are you a veteran?” Understanding of the term “veteran” among UK ex-service

personnel. *Armed Forces & Society*, 39(4), 751–759.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x12452033>

Caamal, N. I. (2017). *Followership: Exploring the Meanings that Afghanistan and Iraq War Veterans Ascribe to Following in the Civilian Workplace* (Order No. 10690416).

Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

(1969256263). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/followership-exploring-meanings-that-afghanistan/docview/1969256263/se-2>

Campbell, A. (2023). Warriors in liminality: An alchemical view of the transition from military service to civilian life. *Journal of Jungian Scholarly Studies*, 18(1), 31–44.

<https://doi.org/10.29173/jjs213s>

Campbell, K., Orr, E., Durepos, P., Nguyen, L., Li, L., Whitmore, C., Gehrke, P., Graham, L., & Jack, S. (2021). Reflexive thematic analysis for applied qualitative health research.

Qualitative Report, 26(6), 2011-2028. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.5010>

Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples.

Journal of Research in Nursing, 25(8), 652–661.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>

Candela, A. (2019). Exploring the function of member checking. *Qualitative Report*, 24(3), 619–628. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3726>

Carpenter, R. E., & Silberman, D. (2020). Veteran-civilian career identity conflict: What is human resource development's role? *New Horizons in Adult Education & Human*

Resource Development, 32(3), 35-53. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nha3.20287>

Cassidy, J. M. (2014). Suddenly discharged the combat continued: Eliminating the legal services gap to ensure veterans' success after leaving military service. *The University of Memphis Law Review*, 45(4), 837-885.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1702079594/fulltextPDF/3BDB2D3E3E384AF9PQ/>

[1](#)

Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 10(6), 807-815.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019>

Chaichian, M. A. (2021). Role exit or transition? Continuity and change for retired faculty at a liberal arts midwestern university. *Educational Gerontology*, 47(3), 87–102.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2021.1881867>

Cheesebrough, K. R., Bronzert, J., & Frazier-De La Torre, E. (2020). Leadership, academia, and the role of career coaching. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 10(4), 870–872.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaa057>

Chiang, L., Xu, A., Kim, J., Tang, L., & Manthiou, A. (2016). Investigating festivals and events as social gatherings: The application of social identity theory. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(6), 779–792. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2016.1233927>

Connaughton, H., & Cline, T. (2021). How far can social role valorisation theory help in transition planning for a school-leaver with significant special needs? *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 49(1), 80–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bld.12310>

Translated by Content Engine LLC. (2022, Dec 31). Harvard business review: When changing jobs changes your identity. *CE Noticias Financieras*

<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/harvard-business-review-when-changing-jobs/docview/2759920353/se-2>

Cooper, L., Caddick, N., Godier, L., Cooper, A., & Fossey, M. (2018). Transition from the military into civilian life: An exploration of cultural competence. *Armed Forces & Society, 44*(1), 156-177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x16675965>

Coppola, P. J., & Young, A. F. (2022). Making the difficult career transition: Writing the next chapter during the great resignation or in the future. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.905813>

Corrie, I., & Lawson, R. (2017). Transformative executive coaching: Considerations for an expanding field of research. *Journal of Transformative Learning, 4*(1), 50–59. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/transformative-executive-coaching-considerations/docview/2193156166/se-2>

Crawford, D. C., Cooke Bailey, J. N., & Briggs, F. B. S. (2019). Mind the gap: Resources required to receive, process and interpret research-returned whole genome data. *Human Genetics, 138*(7), 691-701. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00439-019-02033-5>

Crenshaw, J. (2020). Identity work in career transition: Lessons for human resources development in the verification of identity in career transition. *Dissertationn, Georgia State University, 2020*. <https://doi.org/10.57709/18578905>

Creswell, J.W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study. *DBER Speaker Series, 48*.

Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th ed.). Pearson.

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Currie, G., Finn, R., & Martin, G. (2010). Role transition and the interaction of relational and social identity: New nursing roles in the english NHS. *Organization Studies*, *31*(7), 941–961. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840610373199>
- Dabengwa, I. M., Raju, J., & Matingwina, T. (2020). Applying interpretive phenomenological analysis to library and information science research on blended librarianship: A case study. *Library & Information Science Research*, *42*(4), 101055-101055. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2020.101055>
- Daniels, W.C. (2017). A phenomenological study of the process of transitioning out of the military and into civilian life from the acculturation perspective. *UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones*. 3124. <http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/11889683>
- Davenport, K. E., Morgan, N. R., McCarthy, K. J., Bleser, J. A., Aronson, K. R., & Perkins, D. F. (2022). The subjective underemployment experience of post-9/11 veterans after transition to civilian work. *Work (Reading, Mass.)*, *72*(4), 1349-1357. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-210029>
- Davis, J. L., Love, T. P., & Fares, P. (2019). Collective social identity: Synthesizing identity theory and social identity theory using digital data. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *82*(3), 254-273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272519851025>
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

- Diefenbach, T. (2009). Are case studies more than sophisticated storytelling?: Methodological problems of qualitative empirical research mainly based on semi-structured interviews. *Quality & Quantity*, 43(6), 875-894. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-008-9164-0>
- Dierdorff, E. C., Rubin, R. S., & Bachrach, D. G. (2010). Role expectations as antecedents of citizenship and the moderating effects of work context. *Journal of Management*, 38(2), 573-598. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309359199>
- Eaves, T., Allen, J., Rosellini, A., & Bank, N. (2023). Wisdom and veterans: Enhancing the workforce with self-insight, experience, and sound judgement. *Journal of Information & Knowledge Management*, 22(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1142/s0219649223500193>
- Ebner, K. (2020). Promoting career optimism and career security during career coaching: Development and test of a model. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 14(1), 20–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2019.1707247>
- Edwards, E. R., Goldsmith, M. M., Tran, H. N., Bulanchuk, N. K., Epshteyn, G., Wroblewski, J., May, D. G., Snyder, S., Lee, A. S., Schofield, K. F., Gorman, D., Dichiaro, A., & Geraci, J. C. (2022). Supporting the nation's transitioning veterans: Narrative review of practices and recommendations for psychotherapy and counseling of veterans separating from military service. *Psychological Services*, 20(4), 876–888. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000701>
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, M. (2021). Ordering global governance complexes: The evolution of the governance complex for international civil aviation. *The Review of International Organizations*, 17(2), 293-322. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-020-09411-z>

- Faizi, F., & Moradian, S. T. (2022). Perceptions of undergraduate nursing students toward providing care to COVID-19 patients. *Frontiers in Public Health, 10*, 954907-954907. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.954907>
- Fischer, E. P., Sherman, M. D., McSweeney, J. C., Pyne, J. M., Owen, R. R., & Dixon, L. B. (2015). Perspectives of family and veterans on family programs to support reintegration of returning veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Psychological Services, 12*(3), 187–198. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000033>
- Fisher, F. (2019). Life coaching: The heart and soul of professional coaching. In S. English, J. M. Sabatine, & P. Brownell (Eds.), *Professional coaching: Principles and practice*. (pp. 355–367). Springer Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1891/9780826180094.0029>
- Fitipaldi, H., & Franks, P. W. (2023). Ethnic, gender and other sociodemographic biases in genome-wide association studies for the most burdensome non-communicable diseases: 2005-2022. *Human Molecular Genetics, 32*(3), 520-532. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hmg/ddac245>
- Flack, M., & Kite, L. (2021). Transition from military to civilian: Identity, social connectedness, and veteran wellbeing. *PloS One, 16*(12), e0261634-e0261634. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261634>
- Fleming, G. L. (2018). Navigation to transformation: Effective case management strategies. *Journal of Global Engagement and Transformation, 2*(1). <https://doi.org/10.52553/20001d>
- Flynn, S. V., & Korcuska, J. S. (2018). Credible phenomenological research: A mixed-methods study. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 57*(1), 34-50. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12092>

- Garcia Zea, D., Sankar, S., & Isna, N. (2023). The impact of emotional intelligence in the military workplace. *Human Resource Development International*, 26(1), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2019.1708157>
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (2012). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Pearson.
- Gelinas, L., Pierce, R., Winkler, S., Cohen, I. G., Lynch, H. F., & Bierer, B. E. (2017). Using social media as a research recruitment tool: Ethical issues and recommendations. *American Journal of Bioethics*, 17(3), 3-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2016.1276644>
- Gellweiler, S., Fletcher, T., & Wise, N. (2019). Exploring experiences and emotions sport event volunteers associate with ‘role exit’. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 54(4), 495-511. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690217732533>
- George, M. M., Wittman, S., & Rockmann, K. W. (2022). Transitioning the study of role transitions: From an attribute-based to an experience-based approach. *Academy of Management Annals*, 16(1), 102-133. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0238>
- Ghafouri, R., & Ofoghi, S. (2016). Trustworth and rigor in qualitative research. *International journal of advanced biotechnology and research*, 7(4), 1914-1922. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Raziyeh-Ghafouri/publication/322715130_Trustworth_and_Rigor_in_Qualitative_Research/links/5a6acf3ba6fdcc2aedee29b7/Trustworth-and-Rigor-in-Qualitative-Research.pdf
- Gholami, P., Ghaslani, R., & Bolandhematan, K. (2022). Understanding co-authorship: Phenomenological investigation of faculty members’ experience in Iran universities. *Human Studies*, 45(2), 243-264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-021-09612-4>

- Goldspink, S., & Engward, H. (2019). Booming clangs and whispering ghosts: Attending to the reflexive echoes in IPA research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 16*(2), 291-304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1543111>
- Gonzalez, J. A., & Simpson, J. (2021). The workplace integration of veterans: Applying diversity and fit perspectives. *Human Resource Management Review, 31*(2), 100775. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2020.100775>
- Government Accountability Office. (2022). *Servicemembers transitioning to civilian life: DOD can better leverage performance information to improve participation in counseling pathways*. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-104538>
- Graham, D. L., Pryor, A. L., & Gray, M. (2015). Impact of college athletics involvement on African American male student-athletes' career development. *Diversity in Higher Education, 261*–284. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-364420140000016013>
- Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: Concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today, 24*(2), 105-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2003.10.001>
- Greer, T. W. (2017). Career development for women veterans: Facilitating successful transitions from military service to civilian employment. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 19*(1), 54–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316682737>
- Griffin, K. A., & Gilbert, C. K. (2015). Better transitions for troops: An application of Schlossberg's transition framework to analyses of barriers and institutional support structures for student veterans. *The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus), 86*(1), 71-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2015.11777357>

- Harman, L. (2022). School counselors' lived experiences of support received during the RAMP designation process: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Professional School Counseling, 26*(1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X221137291>
- Hart, D. A., & Thompson, R. (2016). Veterans in the writing classroom: Three programmatic approaches to facilitate the transition from the military to higher education. *College Composition and Communication, 68*(2), 345-371.
- Harwood, J. (2020). Social identity theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology, 1*–7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.iemp0153>
- Hennink, M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science & Medicine (1982), 292*, 114523-114523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Higate, P., Dawes, A., Edmunds, T., Jenkins, K. N., & Woodward, R. (2019). Militarization, stigma, and resistance: Negotiating military reservist identity in the civilian workplace. *Critical Military Studies, 7*(2), 173–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2018.1554941>
- Hmieleski, K. M., & Sheppard, L. D. (2019). The yin and yang of entrepreneurship: Gender differences in the importance of communal and agentic characteristics for entrepreneurs' subjective well-being and performance. *Journal of Business Venturing, 34*(4), 709-730. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.06.006>
- Holy Bible: The New King James Version.* (1982). Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- Horrigan-Kelly, M., Millar, M., & Dowling, M. (2016). Understanding the key tenets of Heidegger's philosophy for interpretive phenomenological research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 15*(1), 160940691668063. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916680634>

- Hunter-Johnson, Y., & Al-Asfour, A. (2021). Let's connect: Diversity, inclusion and career development of veterans within the civilian workforce. *American Association for Adult and Continuing Education*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED611619.pdf>
- Hunter-Johnson, Y., Niu, Y., Smith, S., Whitaker, B., Wells, R., & Charkasova, A. (2020). The veteran employees: Recruitment, career development, engagement, and job satisfaction of veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2020(166), 139–150. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20389>
- Israelashvili, M. (2023). Adjustment to transitions: Common components. In: *Prevention of Maladjustment to Life Course Transitions* (pp. 99-133). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26700-0_5
- Jansen, M. M., & Delahaij, R. (2020). Leadership acceptance through the lens of social identity theory: A case study of military leadership in Afghanistan. *Armed Forces & Society*, 46(4), 657-676. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327x19845027>
- Jensen, C. W. (2022). *Marching Forward: A Qualitative Examination of Adapting Enlisted Veteran Leadership Skills in the Corporate Environment* (Order No. 29320797). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2702203776). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/marching-forward-qualitative-examination-adapting/docview/2702203776/se-2>
- Jia, C. X., Cheung, C., & Fu, C. (2020). Work support, role stress, and life satisfaction among chinese social workers: The mediation role of work-family conflict. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(23),8881. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17238881>

- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954-2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Keeling, M., Kintzle, S., & Castro, C. A. (2018). Exploring U.S. veterans' post-service employment experiences. *Military Psychology*, 30(1), 63-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2017.1420976>
- Kim, N. H., Wilson, N., Mashburn, T., Reist, L., Westrick, S. C., Look, K., Kennelty, K., & Carpenter, D. (2021). Lessons learned recruiting a diverse sample of rural study participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The International Journal of Drug Policy*, 97, 103344–103344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2021.103344>
- Kintzle, S., & Castro, C. A. (2018). Examining veteran transition to the workplace through military transition theory. *Occupational Stress and Well-Being in Military Contexts*, 16, 117-127. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-355520180000016009>
- Kirchner, M., & Minnis, S. (2018). Engaging military friendly in organizations: An empirical-based definition. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 3(2), 94. <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v3i2.49>
- Koenig, C. J., Maguen, S., Monroy, J. D., Mayott, L., & Seal, K. H. (2014). Facilitating culture-centered communication between health care providers and veterans transitioning from military deployment to civilian life. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 95(3), 414-420. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2014.03.016>
- Koka, K., Yadlapalli, S., Pillarisetti, P., Yasangi, M., Yaragani, A., & Kummamuru, S. (2021). The barriers for tobacco cessation counseling in teaching health care institutions: A

- qualitative data analysis using MAXQDA software. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 10(9), 3262-3267. https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmipc.jfmipc_19_21
- Kukla, M., Rattray, N. A., & Salyers, M. P. (2015). Mixed methods study examining work reintegration experiences from perspectives of veterans with mental health disorders. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, 52(4).
<https://doi.org/10.1682/jrrd.2014.11.0289>
- Kuntsche, S., & Kuntsche, E. (2019). Being old fashioned in a modern world: Gender role attitudes moderate the relation between role conflicts and alcohol use of parents. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 195, 90-93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2018.11.025>
- Larson, R. B. (2019). Controlling social desirability bias. *International Journal of Market Research*, 61(5), 534–547. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470785318805305>
- Lauterbach, A. (2018). Hermeneutic phenomenological interviewing: Going beyond semi-structured formats to help participants revisit experience. *Qualitative Report*, 23(11), 2883-2898. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3464>
- Leighton, K., Kardong-Edgren, S., Schneidereith, T., & Foisy-Doll, C. (2021). Using social media and snowball sampling as an alternative recruitment strategy for research. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 55, 37-42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecns.2021.03.006>
- LePage, P. (2020). Retaining military veterans in the civilian workforce. *Muma Business Review*, 4, 091–106. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4584>
- Lichtman, M. (2023). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Routledge.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2007). But is it rigorous? trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, (114), 15-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.223>

- Lynch, K. D. (2007). Modeling role enactment: Linking role theory and social cognition. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 37(4), 379-399. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2007.00349.x>
- Maden-Eyiusta, C. (2021). Role conflict, role ambiguity, and proactive behaviors: Does flexible role orientation moderate the mediating impact of engagement? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(13), 2829-2855. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1616590>
- Mael, F., Wyatt, W., & Iyer, U. J. (2022). Veterans to workplace: Keys to successful transition. *Military Psychology*, 34(5), 516–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2021.2016307>
- Manning, E. P. (2019). A veteran-centric model of care: Crossing the cultural divide. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 171(11), 843. <https://doi.org/10.7326/m19-1264>
- Marcus, B., Weigelt, O., Hergert, J., Gurt, J., & Gelléri, P. (2017). The use of snowball sampling for multi source organizational research: Some cause for concern. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(3), 635-673. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12169>
- McCommon, D. D. (2019). *Barriers Facing African-American Female Veterans Transitioning to Civilian Employment* (Order No. 10981212). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection. (2166277394). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/barriers-facing-african-american-female-veterans/docview/2166277394/se-2>
- McCormick, W. H., Currier, J. M., Isaak, S. L., Sims, B. M., Slagel, B. A., Carroll, T. D., Hamner, K., & Albright, D. L. (2019). Military culture and post-military transitioning

among veterans: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 4(2), 288.

<https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v4i2.121>

McDermott, J. (2007). *Old soldiers never die: they adapt their military skills and become successful civilians. What factors contribute to the successful transition of Army veterans to civilian life and work?* (Order No. U237412). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (301701733). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/old-soldiers-never-die-they-adapt-their-military/docview/301701733/se-2>

McGaha, K. K., & D'Urso, P. A. (2019). A non-traditional validation tool: Using cultural domain analysis for interpretive phenomenology. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 22(6), 585-598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2019.1621474>

McKinley, C. J., Masto, D., & Warber, K. M. (2014). Social identity theory is a framework for understanding the effects of exposure to positive media images of self and others on intergroup outcomes. *International Journal of Communication*. (19328036), 8, 1049–1068.

Meca, A., Allison, K. K., Ayers, K. L., Carr, K., Cox, S., Bravo, A. J., Davies, R., & Kelley, M. L. (2021). Understanding the unique effects of identity in adjustment among veterans. *Military Behavioral Health*, 9(4), 1–424.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2021.1927918>

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016;2015;). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Merton, R. K. (1957). The role-set: Problems in sociological theory. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 106–120. <https://doi.org/10.2307/587363>

- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Military-Transition. (n.d.). *Transition resources*. <https://www.military-transition.org/resources.html>
- Mobbs, M. C., & Bonanno, G. A. (2018). Beyond war and PTSD: The crucial role of transition stress in the lives of military veterans. *Clinical Psychology Review, 59*, 137-144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.11.007>
- Morant, N. B. (2018). *U.S. Military Career Transition: An Exploratory Interview Study of the Learning Experiences of Enlisted Military Personnel Transitioning from Active Duty to the Civilian Workforce*. Order No. 10824335). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2056106045). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/u-s-military-career-transition-exploratory/docview/2056106045/se-2>
- Morgan, N. R., Aronson, K. R., Perkins, D. F., Bleser, J. A., Davenport, K., Vogt, D., Copeland, L. A., Finley, E. P., & Gilman, C. L. (2020). Reducing barriers to post-9/11 veterans' use of programs and services as they transition to civilian life. *BMC Health Services Research, 20*(1), 525–525. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-020-05320-4>
- Nigam, A., Sackett, E., & Golden, B. (2022). Duality and social position: Role expectations of people who combine outsider-ness and insider-ness in organizational change. *Organization Studies, 43*(3), 413–435. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840621989004>
- Noon, E. J. (2018). Interpretive phenomenological analysis: An appropriate methodology for educational research? *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice, 6*(1), 75-83. <https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v6i1.304>

- Nordenmark, M. (2004). Multiple social roles and well-being: A longitudinal test of the role stress theory and the role expansion theory. *Acta Sociologica*, 47(2), 115-126.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699304043823>
- Okolie, U. C., Nwajiuba, C. A., Binuomote, M. O., Ehiobuche, C., Igu, N. C., & Ajoke, O. S. (2020). Career training with mentoring programs in higher education. *Education + Training*, 62(3), 214-234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/et-04-2019-0071>
- Olenick, M., Flowers, M., & Diaz, V. (2015). U.S. veterans and their unique issues: Enhancing health care professional awareness. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 635.
<https://doi.org/10.2147/amep.s89479>
- Orazem, R. J., Frazier, P. A., Schnurr, P. P., Oleson, H. E., Carlson, K. F., Litz, B. T., & Sayer, N. A. (2017). Identity adjustment among Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans with reintegration difficulty. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 9(Suppl 1), 4–11. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000225>
- Ouwerkerk, J. W., Van Dijk, W. W., Vonkeman, C. C., & Spears, R. (2018). When we enjoy bad news about other groups: A social identity approach to out-group schadenfreude. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 21(1), 214-232.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216663018>
- Parameswaran, U. D., Ozawa-Kirk, J. L., & Latendresse, G. (2020). To live (code) or to not: A new method for coding in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work: QSW: Research and Practice*, 19(4), 630–644. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325019840394>
- Parker, P., & Arthur, M. B. (2004). Coaching for career development and leadership development: An intelligent career approach. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 13(3), 55-60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620401300311>

- Patterson, B. J., Elliott, B., & Chargualaf, K. A. (2019). Discovering a new purpose: Veterans' transition to nursing education. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 40(6), 352-354. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000000538>
- Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189-1189. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1089059/pdf/hsresearch00022-0112.pdf>
- Perkins, D. F., Aronson, K. R., Morgan, N. R., Bleser, J. A., Vogt, D., Copeland, L. A., Finley, E. P., & Gilman, C. (2019). Veterans' use of programs and services as they transition to civilian life: Baseline assessment for the veteran metrics initiative. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 46(2), 241–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2018.1546259>
- Pietilä, A. M., Nurmi, S. M., Halkoaho, A., & Kyngäs, H. (2020). Qualitative research: Ethical considerations. *The application of content analysis in nursing science research*, 49-69. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30199-6_6
- Porter, T. H., Rathert, C., & Lawong, D. (2023). Career development through career transition coaching: A qualitative study of military veterans and student coaches. *Journal of Service-Learning in Higher Education*, 16, 20–43. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1382270.pdf>
- Pringle, J., Drummond, J., McLafferty, E., & Hendry, C. (2011). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: A discussion and critique. *Nurse Researcher*, 18(3), 20–24. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2011.04.18.3.20.c8459>
- Protection of Human Subjects, 45 C.F.R. § 45 (2023). <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-46>

- Reburiano, M. A. (2019). *Military Veterans in the Federal Civil Service: A Qualitative Descriptive Study Using Schlossberg's Transition Theory and Appreciative Inquiry to Improve Reintegration and Retention* (Order No. 22584769). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2291267202).
<https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/military-veterans-federal-civilservice/docview/2291267202/se-2>
- Roberts, P. E. (2015). Post-9/11 veterans: Welcoming them home as colleagues and clients. *The University of Memphis Law Review*, 45(4), 771-835.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1702079503/fulltextPDF/1ECB23B296F94622PQ/1>
- Roberts, R. (2020). Qualitative interview questions: Guidance for novice researchers. *Qualitative Report*, 25(9), 3185–3203. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4640>
- Robertson, H. C., & Hayden, S. C. W. (2018). Serving all that served: Career development among at-risk veterans. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 34(4), 54–65.
<https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/serving-all-that-served-career-development-among/docview/2251593948/se-2>
- Romaniuk, M., & Kidd, C. (2018). The psychological adjustment experience of reintegration following discharge from military service: A systemic review. *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, 26(2), 60-73.
- Ruslin, R., Mashuri, S., Rasak, M. S. A., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured Interview: A methodological reflection on the development of a qualitative research instrument in educational studies. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 12(1), 22-29.

- Russell, C. A., & Russell, D. W. (2018). It's not just showing up: How social identification with a veterans service organization relates to benefit-finding and social isolation among veterans. *Psychological Services, 15*(2), 154-162. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000176>
- Saillard, E. K. (2011). Systematic versus interpretive analysis with two CAQDAS packages: NVivo and MAXQDA. *Forum, Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1).
<https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1518>
- Samuel, R. D., Basevitch, I., Wildikan, L., Prosoli, R., & McDonald, K. (2019). Please stop changing the rules! The modifications of judo regulations as a change-event in judokas' and coaches' careers. *Sport in Society, 23*(4), 774–794.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2019.1669911>
- Secco, A. R., Peleias, I. R., Weffort, E. J., & Grzybovski, D. (2022). Arbitrator's expectations and motives regarding the expert accountant's performance in arbitration in the light of role theory. *Revista Contabilidade & Finanças, 33*(90). <https://doi.org/10.1590/1808-057x20221369.en>
- Shankle, S., Hibler, D., Caven, G., Krause-Parello, C. A., & Duffy, S. A. (2023). Transitioning from military to civilian life: The Ohio story. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 53*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2698>
- Shepherd, S., Sherman, D. K., MacLean, A., & Kay, A. C. (2020). The challenges of military veterans in their transition to the workplace: A call for integrating basic and applied psychological science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 16*(3), 590–613.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620953096>

- Sherman, M. D., & Larsen, J. L. (2018). Family-focused interventions and resources for veterans and their families. *Psychological Services, 15*(2), 146-153.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000174>
- Shue, S., Matthias, M. S., Watson, D. P., Miller, K. K., & Munk, N. (2021). The career transition experiences of military veterans: A qualitative study. *Military Psychology, 33*(6), 359-371. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2021.1962175>
- Sierra, J. J., & McQuitty, S. (2007). Attitudes and emotions as determinants of nostalgia purchases: An application of social identity theory. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 15*(2), 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.2753/mtp1069-6679150201>
- Sim, J., Saunders, B., Waterfield, J., & Kingstone, T. (2018). Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 21*(5), 619–634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643>
- Singh, L. (2019). *The impact of veteran support programs on stress, satisfaction, and retention for veteran employees* (Order No. 13862666). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2246429311). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/impact-veteran-support-programs-on-stress/docview/2246429311/se-2>
- Smith, A. (2018). “My understanding ... has literally changed”: Addressing the military-civilian gap with an academic-community engagement project. *Journal of Veterans Studies, 3*(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.1>
- Smith, A. J. (2021). Towards a trauma-informed existential career development group for veterans-in-transition: A conceptual exploration. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 46*(2), 187–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01933922.2021.1900958>

- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretive phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research*. Sage.
- Smith, J. A., & Nizza, I. E. (2022). *Essentials of interpretative phenomenological analysis*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000259-000>
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain*, 9(1), 41-42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2049463714541642>
- Smith, R. T., & True, G. (2014). Warring identities: Identity conflict and the mental distress of american veterans of the wars in iraq and afghanistan. *Society and Mental Health*, 4(2), 147-161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156869313512212>
- Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1982). Commitment, identity salience, and role behavior: Theory and research example. *Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior*, 199-218. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-9469-3_7
- Stull, F., Kirchner, M., & Herd, A. (2020). Learning challenges faced by transitioning military service members. *Journal of Military Learning*, 4(1), 36-56. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/journal-of-military-learning/Archives/April-2020/JML-April-20-BOOK-1.pdf#page=39>
- Sun, S., Wang, H., Tsilimigras, M. C., Howard, A. G., Sha, W., Zhang, J., Su, C., Wang, Z., Du, S., Sioda, M., Fouladi, F., Fodor, A., Gordon-Larsen, P., & Zhang, B. (2020). Does geographical variation confound the relationship between host factors and the human gut microbiota: A population-based study in china. *BMJ Open*, 10(11), e038163-e038163. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-038163>

- Tajfel, H. (1978). The achievement of inter-group differentiation. Differentiation between social groups.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1978). Chapter 3: An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations; Austin, WG, Worchel, S., Eds*, 33-47.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7–24). Chicago, IL: Nelson.
- Terblanche, N. H. D. (2022). Transformative transition coaching: A framework to facilitate transformative learning during career transitions. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(2), 269-296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1688376>
- Terblanche, N., Albertyn, D. R., & Van Coller-Peter, S. (2018). Using transformative transition coaching to support leaders during career transitions. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.15249/12-1-166>
- Thomas, G. (2018). The stress effects of military families' transition to civilian life. *Mental Health Practice*, 21(9), 25–29. <https://doi.org/10.7748/mhp.2018.e1311>
- Tkachuck, M. A., Pavlacic, J. M., Raley, M. J., McCaslin, S. E., & Schulenberg, S. E. (2022). Validating military culture: The factor analysis of a military-related adaptation of acculturation in veterans. *Psychological Services*, 19(3), 585-596. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000558>
- Trepte, S., & Loy, L. S. (2017). Social identity theory and self-categorization theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0088>

- Turner, J., & Moran, D. (2023). Bridging the gap? Ex-military personnel and military–civilian transition within the prison workforce. *Armed Forces and Society*, 49(1), 70–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X211039879>
- Turner, R. H. (1978). The role and the person. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 84(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226738>
- Vicary, S., Young, A., & Hicks, S. (2017). A reflective journal as learning process and contribution to quality and validity in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Social Work: QSW: Research and Practice*, 16(4), 550-565. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325016635244>
- Vogt, D., Perkins, D. F., Copeland, L. A., Finley, E. P., Jamieson, C. S., Booth, B., Lederer, S., & Gilman, C. L. (2018). The veterans metrics initiative study of U.S. veterans' experiences during their transition from military service. *BMJ Open*, 8(6), e020734-e020734. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-020734>
- Ware, N. C., Hopper, K., Tugenberg, T., Dickey, B., & Fisher, D. (2007). Connectedness and citizenship: Redefining social integration. *Psychiatric Services (Washington, D.C.)*, 58(4), 469-474. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ps.2007.58.4.469>
- Watson, A. (2008). Culture and combat in the western world, 1900–1945. *The Historical Journal*, 51(2), 529–546. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X0800681X>
- Westwood, M. J., & Israelashvili, M. (2023). Veteran transition to civilian life: Leveraging the strengths of military culture. *Advances in Prevention Science*, 341–363. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26700-0_13

- Westwood, M. J., McLean, H., Cave, D., Borgen, W., & Slakov, P. (2010). Coming home: A group-based approach for assisting military veterans in transition. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 35(1), 44-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01933920903466059>
- Willer, B., Rosenthal, M., Kreutzer, J. S., Gordon, W. A., & Rempel, R. (1993). Assessment of community integration following rehabilitation for traumatic brain injury. *The Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 8(2), 75-87. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00001199-199308020-00009>
- Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. *International Management Review*, 15(1), 45-72. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/art-coding-thematic-exploration-qualitative/docview/2210886420/se-2>
- Yamagata, M., & Miura, A. (2022). Retrospective bias during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Jikken Shakai Shinrigaku Kenkyū*, 62(2), si5-2-239. <https://doi.org/10.2130/jjesp.si5-2>
- Yanchus, N. J., Osatuke, K., Carameli, K. A., Barnes, T., & Ramsel, D. (2018). Assessing workplace perceptions of military veteran compared to nonveteran employees. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 3(1), 37. <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.3>
- Yang, Y., Xiao, Y., & Li, T. (2021). A survey of autonomous underwater vehicle formation: Performance, formation control, and communication capability. *IEEE Communications Surveys & Tutorials*, 23(2), 815-841. <https://doi.org/10.1109/comst.2021.3059998>
- Ziencik, C. (2020). Transitioning from the military to higher education: A case study of the transition assistance program. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 6(1), 30. <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i2.178>

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 4, 2024

Miguel Ingle
Ralph Ogburn

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-947 MILITARY VETERAN CAREER TRANSITION COACHING EXPERIENCES: NAVIGATING THE SHIFT FROM MILITARY SERVICE TO CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT

Dear Miguel Ingle, Ralph Ogburn,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data-safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP

Administrative Chair

Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: EMAIL/PHONE SCRIPT

EMAIL SCRIPT

Subject: Request for Collaboration on Veteran Career Transition Study

Dear [Organization Name], I hope this message finds you well.

My name is Miguel, and I am conducting a study entitled “Military Veteran Career Transition Coaching Experiences: Navigating the Shift From Military Service to Civilian Employment.” The aim is to explore the career transition experiences of military veterans and the impact of coaching on their shift to civilian roles.

As an organization committed to assisting veterans in their career journeys, your collaboration would be invaluable. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to share a recruitment letter for my study with your clients. Your participation could help highlight the challenges and successes veterans face during this transition, ultimately contributing to the betterment of transition support services.

The recruitment letter outlines the purpose of the study, the criteria for participation, and how interested individuals can get involved. Participation is voluntary, and all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

I am more than willing to provide additional information and answer any questions you or your team may have. Enclosed is the recruitment letter with a summary of the study for your review.

Thank you for considering this request. Your support could make a significant difference in the lives of those who have served our country.

Best regards,

Miguel A. Ingle

██████████@liberty.edu

School of Behavioral Sciences, Ph.D. candidate

PHONE SCRIPT

Hello [Organization/Person Name]

My name is Miguel, and I am conducting a study to understand the transition experiences of military veterans into civilian employment.

I am reaching out to inquire if you would be willing to distribute a recruitment letter to your clients, inviting them to participate in this study.

I am happy to provide more information about the study and discuss any questions you may have.

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Recipient,

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Behavioral Sciences psychology program at Liberty University. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree. My research aims to understand the experiences of military veterans who transitioned to civilian employment and participated in a career transition coaching program during their transition. I invite qualified participants to join my study. Participating in this research is voluntary.

To be eligible, participants must be military veterans aged 18 or older, have served in a U.S. military branch for at least three years, completed service within the past five years, and received career transition coaching during their shift from military to civilian employment.

Participants will be invited to a semi-structured interview of approximately 45-60 minutes. Interviews will be audio recorded and conducted most conveniently, including telephone, in-person, or video conferencing platforms. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed. Post-interview, participants will review their transcripts, offer feedback, and verify accuracy and resonance with their experiences.

If you would like to participate in the study, complete the screening survey via the link or QR code provided.

<https://forms.office.com/r/mJp64caPXb>



If selected to participate, an information sheet will either be sent to your email address before scheduling an interview or will be handed to you at the time of the scheduled interview. You do not need to sign and return the information sheet.

Best regards,

Miguel A. Ingle
School of Behavioral Sciences, Ph.D. candidate

██████████@liberty.edu

APPENDIX D: VETERAN CAREER TRANSITION COACHING SCREENING

To be eligible, participants must be military veterans aged 18 or older, have served in a U.S. military branch for at least three years, completed service within the past five years, and received career transition coaching during their shift from military to civilian employment.

* Required

1. * Please provide your name (First and Last).
 - a. Enter your answer.
2. * Email.
 - a. Enter your answer.
3. * Phone number.
 - a. Enter your answer.
4. * Are you 18 years or older?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. * What is your age range?
 - a. 18-21
 - b. 22-29
 - c. 30-39
 - d. 40 or older
6. * Are you a U.S. military veteran with at least three years of service?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. * What branch of service did you serve in?
 - Air Force
 - Army
 - Coast Guard
 - Marine Corps
 - Navy
 - Space Force
8. * Have you completed your military service within the past five years?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. * Please provide the end date of your military service.
 - a. Please input your date (M/d/yyyy)
10. * Did you participate in a career transition coaching program during your military-to-civilian role shift?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET

Information Sheet

Title of the Project: A phenomenological study exploring the lived experiences of military veterans who received career transition coaching while transitioning from military to civilian roles.

Principal Investigator: Miguel A. Ingle, Doctoral Candidate, Psychology Department of Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

To participate, you must be a military veteran aged eighteen or older, have served in a U.S. military branch for at least three years, completed service within the past five years, and received career transition coaching during your shift from military to civilian employment. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please read this entire form. Ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

This study aims to understand and analyze the experiences of military veterans who underwent career transition coaching as they navigate the complex process of shifting from military service to civilian employment. The study aims to understand veterans' experiences with career transition coaching, identifying its dynamics, drawbacks, and successes. The results will inform enhancements to coaching programs and tailor interventions for veterans seeking meaningful civilian careers.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured audio-recorded interview of 45-60 minutes through telephone, in-person, or video conferencing platforms, whichever is most convenient at the time of the interview.
2. You will be asked to provide your name and other personal details for the study. The information you provide will be kept confidential.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not anticipate immediate personal benefits from this study. However, the broader society will benefit as the data aids others in navigating the transition from military to civilian roles.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks associated with this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. A comfortable and private interview setting will be established. During virtual interviews, you will be encouraged to choose a safe location free from interruptions. Pause and check-ins will be conducted during the interview to gauge if breaks may

be needed before continuing the interview. Should participants experience such reactions, I will provide the resources below:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: A national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Helpline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- (b) SAMHSA's National Helpline: A confidential, free, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental or substance use disorders. Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357). Website: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. They will be securely stored; only the researcher can access the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will take place in a location where others cannot easily overhear the conversation.
- Information will be saved on a computer secured with a password. All electronic files will be removed after three years.
- Recordings will be kept on a secured computer for three years before being erased. Sole access to this data will remain with the researcher.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address and/or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Miguel A. Ingle. You may ask any questions you have at any point. You are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Ralph Ogburn, at [REDACTED]@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and want to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional

Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that human subjects research will be ethically conducted as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What motivated you to seek career transition coaching, and how did you believe it would assist you in your career change?
2. How did you perceive your career transition coaching experience during separation from military service to civilian employment?
3. What challenges did you encounter during the transition process, and how did your career transition coaching experiences help you navigate these challenges?
4. How did your military attributes (e.g., rank, occupation, years of service, deployment history) influence your experiences with career transition coaching?
5. How have your expectations of civilian employment changed, and how did career transition coaching contribute to this change in expectations?
6. What were the most effective coaching strategies or techniques supporting your transition to civilian employment, and how did you and your coach(es) identify these?
7. How did your mental and emotional well-being influence your experiences with career transition coaching and your subsequent employment outcomes?
8. How did your faith, values, or beliefs influence your career transition coaching experience?
9. In what ways did social networks and support systems impact your experiences with career transition coaching and your overall success in the civilian job market?
10. How did you perceive the effectiveness of available resources (e.g., government programs, non-profit organizations) in supporting your career transition coaching experiences?
11. How did your experiences with career transition coaching influence your confidence, self-efficacy, and overall well-being during the transition process?
12. To what extent did the military culture impact your career transition experiences and your engagement with career transition coaching services?
13. How do you perceive your civilian career outcomes having participated in career transition coaching programs compared to veterans who have not participated in such programs?
14. What recommendations do you have for improving career transition coaching services and support systems to better address the unique needs of veterans during the transition from military to civilian employment?

15. What additional information would you like to share regarding your experience with transition career coaching?

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT

Question

How did you perceive your career transition coaching experience during separation from military service to civilian employment?

Answer

I had two experiences with career transition coaching. Both were positive though they were not equal. My first experience with career transition coaching, the coach was a seasoned military officer who retired with over 20 years of service. This individual could undoubtedly relate to what I was going through as I transitioned but had almost no corporate experience. He demonstrated that he cared and that he wanted to help. We had a set number of sessions and a lot of what we reviewed seemed like it came from a textbook, what do I want in life after the military, what are my goals and so on. I would say my experience with him was good in that it made me think about things that I needed to consider. Looking back though, it did not go far enough. My second experience was, it was an exceptional experience. This was as much a mentor protégé experience as it was a coaching experience. I was partnered with a primary coach who had over 40 years of corporate experience where he was senior business leader and also an entrepreneur. Our discussions occurred multiple times a week and were all-encompassing. The discussions were broad and covered everything from who I was to what I wanted to do and how to get there. This included doing multiple personality assessments, developing a value proposition, resume development, interview preparation and exposure to his and the foundation's networks. My only regret was that I waited too long to engage with this organization so had to move at an expedited pace to get through their program.

Question

How did your military attributes (e.g., rank, occupation, years of service, deployment history) influence your experiences with career transition coaching?

Answer

For me they all make the transition harder. I had to land at a much higher level than the CPT I was transitioning with. I was further along in life, had a mortgage, a large family. These things are expensive. To complicate this further I did not want to transition into the defense industry, I wanted to be in traditional business and I didn't have the traditional civilian skills that business was looking for. My coach did his best to help me understand where he thought my skills had parallels to business and how I could emphasize those. But the truth is I didn't get it until I worked at a startup and had to use what I knew while also learning on the job. Then after walking the walk, I started to comprehend just how many parallels there really were. Since then I have shared those experiences with transitioning veterans when connected with them. We are much better suited for the transition than we know, but it takes time to understand the operating environment and put the pieces together.

APPENDIX H: REFLECTIVE RESEARCH JOURNAL EXCERPTS

November 15, 2023

Reflecting on My Military Background and Its Influence

I'm contemplating the impact of my military experiences on this dissertation journey. I recognize the potential for my background to misrepresent my interpretations; I found and drew inspiration from Horrigan-Kelly et al. (2016), needing to consider how to maintain my awareness of biases. Given my dual identity as a researcher and veteran, the insights prompted deep reflection on the importance of a reflexive stance.

January 10, 2024

Echoes of My Experience in Participant Stories

In today's interviews, I know the parallels between participants' transition experiences and mine. The narrative of feeling lost resonated with me, echoing Goldspink and Engward's (2019) notion of "echoes" in the data. Reflecting on this resonance, I'm journaling about distinguishing my experiences from those of my participants, trying to prevent my personal history from overshadowing the data.

January 29, 2024

Balancing Reflexivity and Data Analysis

As I analyzed the interview data, I was particularly mindful of not letting my reflections detract from the participants' experiences. My journal entries focus on instances where my journey mirrored that of my participants, using these moments to evaluate my interpretive stance critically.

February 1, 2024

The Role of the Researcher in Interpretative Claims

The inherently interpretative nature of IPA has made me acutely aware of my role in the analytical process. Today, I reflected on the importance of reflexivity in IPA research. My journal serves as a critical space for engaging with my positionality, ensuring that my interpretations remain faithful to the participants' experiences while acknowledging my influence.

February 3, 2024

Insights from Reflexive Journaling as I Prepare to Write

On the eve of completing the results chapter, I reviewed my reflexive journal entries. This practice, enriched by the thoughts of Vicary et al. (2017), has not only heightened the transparency of my research but also ensured its rigor. The process of journaling about echoes in the data has been invaluable, allowing me to navigate my personal and professional influences on the research carefully. Today's reflection solidified my readiness to integrate these insights into my analytical narrative, embodying the critical, reflexive engagement central to IPA.