Exploring Military Veterans’ Emotion Management Experiences While Transitioning to the Civilian Workforce

Submitted by

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I verify that my dissertation represents original research, is not falsified or plagiarized, and that I have accurately reported, cited, and referenced all sources within this manuscript in strict compliance with APA and Grand Canyon University (GCU) guidelines. I also verify my dissertation complies with the approval(s) granted for this research investigation by GCU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

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7/24/2017

Date
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans managed the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. Phenomenology investigates consciousness through the examination of its actions and utilizes lived experiences as a path to understand phenomena. The problem statement of this research study was: It was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with the transition to the civilian workforce. The theoretical frameworks of Schlossberg’s transition theory and Goleman’s theory of emotional intelligence were utilized in this study. This study answered the following research questions: What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce, how do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce and why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce. A qualitative methodology and a phenomenological design provided in depth information about lived experiences. A sample of ten participants were interviewed face to face to collect results in the most personable manner. NVivo 11 was utilized to assist with analyzing participant responses. Through participant response seven prevalent themes emerged: (a) frustration (b) anxiety (c) fear (d) feelings of unpreparedness (e) considering the big picture (f) removal of self from situations and (g) continuity of business and personal well-being. This study’s findings may serve as a reference point for veterans and civilian hiring managers.

Keywords: veterans, transition, emotion management, emotional intelligence.
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my Mother Joycelyn. On April 8, 2017, you transitioned into eternity. You told me “Your sons will be able to say; my Dad is Dr. Benjamin Andrew.” My goal was to make that a reality, and it is now. Terrence and I are carrying on your legacy. My Ceirra, my Ben Jr., my Brad and my Ethan, you all are more than my wife and sons, you four are my everything. This could not happen without your support. Above all I give praise, honor and glory to the Lord Jesus for this opportunity to work hard and see results. We have come this far by faith. Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to the great city of New Orleans, Louisiana.
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To the participants of this study, thank you for volunteering your time and participating in something so awesome. The study of veterans is an intriguing endeavor as we are a very special community of citizens.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The rising number of service members separating from today’s military contributes to an influx of veterans in the civilian society (Kirchner, 2015). With an increase of veterans transitioning to civilian jobs, there is a growing need for the veteran transition to be examined and conceptualized (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). According to Gaither (2014), the transition of military service members to the civilian society is one of the more prominent transitions witnessed in the United States of America. Anderson and Goodman (2014) suggests that transitions are a type of change and the phenomena of change itself can cause emotional anxiety and stress to the person in the change process.

In the civilian workforce, it is imperative that military veterans understand how to manage emotions while performing their functions in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. It was not known how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning to the civilian workforce. This study adds to the body of knowledge by contributing potentially valuable insight in the form of lived experiences.

This introductory chapter explored the background of the study which led to a problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and rationale for methodology and design. Additionally, this chapter discussed this study’s limitations and provided a robust definition of terms section to foster a common understanding of technical terminology used in the scope of this study. The objective of
this chapter was to provide a detailed introduction regarding the current study. This chapter will conclude with a summary of all information contained therein.

**Background of the Study**

According to a significant amount of literature produced on the subject, the veteran transition to the civilian society is a complex undertaking (Gaither, 2014; Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Troutman & Gagnon, 2014). Unbeknownst to many, one of the greatest challenges for veterans transitioning to the civilian society is the change in mentality, which ultimately contributes to a multiplicity of emotions (Gaither, 2014). A widespread lack of understanding concerning the veteran transition and mental stability has increased misconceptions and has contributed to a number of negative stigmas (Randall, 2015; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). Kintzle et al., (2015) affirms that existing stigmas regarding the mental health of transitioned veterans, causes some employers to exercise caution when considering veterans for hire.

A qualitative study conducted by Minnis (2014) identifies the gap associated with this study, thereby demonstrating that it was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian environment. As noted in Sarkar and Suresh (2013), the management of emotions is an integral part of occupational wellbeing. A study by Cox and Patrick (2012) advanced the notion that all jobs functions are susceptible to situations where the suppression or stimulation of emotions conflict with what an employee is experiencing. The goal of this research was to identify the emotions veterans are experiencing while transitioning to the civilian workforce and discover how they manage those emotions while adjusting to a new occupational environment.
The growing population of veterans in the civilian workforce deem it necessary for civilian employers, transitioning veterans and non-veteran employees to further their knowledge of the veteran transition (Boutin, 2011; Kirchner, 2015). Examining relevant lived experiences addresses the need to further understand how veterans manage emotions in the workplace. The current study will contribute to the body of knowledge by bridging the gap identified in the literature. Furthermore, the findings in this study could potentially dispel negative stigmas regarding the emotional state of transitioning veterans.

**Problem Statement**

It was not known how military veterans manage the emotions associated with the transition to the civilian workforce. From an emotional intelligence perspective, the management of emotions has great value in the everyday professional environment (Thory, 2015). It is a benefit to organizations when employees understand how to effectively manage emotions while on the job (Sarkar & Suresh, 2013). Recently there has been a subsequent increase of the veteran population in the civilian workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016a), deeming it necessary for civilian employers to further understand the transition phenomenon and how it affects the veteran employee (Boutin, 2011; Kirchner, 2015).

Although a number veterans have challenges adjusting to civilian work functions (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014), research reveals there is a significant amount of resilience and potential existing with the veteran population (Brown & Routon, 2016). Brown and Routon speculate that the qualities of discipline, responsibility, and teamwork instilled in veterans while serving, are all valuable in the civilian workforce. It is a possible that
these qualities are overlooked for the sake of negative preconceived notions perpetuated by the media and society.

Increased media attention to war oriented matters has created subconscious veteran prejudices amongst many employers (Shane, 2013; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). Zalaquett and Chatters proposed that society’s preoccupation with veteran war trauma has created a fear that veteran employees may struggle to assimilate and may be prone to possible workplace violence. To assist with fostering a better understanding of veterans in the civilian workplace; this study will explore lived experiences of transitioning veterans employing emotion management in the civilian workplace. Transitions are a form of change and change is a common phenomenon which can cause stress and anxiety. Military veterans are constantly transitioning from the ranked military environment to the rather distinct civilian environment (Robertson & Brott, 2013). As time advances, the need to understand the transition process increases. Thus, so does the need to understand how emotions are being managed (Minnis, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. The target population for this study was prior enlisted military veterans who served between September 2001 and September 2016. The sample size was 10 prior enlisted veterans employed at various civilian establishments. The growing population of veterans presents an increased need to understand the veteran population (Boutin, 2011).
According to Ahern et al., (2015), gaining insight into the veteran to civilian transition is critical to understand challenges as well as to inform interventions to support successful reintegration. Pease, Billera, and Gerard (2016) affirms that further understanding of the veteran transition experience assists veteran support entities with providing even psychiatric support. Psychiatric support is then essential for transitioning veterans as certain ailments can interfere with sustainment of employment.

As veterans continue to reintegrate into the civilian workforce, emotion management becomes an increasingly important notion. The concept of emotion management refers to one trying to control or manage feelings, facial expressions and body language, to sustain an alignment with societal expectations of behavior (Hochschild, 2003). Research indicates that negative, unmanaged emotions during the veteran transition can contribute to higher risks for suicide (Rogers, Kelliher-Rabon, Hagan, Hirsch, & Joiner, 2017).

In addition to the emotion aspects of reintegration, today there are many civilian misconceptions about military veterans. This study offers potential contribution to the field in that there is currently a large population of hiring managers that believe military leadership perspective is solely based on the ability to just bark an order to get something done (Vinezeano, 2010). Misconceptions contribute to cultural conflicts and concerns which could weigh heavy on emotions, particularly those transitioning from the military to the civilian society. The intent of the researcher was to utilize this study to add to the existing body of knowledge concerning the veteran transition.
Research Questions

The research questions in this study guided an exploration of military veteran’s emotion management while transitioning to the civilian work environment. There are three research questions which strived to identify the emotions veterans are experiencing in the transition to the civilian workforce, how the emotions are being managed and why it is necessary to manage those emotions. Further, Maxwell (2013) noted that the research questions should be informed by the phenomena being studied. The phenomena being studied is the management of emotions while transitioning from military to the civilian workforce. The following questions guided this study:

RQ1: What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?

RQ2: How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

RQ3: Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

The research questions were designed to identify the types of emotions experienced in the transition, assess how the veteran manages those emotions, and explore the necessity of emotion management in the transition process. The research questions provided a framework to construct the interview protocol. The data collection tool associated with this study was designed to address each research question by encouraging the participant to provide thoughtful, robust responses during the interview session. Analyzing the lived experiences of the participants could potentially lay a
foundation to help veterans conceptualize the emotional aspects of the civilian transition process.

**Advancing Scientific Knowledge**

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to advance current scientific knowledge concerning the veteran to civilian transition. The expanding number of veterans in the U.S. presents an increased need to further understand the veteran population (Boutin, 2011). A gap in the literature exists as it is necessary to further examine how military veterans manage emotions in transition to the civilian workforce (Minnis, 2014). This study identifies the emotions veterans experience in the transition process and expands on how those emotions are managed. The assessment of lived experiences assists with understanding the personal accounts of veterans employing emotion management in the civilian workplace.

Recently published research reveals that 42% of human resource managers experienced complications with the notion of hiring veterans due to misconceptions of mental health issues (Minton-Eversole, 2012). Zalaquett and Chatters (2016) findings suggest there's a concern existing amongst employers, that hiring veteran employees may present cultural adjustment challenges which could increase the chances of workplace violence. Loughran and Heaton (2013) suggests that certain misconceptions of the veteran population may contribute to increased unemployment rates and lower wages. The misfortunes substantiate a need to further understand the veteran population in the civilian society. The current study addresses this need by examining lived experiences of a sample from the veteran population.
The theoretical frameworks of Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011) and Goleman’s Theory of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1997; Goleman, 1998) was used to guide this study. Schlossberg’s (1981) transition model identifies four general coping factors known as 4S which conceptualizes the transition elements of situation, self, supports and strategies. Goleman’s (1998) model places emphasis on emotional intelligence as a broad range of social and emotional competencies consisting of five focal points: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy and motivation. This study advances both frameworks by expanding on the veteran transition, encompassing the four elements of Schlossberg’s (1981) model and the five components of Goleman’s (1998) model.

**Significance of the Study**

Several investigations have evaluated the topic of veteran reintegration and have concluded that the veteran role is a crucial area that warrants further exploration (Kukla, Rattray, & Salyers, 2015; Minnis, 2014). The current study will add to existing knowledge by exploring roles of veterans reintegrating into civilian society. Parker (2012) affirms that the more employers know about hiring veterans, the better equipped they are to do so. The lack of employer knowledge of the veteran populace contributes to a myriad of negative perceptions. Thus, addressing the gaps in the research benefits the veteran as well as civilian employers.

A review of veteran transition literature identifies a gap in research regarding the emotion management efforts of transitioning military veterans (Minnis, 2014). The growing number of service members departing the military inevitably increases the
population of military veterans in today’s civilian workforce (Kirchner, 2015; U.S. Department of Labor, 2016b). With an increasing number of veterans in America’s civilian workforce, there is likewise a growing need to further understand the veteran transition process. This study contributes to the current knowledge base of transitioning veterans by assessing how emotions are managed in the process. Addressing the phenomenon via lived experiences could potentially dispel negative myths and stigmas regarding transitioning veterans.

Substantial research reveals that the transition from the military to the civilian society introduces several challenges to veterans (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Collins et al., 2014; Robertson & Brott, 2014). The degree of transition challenges has prompted our government to take preemptive measures to aid our veterans. Currently, service members of each branch of the Armed Forces are offered transition assistance to prepare them for the transition back to civilian life (Cleymans & Conlon, 2014). Service members attend a comprehensive workshop (Transition Assistance Program “TAP”) within 6 months of service departure, to get educated about reintegration. The program consists of a core curriculum, pre-separation counseling and a capstone project (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016b). This study’s significance could potentially add to developments of the existing TAP program by providing rationale for emphasis on emotion management in the civilian workplace.

Rationale for Methodology

A qualitative methodology was selected for this study to explore the lived experiences of veterans managing the emotions in transition to the civilian workforce. A qualitative approach was determined to be the most effective method for this study as
it examines personal insight from a human perspective, which is less likely to be delivered from a quantitative approach, which generates numerical data (Moustakas, 1994; Merriam, 1998). According to Isaacs (2014), qualitative research is useful when the research focuses on complex issues such as human behavior and felt needs. Ideas expressed by Isaacs led to a broader conceptualization of qualitative research as the author expressed that the goal of such is to foster an understanding of social phenomena. Thus, the qualitative methodology was deemed to be remotely fitting for the current study.

As noted, a quantitative approach is less likely able accomplish an examination of personal insight from a human perspective. While qualitative research samples are essentially small, quantitative research samples are customarily larger and statistical in nature (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). The selection of the qualitative methodology for this study served to effectively communicate lived experiences, to answer the research questions and examine the phenomena. Tufford and Newman (2012) posits that the qualitative research methodology is most suitable for interpreting, understanding and discovering how phenomena is experienced.

**Nature of the Research Design for the Study**

The research design selected for the current study was the phenomenological research design. The phenomenological research design was the most apropos as it enables the researcher to explore behavioral patterns and lived experiences (Converse, 2012). The phenomenological design allowed the researcher to explore the military to civilian transition, in addition to the subsequent employing of emotion management, which all was communicated through participant response via interview.
The general theoretical context of interviewing is assumed to be fundamental to phenomenological research. Robinson (2014) advances, that interviewing often leads to extensive intimate self-disclosure and is likely to lead to an engaged sample of interested candidates. The target population for this study was prior enlisted military veterans who served on active duty between September 2001 and September 2016. All participants were prior enlisted, and discharged from the military within the past 5-7 years. A purposive sample of 10 veterans with civilian employment experience were interviewed using one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Other qualitative approaches such as case study, ethnography and grounded theory were considered for this study but were not appropriate. In a qualitative case study, a current experience gets investigated and examined within the present context and setting (Yin, 2013). In ethnography, the researcher makes participant observations in a setting to understand the participant’s daily environment from a social and cultural perspective (Rashid, Caine, & Goez, 2015). Lowe, Milligan, Watanabe and Brearley (2015) submits that grounded theory deals exclusively with the development of theory. The phenomenological approach examines individuals lived experiences and phenomena, which is essentially the goal of this study. The phenomenological design enabled this study to identify the emotions veterans are experiencing while transitioning to the civilian workforce and determine how those emotions are managed amid the transition.

**Definition of Terms**

Within this study of the veteran transition, the researcher utilized key terms specific to the study. To provide further meaning and context, this section lists and
defines those key terms which also includes the phenomenon being studied, the management of emotions while transitioning from military to the civilian workforce.

**Active Duty.** The term “active duty” refers to being exclusively full time. Active-duty members are available for duty 24/7 days a week, with the exclusion of leave (vacation) or pass (authorized time off). American active duty members of the armed forces consist of members of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force (Gade & Wilkins, 2012).

**Civilian Workforce.** Civilian workforce is a term which describes all people who form the labor force of the country, to include anyone at least 16 years of age, employed or unemployed, not serving in the U.S. military (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016c).

**Emotion.** The term “emotion” is described is a human experience that informs us about our worldview which drives us to action, thereby influencing our interactions with other individuals (Tamir et al., 2016).

**Emotion Management.** The effort of controlling and managing feelings and emotions while keeping facial and bodily displays consistent with expectations in social interaction (Hochschild, 2003).

**Emotion Regulation.** Emotion regulation is a form of emotion management which is conceptualized as the efforts to influence emotions, when they’re experienced, how they’re experienced and how they’re expressed (Gross, 1998).

**Gulf War Era II.** An established period of wartime recognized by the federal government beginning September 2001 to the present day (Walker, 2008; U.S. Department of Labor, 2016c).
**Phenomenological (Phenomenology).** The study of human experience / phenomena. Phenomenology essentially refers to the totality of lived experiences that belong to a single person (Giorgi, 1997).

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).** A debilitating psychiatric disorder that may develop after exposure to a traumatic event and is characterized by intrusive and avoidant symptoms, as well as hyper-arousal and negative cognition and mood (Gillikin et al., 2016).

**Semi-structured Interview.** An interview involves in-depth conversations between the researcher and interviewee (participant), which has an overall purpose prompted by the aims of the research, but are strongly guided by the interviewee’s personal perceptions, opinions, and experiences (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015).

**Transition.** Any event or nonevent that results in change; affecting people’s relationships, routines and habits (Anderson & Goodman, 2014)

**Veteran.** A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. (Gade & Wilkins, 2012).

### Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

This section provides an overview of the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations associated with this study. Per Leedy and Ormond (2013), assumptions are factual, self-evident truths which are usually accepted within reason. Limitations are elements of the research which are outside of the researcher’s realm of control. Delimitations are elements of the research within the researcher’s control, which defines the boundaries and limits the research scope (Simon, 2011).
Assumptions

1. Lived Experiences. Gee, Loewenthal and Cayne (2013) proposed that when striving to gain knowledge of a phenomenon, it is important to explore individuals lived experience of the phenomenon. The actual lived experiences of veterans employing emotion management in the civilian workplace was examined in this study. The participants were briefed of the protocol in place to protect descriptive information about their person. The participants were also informed of the member checking process to ensure validity of responses.

2. Honest Response. Research affirms that honesty is a part of virtue or character ethics (Erichsen, Danielsson, & Friedrichsen, 2010). In this study, it was assumed that participants will give honest and credible responses during the interview. The researcher expressed the scope and significance of the study to communicate the importance of candid and sincere responses.

3. Emotion Management. Hochschild (2003) suggests that emotion management is the act of controlling one’s feelings and expressions to remain consistent with established norms. All participants in this study were employed by a civilian employer for a minimum period of 6 months. It was assumed that during post-military employment, the participants have had to employ emotion management methods to control workplace emotions.

4. Researcher’s Veteran Status. The researcher of this study is a military veteran. Jain, McLean, Adler, and Rosen (2016) suggests that peer support amongst the veteran community contributes to overall comfort and well-being. It was assumed that the participants will feel more comfortable being interviewed by a fellow veteran rather than an individual who hasn’t served in the military.

5. Participant Interest. To satisfy the participants’ concerns and interests, all participants were made aware of the research questions and scope of the study via recruitment and prior to the interview (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Participation was voluntary and up to the potential participant if he or she chooses to participate or not. It was assumed that those who elected to participate would provide a substantial amount of data because of their interest and familiarity with the scope of study.

Limitations

1. Variability in veteran status. The veterans in this study are of different veteran classifications. Some have served one enlistment while some have served five. Hence, they are receiving retirement pay to supplement any lack, which is a significant factor in civilian employment.

2. Employment. This study was limited to participants who have been employed for a minimum of 6 months therefore, the findings would not be representative of all
veterans who have employed emotion management in the workplace. Small sample size.

3. This study was limited to 10 veterans which is a relatively small sample size compared to the number of participants in most quantitative studies.

**Delimitation**

1. Geographical location. This study was delimited to veterans in Southern California who were employed in the same region. With a large population of military service members and veterans existing in Southern California, this study may benefit those who are transitioning from the military. There has yet to be a study examining the emotion management of military veterans in Southern California.

2. Era of service. This study was delimited to veterans who served on active duty from September 2001 to September 2016. The researcher did not explore veteran experiences from veterans who were discharged prior years as September 2001 was the dawn of a new era in terms of our Nation’s defense.

**Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 1 provides the foundation for this research study by overviewing critical areas consisting of the study’s background, purpose, significance, methodology, design, theoretical underpinnings, key terms assumptions and limitations. The problem identified in this study was that it was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce (Minnis, 2014). The results of this phenomenological study may help civilian employers and veterans further understand the military to civilian transition. Additionally, the more employers learn about veterans, the better equipped they are to hire and properly utilize veteran talent (Parker, 2012).

Chapter 2 of this study provides the literature review which discusses background, theoretical foundations and reviews literature relevant to the overall purpose. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work
environment in Southern California. Chapter 3 of this study defines the methodology and expressed in detail the research design, method of data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 explores the descriptive data of this study’s participants, followed by the procedures of data collection and data analysis. Additionally, it reviews the results of this study, followed by a closing summary of the chapter. To conclude, Chapter 5 includes a summary of this study’s findings, implications, strengths and weaknesses and will close out with recommendations. This study utilized the qualitative methodology (Moustakas, 1994) and the phenomenological design (Gee et al., 2013) as it explored the lived experiences of veterans employing emotion management while transitioning to the civilian work environment.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Chapter and Background to the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. Chapter 2 of this research outlines the theoretical foundations and overviews existing literature relevant to the phenomenon of emotion management and transitioning military veterans. A study conducted by Minnis (2014) revealed that it was not known how veterans managed the emotions associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian environment. The goal of this research was to identify the emotions veterans are experiencing while transitioning to the civilian workforce and discover how they manage those emotions while adjusting to a new occupational environment.

The literature associated with this research was collected from databases such as Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, and ERIC (EBSCO) platforms located in the Grand Canyon University online library. Google Scholar and hardbound literature from local book retailers were also reviewed. These databases provided access to a myriad of peer-reviewed articles concerning the military veteran transition and emotion management.

The growing population of veterans presents an increased need to further understand the veteran population (Boutin, 2011). Military veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce not only have to adapt to a different culture and lifestyle, but there are also psychological factors which should be adjusted (Collins et al., 2014). Social interactions, perceptions of authority, communication methods and the translation of
skills are only a few basic yet complex areas affected during the military to civilian transition experience (Miles, 2014). Thus, the military to civilian transition is extremely challenging and will challenge veterans to make necessary emotional adjustments while reintegrating back into the civilian society (Gaither, 2014).

This chapter thoroughly examined the literature pertinent to the military to civilian transition and emotion management. The chapter is arranged by topics and subsequent sub-topics. The introductory section of this chapter provides overview the historical background of veterans transitioning out of the military. The second section elaborates on the theoretical foundations associated with the military to civilian transition and emotion management. The third and final section of this chapter discussed the existing literature on the military to civilian transition and emotion management.

**Background to the Problem**

The growing number of service members leaving the military inevitably increases the population of military veterans in today’s civilian society (Kirchner, 2015). In 2015, 21.2 million men and women were veterans, accounting for about 9% of the civilian non-institutional population (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016c). In the same year, 3.6 million men and women within the total veteran population were Gulf War Era II veterans, serving from September 2001 and further. Further research reveals that in the past year more military veterans have been hired, as the unemployment rate for veterans has decreased. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, the 2015 unemployment rate for Gulf War Era II veterans declined by 1.4% (5.8) from the previous year (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016c). Per the Employment Situation of Veterans 2014 report, the unemployment rate of Gulf War Era II veterans declined by 1.8
% (7.2) from 2013. More veterans are transitioning out of the military however; it is continually difficult for many to sustain employment in civilian establishments (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Gaither, 2014).

The transition from the military into the civilian society is a challenging undertaking that is quite unfamiliar to many civilians. Anderson and Goodman (2014) describe a transition as any event or nonevent that results in change; affecting people’s relationships, routines and habits. Gaither (2014) posits that one of the more prominent transitions in America is the transition of the military service member to the civilian society. Transitions are a form of change and change is a common phenomenon which can cause stress and anxiety (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Military veterans transitioning to the civilian society must manage change to adapt to different cultures and environments (Collins et al., 2014).

A recent study revealed that the one of the primary contributors to transitioning veteran frustration is differences between the structured military environment and the less structured civilian environment (Ahern et al., 2015). Gaither (2014) asserts further that the greatest challenge for military veterans transitioning to the civilian society is the change in mentality, which contributes to a wide range of emotions. There was therefore a need to identify which emotions are experienced by transitioning veterans and how veterans employ emotion management while in the transition process (Minnis, 2014).

Managing emotions is an everyday function, approached differently by everyone, with variable degrees of success and failure. In 1983 Arlie Hochschild published a book entitled: The Managed Heart which pioneers the phenomenon of managing emotions within the occupational setting, Hochschild posits that the process of managing emotions
refers to intentional action employed by an individual to create and display the emotions deemed fitting for the current situation (Hochschild, 2003). In today’s organizations, it remains critically imperative that employees understand how to manage emotions while in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014).

According to Cox and Patrick (2012), all jobs functions are susceptible to situations where the suppression or stimulation of emotions could conflict with how an employee feels. The act of suppressing feelings (e.g. anger) to sustain a calm outward countenance (e.g. happy) in the workplace is referred to as emotional labor. Emotional labor is the modification of emotional expressions in accordance to the expectations of the organization (Hochschild, 2003). Morris and Feldman (1996) define emotional labor as the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions. Organizations benefit when members’ emotion management is effectively employed within the workplace. Sarkar and Suresh (2013) assert that the management of emotions is an integral part of occupational wellbeing.

The gap previously mentioned in the literature affirms the need to understand how veterans manage those emotions amid the transition process (Minnis, 2014). This phenomenological study will assess and describe the lived experiences of prior enlisted United States Military veterans, employed in the civilian workforce for ten years or less. By assessing the lived experiences associated with the phenomena, this study bridges the gap identified in existing research.

**Theoretical Foundations and/or Conceptual Framework**

The frameworks of Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (Anderson et al., 2012; Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011) and Goleman’s Theory of
Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1997; Goleman, 1998) were used to guide this study. Schlossberg (2011) provides a comprehensive framework that brings clarity to the key elements of the transition experience. Throughout the literature, Schlossberg communicates a constant theme; everyone adapts to change differently (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011). While job loss may stimulate one person to develop new interests, it could push another to a dead end marked by emotion detriment. To one person a geographical move can be considered opportunity while another may perceive it as an inconvenience. The concepts presented in both, Schlossberg’s Transition Theory and Goleman’s Theory of Emotional Intelligence provides a well-structured framework which guided this study.

**Transition theory.** In previous literature, Schlossberg’s (1981) developed a model for human adaptation to transition. Commonly referred to as the seminal work in transition theory, Schlossberg asserts “*A transition can be said to occur if an event or non-event results in change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behavior and relationships*” (p. 5). The adaptation to transition occurs when a person moves from preoccupation with the transition to incorporation of the transition into his or her life. The model proposes three factors which influence the adaptation to transition: (1) Transition characteristics (2) Pre- and post-transition environment characteristics and (3) The characteristics of the individual.

Since its inception, Schlossberg’s transition theory has developed into a modern framework. Schlossberg’s (2011) transition theory discusses transitions from the viewpoint of three critical factors: (1) understanding transitions, (2) coping with transitions and (3) applying the model to work life transitions. In this model, the first step
in effectively dealing with change requires a sound understanding of the distinct types of transitions and the transition process. Schlossberg (2011) suggests that significant changes such as the change of career, dramatically alters a person’s life. The change of routines, assumptions and relationships all have a cognitive effect on individuals in the transition process. Coping while actively in the transition is a complex function in conjunction with applying the model to work life transitions (Schlossberg, 2011).

4S System for coping with transition. In the process of transitioning and adaptation, coping plays a significant role. Schlossberg’s (1981) transition model identified four general coping factors known as 4S; situation, self, supports and strategies. These four factors influence a person’s coping ability while transitioning:

- **Situation** – The situation factor considers the trigger for the transition which essentially precipitates the phenomenon. An individual’s response to stressful situations heavily depends on the circumstances associated with the given situation. Anderson et al., (2012) posits that there are eight concepts which impact an individual’s situation; (a) trigger, (b) timing, (c) control, (d) role-change, (e) duration, (f) previous experience with a similar transition, (g) concurrent stress, and, (h) assessment.

- **Self** - According to Anderson et al., (2012) “every individual has both assets and liabilities, resources and deficits” which influence an individual’s transition experience. Additionally, Anderson et al., (2012) postulates “every person brings different assets to the transition” p. 83. Characteristics relevant to an individual’s coping abilities consist of personal and demographic characteristics and psychological resources. Personal and demographic characteristics include (a) socioeconomic status, (b) gender and sexual orientation, (c) age and stage of life, (d) state of health, and (e) ethnicity and culture (Anderson et al., 2012). Psychological resources include (a) ego development, (b) optimism and self-efficacy (c) commitments and values (d) spirituality and resilience (Anderson et al., 2012).

- **Supports** - Research indicates several types of support needed to effectively cope with the transition process. Anderson et al., (2012) proposes, the type of support an individual receives is classified according to the source(s): intimate relationships, family units, networks of friends, and the institutions and or/communities of which people are connected with.
Strategies – The concept of coping strategy has a high degree of variability but could be condensed into three groupings. Anderson et al., (2012) cites Pearlin and Schooler’s categorization to conceptualize the types of coping:

1. “Responses that modify the situation” (such as negotiation in marriage, discipline in parenting, optimistic action in occupation, and seeking advice in marriage and parenting).

2. “Responses that . . . control the meaning of the problem” (such as responses that neutralize, positive comparisons, selective ignoring, substitution of rewards).

3. Responses that help to manage stress after it has occurred (such as “denial, passive acceptance, withdrawal, magical thinking, hopefulness, avoidance of worry, relaxation”). Specific mechanisms include “emotional discharge versus controlled reflectiveness, . . . passive forbearance versus self-assertion, . . . potency versus helpless resignation, . . . optimistic faith.” (P. 88).

Schlossberg’s 4-S Model provides a comprehensive framework to incorporate resources and assess the veteran transition process across the areas of Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). As veterans experience the unique process of transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce, they must learn to cope and adapt to a new lifestyle. Anderson et al., (2012) posits that a transition can be assessed across the areas of relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles, taking into consideration both the individual’s reactions and current socio-cultural status and history.

The use of this model is intended to bring awareness and understanding to the veteran’s transition experience. Schlossberg’s (1981) theory can be applied to the population of transitioning military veterans due to the multitude of challenges experienced during the process. In terms of emotion management, coping is an essential element which affects symptoms of anxiety, depression and other forms of emotional distress (Romero, Riggs, & Ruggero, 2015). In the transition process, coping has the capability to facilitate change of perspective and promote redirection (Pellegrino &
Hoggan, 2015), Schlossberg’s 4-S model explains the process of coping considering 4 factors that influence a person’s coping ability while transitioning. In this study the 4S model will be used to consider the veteran’s situation, how he/she view’s themselves, what support systems are available to them and the strategies in place to assist with coping in while transitioning. Overall, the concepts associated with Schlossberg’s 4-S Model present a well-balanced framework to further understand how veterans manage emotions while in transition.

**Emotional intelligence theory.** In previous years, the concept of emotional intelligence has gained considerable notoriety. Popularized by Daniel Goleman’s (1997) bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence*, the concept of emotional intelligence refers to the ability to manage emotions thereby increasing self-awareness. According to Goleman (1997), emotional intelligence influences critical life outcomes to include improved decision making, decreased aggression and enhanced learning capability. Additionally, Goleman posited that emotional intelligence contributed to life’s success potential. Emotional intelligence has significant value in the professional environments of today, deeming necessary for employees to understand how to manage emotions while functioning in the workplace (Thory, 2015).

Research indicates, the concept of emotional intelligence has a history which extends beyond its point of popularity. The term was used in the 1960s by Ghent (1961) in fashion, and then by Leuner (1966) in areas related to psychiatry. In 1986 a dissertation was conducted on the topic of developing emotional intelligence (Payne, 1985). Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the modernized concept of emotional intelligence and defined it as “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and
emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 5). Since its modern introduction via Salovey and Mayer, several researchers have defined emotional intelligence. Goleman (1997) posited that Emotional Intelligence is “being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope”. Goleman’s emphasis on self-control and self-discipline expanded the general concept of emotional appraisal and expression, previously posited by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Bar-On (2010) asserts emotional intelligence is an array of interrelated emotional competencies and skills that determine how effectively individuals understand and express themselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands and challenges.

Gupta and Kumar (2015) suggests that emotional intelligence also involves the ability to regulate one’s own emotions to use them to make good decisions and to act effectively. Emotional intelligence then becomes a method of recognizing, understanding and choosing how we feel and think. (Gupta & Kumar, 2015). Military service members are exposed to situations that demand emotional intelligence (Oden, Lohani, McCoy, Crutchfield, & Rivers, 2015). It is then incumbent upon veterans to sustain that in the post military phase and transition.

Goleman’s (1998) model places emphasis on emotional intelligence as a broad range of social and emotional competencies consisting of five focal points: (a) self-awareness – knowing one’s self i.e. emotions, values, strengths, opportunities (b) self-regulation – understanding how to manage one’s responses or disruptive impulses (c) social skill- understanding how to effectively manage relationships in order to move
people in a desired direction (d) empathy – considering the feelings of others particularly when making decisions (e) motivation – having the drive to achieve for the sake of achievement. Goleman (1998) posits that everyone will have distinct responses throughout this model which means that some will be more proficient in certain areas of the model than others. The same is true regarding the military transition. Every veteran will respond differently when transitioning adjusting the civilian environment. Every individual exhibit distinct levels of awareness, regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation. This model provides a foundation for exploring how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning to the civilian workforce. Furthermore, the focal points (self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy and motivation) will be utilized to examine how veterans approach the effort of emotion management in the transition context.

**Review of the Literature**

The scope of this literature review consists of scholarly journal articles, database inquiries, official government website searches and reviews of qualitative and quantitative studies relevant to the topic. The researcher could attain relevant studies and sufficient data related to the veteran transition experience. Literature regarding emotion management has also been reviewed along with the myriad of challenges associated with the veteran transition. A thorough review of the literature was conducted to adequately examine the existing contributions. This study was organized as: (a) Veterans in the Civilian Workforce (b) An Overview of the Veteran Transition (c) The Veteran’s Adjustment in the Transition (d) Veteran’s Skill Translation (e) Veterans and Job Stress (f) Veterans and PTSD (g) Veterans and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). (h) Veterans and
Veterans in the civilian workforce. This section discussed veterans in the civilian workforce and elaborated on their contributions, which compliment productivity and well-being within the organization. Military veterans are an active element in our nation's workforce (Parker, 2012; Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Veterans are individuals who have proven that they can learn new concepts and adapt to different work cultures and environments. Veterans bring a host of transferable skills to the civilian workforce to include team work, leadership, efficient performance under pressure and respect for procedures (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Every branch of the U.S. Military is unique however, the competencies are fundamental across each branch for good order and discipline.

Orme and Kehoe (2012) conducted a study that examined deployment perceptions of Army reservists by their employers. The study surveyed 126 employers of active reservists who were deployed during the tenure employment. The employers reported a significant number of positives regarding the impact of deployment on their enterprise and for the reservist employee. The positives included an increase of leadership, confidence and comradery. Of the surveyed population, there were forty percent fewer reports of negatives which concerned certain costs related to the absence of an essential employee (Orme & Kehoe, 2012).

The study also revealed that the deployments matured the reservist employee, which had a significant impact on the organizational functions (Orme & Kehoe, 2012). Maturation and growth stimulated the notion of personal and professional development.
which in many cases is influential in the workplace. Additionally, the researcher discovered that the reservist employee’s absence encouraged the organization’s leadership to improve staffing levels and talent management. The respondents generated 86 positive statements regarding the reservists employed within their organization. 64% of those statements reported mind changing revelations regarding the service members and veterans.

When there is no war, employers must view their reservist employees no different from other civilians (Zelcer, 2012). Zelcer notes a significant difference between active duty military and reservists. The active duty service member's training is ongoing whereas the reservist's training is periodic. Both active and reserve are exposed to the military culture which is heavily grounded in trust. According to Zelcer (2012), trust that is forged in units where soldiers literally risk their lives for each other and depend on each other's competence and loyalty will be different from trust forged in the civilian marketplace. Thus, whether a veteran is an active reservist or a retiree, they are entering the civilian workplace with a comprehensive understanding of trust and what it means to be honorable.

In 2011 the Pew Research Center surveyed 1,853 veterans from all branches, of all ranks and of variable lengths of time served in the military. The survey revealed a significant number of veterans credited the military with helping them improve and get ahead in life. The respondents credited the military for character building, socialization skills, self-confidence and interpersonal growth (Morin, 2011). The transition from the military presents varying degrees of challenge however, it is being proven that the rewards of hiring veterans are significant.
In recent years, the government has introduced several tax credits to employers who hire veterans. The "Returning Heroes" tax credit is provided to employers who hire veterans unemployed either short-term or long term (Glassman, 2012). Additionally, as the veteran population grows within the country, the department of labor creates more programs and incentives to assist employers with hiring (Parker, 2012).

Rudstam, Strobel Gower, & Cook (2012) conducted a study that examined the readiness of employers to hire veterans with disabilities (VWD). Strong considerations were given regarding Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The study examined the knowledge/beliefs, willingness, and practices of 1,083 human resource professionals. Findings indicate gaps concerning hiring VWDs with PTSD and TBI. However, findings reveal that employers did have the willingness to employ VWDs and saw great benefits in doing so. The respondent's practices showed that the majority were not using their recruitment strategies to target VWDs.

The transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce is not necessarily difficult for all veterans. Bennett et al., (2015) conducted a study which explored variables of the transition to civilian pharmacy career path for retiring military pharmacists. The study examined 140 retired pharmacists, from all branches who were provided with a cross-sectional survey. The survey assessed their military experience and their perceptions of the transition to civility. Concerning the transition from the military, 19.3% of the respondents perceived it as "more difficult" or "somewhat more difficult" than they anticipated. 52.6% of respondents perceived the transition to be "about what" they expected, and 25.9% perceived it as "somewhat easier" or "much easier" than they anticipated (Bennett et al., 2015). Prior to separation (discharge), the military prepares
service members for what's to come as a civilian. However, the post-separation adjustment process is variable (Rausch, 2014).

In recent years, the American civilian workforce has inherited an influx of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans (Cifu, Taylor, Carne, Bidelspach, Sayer, Scholten, & Campbell, 2013). Since the inception of the Afghan and Iraq wars in 2001, there has been over 1.9 million United States Military Personnel deployed in support of OIF and OEF. More than 1.5 million of that population has reintegrated into the civilian society (Hwang, Peyton, Kim, Nakama-Sato, & Noble, 2014). Successful reintegration, including sustaining gainful employment is a necessity and important to the psychological wellbeing of veterans nationwide (Adler et al., 2011).

OIF/OEF veterans contribute to a unique dynamic within the civilian work setting (Teclaw, Osatuke, & Ramsel, 2016). Per Plach, and Sells (2013), veterans who return to civilian life after war-related campaigns are at risk for experiencing focus and engagement distractions within the occupational environment. They conducted a study which identified engagement as the leading occupational performance challenge faced by young veterans reintegrating into the civilian workforce. Subsequently, more veterans are seeking employment with governmental agencies that hire veterans.

Currently, the Federal Government has programs in place to assist veterans in pursuit of civilian employment and affords preferences to those who seek federal employment. Special preference is given to campaign veterans who served during recent war periods (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016c) Below is an outline of several preferential programs offered to veterans by the Federal Government:
Point Preference. To prevent the success of negative employment stigmas regarding military service, veterans are provided with application preference points based on disability ratings.

Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA). VRA allows federal agencies to appoint eligible veterans without the challenge of competition.

Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA). Created for veterans discharged under honorable conditions and those who have completed 3 or more years of service, the VEOA of 1998 is a special appointing authority that is utilized to fill permanent, competitive service vacancies.

As the veteran population continues to grow within the civilian workforce, it becomes essential for employers to further understand veterans. The unique influx of war/campaign veterans transitioning into civilian roles introduces a sensitive dynamic which presents the risk of engagement challenges within the workplace (Plach & Sells, 2013). To understand and maximize the benefits of veteran hires, employers must consider the nature of veteran transition and reintegration into a less structured, less intense environment.

An overview of the veteran transition. This section provides a general overview of the veteran transition with consideration given to the programs available to the veteran in aid of the process. As the military downsizes and defense budgets decrease, thousands of military service members will continue to transition into the civilian society (Cozza, 2015). The transition from the Armed Forces to the civilian society includes an array of factors, internal and external that influence the veteran's ability to cope and adapt (Gaither, 2014; Anderson & Goodman, 2014). The transition itself is accompanied by the possibilities of homelessness and unemployment, which correlates with suicide within the veteran community (Troutman & Gagnon, 2014). Although each veteran's process of transitioning has its similarities, significant differences exist between the veteran's
expectations and reality when entering the civilian work environment (Ahern et al., 2015).

Robertson and Brott (2014) indicated that the occupational transition is viewed as a process occurring over a period, rather than an event that ends when one becomes employed. Thus, it is imperative that military veterans entering the civilian work environment understand the basics of how to manage the change(s) and emotion(s) associated with that transition (Gaither, 2014). Preparation for veterans to adequately deal with the reentry into society is essential and is enhanced when supportive resources are utilized prior to and after separation (Rausch, 2014). Rausch affirms that initiating the transition process early, taking advantage of available resources and networking with civilians prior to separation are three of the most cited strategies for a successful process. Although veterans may implement the proactive strategies, once separated from the military, application of the concepts remains a challenge (Robertson, 2013).

Preparation is a critical element within the veteran transition experience (Ahern et al., 2015). Due to the myriad of transitional challenges experienced by veterans, service members of each branch of the Armed Forces are offered transition assistance to prepare them for the reintegration back to civilian life (Cleymans & Conlon, 2014). The most prominent program available is the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP). The Transition Assistance Program was established to satisfy the needs of service members transitioning to civilian life by offering a relevant and comprehensively focused workshop within 180 days of service departure (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016b). The three-day professionally trained workshop educates service members about job searches, career development, resume writing, interview techniques and information concerning
the benefits and opportunities provided for veterans. Service members departing the military with service-connected disabilities are provided the opportunity to attend a similar workshop called Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP), which focuses more on special needs and job readiness.

Qualitative survey research was conducted to examine the effectiveness of TAP as it relates to reducing veteran unemployment. The study consisted of a sample of 350 Army personnel who attended TAP and who ‘could’ have attended. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the participants that took advantage of the services reported having obtained employment while sixteen (16%) percent did not obtain employment (Faurer, Rogers-Brodersen, & Bailie, 2014). Further research reveals that service members with more than ten (10) years of service found the most benefits in the TAP program while those who served with less than two either declined to participate or found no benefit (Faurer et al., 2014). The study concluded that TAP plays a significant role in the preparation of service members to reintegrate into society.

In 2011 President Barack Obama announced a strategic plan to ensure that all veterans from the current campaign had an increased and expanded amount of transition help prior to separation from the military (Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for military personnel, 2016). In recent years TAP, has undergone several regulatory changes to enhance the quality of the program (Cleymans & Conlon, 2014). The changes resulted in an overhauled TAP, now known as Transition GPS or T-GPS (Goals, Plans, Success), which includes a core curriculum, pre-separation counseling and a capstone project called the Individual Transition Plan (U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), 2016). After receiving all the content and instruction, service members are then to verify in writing
that all the pre-established goals and objectives were met during T-GPS (Cleymans & Conlon, 2014). Per the DoD (2016), the curriculum is evaluated for improvement on an annual basis, based on participant feedback.

The veteran transition to the civilian workforce is a challenging process that requires preparation and focus (Ahern, et al., 2015). Due to the multitude of challenges associated with the transition process, the government has instituted support programs to assist the veteran with a successful transition (Cleymans & Conlon, 2014). The overall goal is to ensure that veterans are prepared to face and overcome the challenges associated with the transition. Sufficient preparation contributes to a positive transition experience.

**The veteran’s adjustment in the transition.** This section will explore the veteran’s ability to adjust during the challenges associated with the transition to the civilian workforce. Additionally, this section will discuss employment barriers and hindrances that transitioning veterans encounter in the process. The transition from the military to the civilian workforce involves a multiplicity of adjustment challenges (Robertson & Brott, 2014). One of the greatest challenges veterans face while readjusting to the civilian society is the culture shock of the civilian way of doing business (Collins et al., 2014). Research reveals that the veteran’s return to the civilian society can be just as frightening as the previous transition of becoming a member of the armed forces (Sportsman & Thomas, 2015). The movement from a regimented, well structured, disciplined environment to a less structured, relaxed system also presents cultural conflicts (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). In addition to causing one to make critical life adjustments, the departure from job security, medical resources and a systematic way of
living contributes to psychological stress and frustration (McCaslin, Leach, Herbst, & Armstrong, 2013).

Between 2009 and 2011 Ahern et al., (2015) conducted a qualitative study which consisted of 24 U.S veterans from multiple branches of service, and of multiple age, gender, and ethnic demographics. The data collection method was semi-structured interviews. The interviews focused on the veteran transition into civilian life with consideration of the challenges and successes in the process. The findings revealed the following:

11 of 24 respondents alluded to structure being a challenge as the military structure was something to hold on to.

19 of 24 respondents reported a feeling of disconnect amongst family, friends, and non-veterans.

15 of 24 respondents felt that they were not getting the supported needed from the support entities.

6 of 24 expressed that the lack of structure as a civilian created several adjustment challenges.

10 of 24 respondents felt that as a civilian there was a loss of purpose which caused them to feel no longer like a contributor to the big picture.

In addition to the cultural and experiential adjustments, veterans who have been deployed to war zones, namely the Middle East (Afghanistan and Iraq) are at an increased risk for medical, social and psychiatric complications (McCaslin et al., 2013). McCaslin et al. noted that among the effects of medical, social and psychiatric complications are concentration and memory impairments which affect work performance.

Veteran reintegration into the civilian society presents adjustment challenges within the context of the veteran’s family (Fischer et al., 2015). Over the previous decade, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have increased efforts to incorporate
family members into the care and servicing of veterans (Glynn, 2013). The return home for most veterans is often misunderstood by family members due to preconceived notions of behavior and emotions (Danish & Antonides, 2013). Veterans, who are trained to function in dangerous and intense environments, require a period of unlearning and adapting which may cause them to remove or suppress certain emotions. Danish and Antonides (2013) posits that the lack of emotion may be viewed as anger or aggression and could affect the family. For this reason, Fischer et al., (2015) suggested that reintegration programs include a family component which addresses the impact of the reintegration phase and if necessary, war trauma related illnesses.

Recently Zivin et al., (2016) conducted a study of veterans which assessed employment barriers, the status of employment, employment functions among veteran patients and examined how anxiety and depression were connected to these conclusions. The sample consisted of 287 veteran patients treated in a VA health care facility in the Midwest. Bivariate and multivariable analyses examined the associations between 6 employment domains; work performance, current employment status, employment search self-efficacy, veteran job loss concern, the likelihood of job search among not employed veterans and employment barriers. Results indicate that 54% of respondents had jobs, 36% of respondents did not, and 10% of respondents were economically inactive. The participants with anxiety or depression (43%) were classified as less likely to be employed, had more employment barriers, lower work performance, and lower employment search self-efficacy.

Although a number veterans experience complexities while adjusting to civilian roles (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014), research reveals that many veterans thrive amid the
complexities, due to the beneficial traits acquired while in ranks (Brown & Routon, 2016). Brown and Routon posit that the traits of discipline, responsibility, and teamwork taught within the military structure are all valuable in the civilian workforce. In addition to the traits, the core competencies of leadership, respect for processes and procedures, integrity, performance under pressure and personal learning (growth) are also very prevalent amongst veteran, and are what makes veterans good employees (Parker, 2012; Delbourg-Delphis, 2014). Delbourg-Delphis highlighted that Rhonda Stickley, president of the Direct Employers Association argued that a young veteran has the potential to be more adaptable and flexible in variable environments than someone who's never served in the military. The lack of employer understanding in this regard can and has created barriers which contribute to veterans feeling as if they do not "belong" (Sherman, Larsen, & Borden, 2015).

Stigmatized veteran knowledge of non-veteran employer’s fuels misconceptions and prejudices which affect veteran’s perceptions of the civilian workforce (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). Thus, the Department of Labor has developed resources which educate employers on how to hire veterans, and why doing so benefits their organization (Parker, 2012). One resource is the America's Heroes at Work – Veterans Hiring Toolkit which was designed to support employers who have made the decision to hire transitioning service members and veterans (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016b). Studies reveal, the more employers know about hiring veterans, the better equipped they are to do so (Parker, 2012). Stone and Stone (2015) theorized that veteran (prior military) hiring managers and those that have a good rapport with veterans will
have a healthier understanding of the military and would give veteran status a more favorable job rating.

During the last decade, war-related publicity has influenced the reputation of veterans' insomuch that some employers now have increased concerns about the emotional and mental stability of those transitioning (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). As mentioned, Zalaquett and Chatters suggest that the preoccupation with veteran war trauma has created a fear that veterans may struggle to assimilate into the new environment. In addition to assimilation struggles, there is also concern that veterans may be prone to increase the potential of workplace violence.

In 2012, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conducted a survey which found that 42% of human resource managers have complications hiring veterans due to their perception of mental health related issues (Minton-Eversole, 2012). The unfortunate conclusion of these preconceived notions is that they may contribute to increased unemployment rates and lower wages amongst the veteran population (Loughran & Heaton, 2013). These revelations indicate there is a need for employers to further understand veteran and the transition process (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016).

Increased media focus and negative stigmas about mental illness and war trauma within the veteran population influences perspectives about military veterans (Randall, 2015; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). A qualitative study conducted by Kintzle et al., (2015) determined that a stigma exist regarding veterans' mental health, which causes some employers to exercise caution when considering military veterans for hire. Additionally, the study reveals that some veterans have experienced uncomfortable moments of discrimination from potential employers, which promotes the feeling of not
wanting to disclose veteran status on the quest for employment. Some veterans feel that instead of their professional abilities, the potential of being “crazy” is the focal point of non-veteran employers when considering them for hire (Kintzle et al., 2015).

In 2011 President Barack Obama signed the Veterans Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (VOW to Hire Heroes Act) (Parker, 2012). Under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Congress enacted significant tax credits to encourage businesses to increase the hiring of veterans (Heaton, 2012). The VOW to Hire Heroes Act allows business to receive stipends for hiring Post 9/11 veterans and veterans who have service-connected disabilities (Gonzalez, Henriquez, & McKennon, 2014) The tax incentive accomplishes a two-fold goal which benefits the participating businesses as well as the veterans in the transition process. For qualified veterans who are unemployed or in need of training to qualify for a new occupation, the VOW program offers vocational rehabilitation services to assist with acquiring the new skill(s) (Gade & Wilkins, 2012).

Although the veteran transition to the civilian society is complex, there is a significant number of resources in place to aid the transition process and to help overcome adjustment barriers for veterans and civilian employers (Parker, 2012; Delbourg-Delphis, 2014).

Adjusting to the civilian workforce is a process that requires veterans to exhibit an effective level of resiliency. Though there are several support systems in place to assist the veteran in the adjustment process, adjustment is yet hinged on an individual’s skills and capabilities. It is then incumbent upon employers to view veterans beyond the perpetuated preconceived notions and presuppositions. Veterans bring a skillset to the
table that’s relevant and transferable. The challenges understanding how to translate that skillset.

**Veteran’s skill translation.** This section will discuss existing literature regarding the translation of skills in a new, less structured environment. The translation of skills and competencies is a continual struggle amongst veterans (Miles, 2014). The military environment endows veterans with a host of valuable skillsets which could be directly translated and utilized in the civilian environment. Upon release from the military, most veterans enter the civilian workforce with the goal of laterally transitioning into an industry like their military function. All too often a lateral transition cannot be accomplished due to the skills not being accurately translated through the resume or in the job interview. While that is a reality, some veterans can translate skills and competencies in a manner that's exclusively understood by veteran recruiters.

According to Kutsmode (2015), one of the biggest challenges for public organizations is translating military competencies into civilian concepts and opportunities. Kutsmode (2015) postulates that employers that are struggling to hire veterans should revisit and revamp their hiring strategies. With a growing population of veterans in the workforce and the existing incentives for hiring heroes, it is imperative for organizations to improve veteran hiring initiatives.

Veterans are highly trained individuals but are often unaware of how those skills will correlate with corporate America (Roney, 2015). The challenge is to understand how the skills learned in ranks translate to soft skills in the less structured business culture. The inability to translate competencies can contribute to a wide range of negative emotions about the civilian workforce in general (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Gaither,
2014). Some veterans who experience such negative emotions are continually discouraged about the transition process. Additionally, the lack of interest, structure and understanding of the competency translation often draws negative conclusions about the civilian workforce in the mind of the veteran (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016).

In a study conducted by Danish and Antonides (2013), the researchers highlighted that some of the skills veterans attain in the military are war specific and survival related. Such skillset(s) are not able to fit in the corporate environment and could contribute to concerns for safety. Veterans who have trouble in transition may feel misunderstood by employers and fellow employees. These feelings have the potential to exacerbate reintegration difficulties and may result in negative thinking and illegal behaviors (Danish & Antonides, 2013).

From a career counseling perspective, for non-veteran civilian hiring managers to understand the translation and transition dilemma of veterans, they must confront their judgments and gain "humanized exposure" to veteran narratives (Zivov, 2013). Through effective interpersonal dialogue, an understanding on both parts could be reached. Zivov (2013) noted that younger veterans would likely lack skills in job searching, which could contribute to more readjustment frustrations. Hiring managers then can consider the impact of the hiring decision on the veteran as well as the benefits of such as it pertains to the organization.

Due to a lack of business training, and a slim market for combat-related work, infantry veterans experience a significant degree of frustration during the transition process. The Department of Veterans Affairs has implemented several programs to mitigate this dilemma, particularly vocational rehabilitation. Through vocational
rehabilitation, approved veterans are provided the opportunity to receive training and education for job fields of which they qualify (Gade & Wilkins, 2012). The VA assigns veterans to rehabilitation counselors to assist the veterans with beginning a new career path, thereby aiding the transition frustration factor.

As previously mentioned, the translation of military skills into civilian roles is a very complex endeavor (Kutsmode, 2015). For working veterans in the transition process, the inability to contribute to the civilian organization they’re employed by opens the door for stressors and anxiety (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Gaither, 2014). The next section will discuss veteran job stress as it pertains to veterans entering the civilian workforce.

**Veterans and job stress.** This section will discuss the management of job stress as it pertains to the military veteran in the civilian workforce. Veterans are transitioning out of the military and into the civilian workforce at an alarming rate. The factors associated with the transition are significantly variable. One factor that remains consistent is the factor of stress and frustration. Veterans experience stress in the process of adapting to new cultures while striving to remain productive and efficient in the workplace.

According to Bowen, Edwards, Lingard and Cattell (2014), Job stress is essentially defined as "The negative physical and emotional strain-effect responses that occur when job requirements do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker." For the transitioning veteran, reintegration and adjustment to civilian organizational culture are two elements that introduce stress amid the transition process (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). The perception of stress exists when the individual's appraisal of threat(s) to the environment exceeds the appraisal of coping strategies,
resources and responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). McAllister, Mackey, Hackney and Perrewé (2015), reported that individual differences can affect reactions to stress oriented stimuli in addition to influencing subsequent behaviors. Regarding military veterans, McAllister et al., (2015) notes that prior experiences, rank, and political dexterity can alter the perceptions of certain environments and the responses to those perceptions.

Courtney (2015), discovered ways to manage job stress as it occurs is beneficial for the both the employee and employer. Excessive job stress without proper intervention is one of the causes for employees pursuing debilitating periods of stress leave (Loveday, 2012). Richards (2012) notes that stress and like illnesses are among the leading numbers for lost time due to worker ill health. Courtney (2015) argues that occupational stress management is a key component in reducing stress related absence. Continued job stress, with employer knowledge yet without employer intervention, could result in the organization being accused of neglect (pg.10)

Stress coping is a strategic effort which incorporates the entire action performed by an individual experiencing stress in a certain situation (Wilczek-Rużyczka, & Jableka, 2013). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) posited that coping was an individual’s cognitive responses to manage existing stress, whether internal or external. Endler and Parker (1990) conducted a Multidimensional Assessment of Coping which identified three fundamental strategies of the coping phenomenon: Task-focused – which identifies a problem, develops a potential solution and implements suitable strategies as a means to resolve the situation, Emotion-focused – which consists of acting in such a way that reduces the strain of emotional tension and , Avoidance focused – which implies that an individual avoids thinking about a stressful situation or subject. Although several coping
strategies have surfaced over the years (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987; Folkman, 2013), the phenomenon varies depending on the individual’s influences and cultural background (Connor, 2016).

Research conducted by Romero et al., (2015) examined how coping style impacts symptoms of depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress in a sample of student veterans. The study also assessed the impact of family social support on anxiety and depression and posttraumatic stress. Data from 136 student veterans revealed that avoidance focused coping significantly predicted symptoms of depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress. Further research revealed that strong family social support lessened the negative impact of avoidance focused coping on symptoms of anxiety and depression but not posttraumatic stress.

Qualitative research conducted by Connor (2016) explored culture’s influence on the coping patterns and strategies of Filipino immigrant nurses. The study’s population consisted of a total of twenty female Filipino nurses, currently working in a U.S. healthcare facility at the time of the interview. All participants received their fundamental nursing education in the Philippines and practiced as registered nurses (RN) for a period, prior to migrating to the United States. The interviews lasted for one hour and were audio recorded. The data was transcribed verbatim and was analyzed using a qualitative data management software (Atlas.ti, v6.0). Several themes emerged from interviews which concluded on the types of coping strategies utilized by the population:

- **Familial** – Respondents described coping behaviors that were linked to their families
- **Intracultural** - Respondents described a strong sense of camaraderie and connection with others of the same cultural demographic (Filipino) in the workplace
• **Faith-based** - Respondents – All the women utilized spiritual/ faith-based coping strategies to assist with overcoming challenges in the workplace

• **Forbearance** – Respondents described self-restraint and self-introspection to control responses to stressors

• **Affirming the nursing profession** – Many respondents considered the positives of their field of work when difficulties arose, and such helped with coping

• **Escape and avoidance** - In the moment of stress and emotional difficulties on the job, many respondents reported that they “escaped” the situation by stepping away and avoiding further confrontation.

  Pellegrino and Hoggan (2015), indicated that coping strategies can facilitate change and ultimately promote revaluation during the transition. Schlossberg (2011) theorizes that some individuals can rapidly acclimate to new roles, relationships, habits and assumptions whereas others may experience a strong sense of uncertainty and fear. How a person copes can dramatically impact their level of job stress, as studies show that coping style influences symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety (Romero et al., 2015).

  For the military veteran, discovering ways to manage job stress is imperative if one desires to remain effective in the civilian workplace. To leverage the stressors associated with the transition process, veterans must learn to cope and manage emotions. Coping is the mechanism where one controls the emotions and reactions that stem from stressors (Wilczek-Rużyczka, & Jableka, 2013).

  **Veterans and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).** This section will discuss PTSD as it pertains to the veteran population. PTSD (Posttraumatic stress disorder) is a mental health condition that some individuals develop after witnessing or experiencing a traumatic life-threatening event (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Common causes in the military involve combat or sexual trauma. In recent years, the topic post-
traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and veterans have gained much attention, which has contributed to negative stigmas concerning veterans being hostile, overly emotional and aggressive (Interian, Kline, Callahan, & Losonczy, 2012).

In 2012, the Center for New American Security researched the impact of PTSD perceptions on the veteran hiring process (Zoroya, 2013). The research consisted of executives from multiple leading corporations. All executives agreed that hiring veterans could be a good business practice, however, a significant number of executives acknowledged and admitted to having negative perceptions of veterans because of media's portrayal of PTSD and veterans in general. Contrary to the existing misconceptions, PTSD can be easily accommodated in the workplace by allowing the employee to have therapy time or assigning workspaces with optimal space (Zoroya, 2013).

Further research reveals that veterans diagnosed with PTSD are negatively impacted by employer misconceptions prior to entering the civilian workforce (Smith, Boteler Humm, Fleming, Jordan, Wright, Ginger, & Bell, 2015). Smith et al., (2015) conducted a study which identified the civilian job interview as a fear induced employment barrier for veterans diagnosed with PTSD. Smith et al., (2015) suggests that veterans with PTSD have fears of being asked about military history and treatment accommodations. Although PTSD is prevalent amongst the veteran population, not all veterans leave the military with PTSD.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, reported that 11 to 20 out of every 100 OIF/OEF veterans are reportedly diagnosed with PTSD (PTSD: National Center for PTSD, 2016). Among the diagnosed population are also veterans that developed PTSD
from non-combat related circumstances. Tamez and Hazler (2014) report that the population of female veterans with PTSD increases due to military sexual trauma (MST). Among males, the leading cause of PTSD is combat exposure whereas the leading cause among females is MST. PTSD stemming from MST is a widespread occurrence due to the frequent exposure of sexual assault in the military (Rossiter & Smith, 2014).

Rossiter and Smith (2014) argue that MST is the leading predictor of PTSD among female service members. In the Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, in 2015, 6,083 cases of sexual assault were submitted to the Armed Forces (Castro, Kintzle, Schuyler, Lucas, & Warner, 2015). Of that number, 5,240 of the reporting victims were service members. These numbers are significant enough to support the notion that post-traumatic stress stems from more than combat related circumstance.

PTSD is a frequent concern of many employers who hire military veterans. The media’s portrayal of the disorder has contributed to misconceptions and stigmas. PTSD can be accommodated in the workplace by allowing the affected individual to participate in whichever form of therapy necessary (Zoroya, 2013). Though the disorder is quite common in the veteran population, it is important to note that not all veterans have PTSD and those with PTSD aren’t all victims of war trauma.

Veterans and traumatic brain injury (TBI). This section will discuss existing literature about veterans and traumatic brain injury. The nation’s workforce includes veterans from all walks of life who have experienced combat and other life changing events. Some of those events alter the way the veteran functions, reacts and interprets certain moments. Particularly, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) has debilitating effects if not
properly treated. Simcox, Mattingly and Marrero (2015) assert that a TBI disrupts the normal functions of the brain and could contribute to depressed mood, sleep problems, fatigue, memory loss, etc. TBIs may occur when a person takes a blow to the head or when an object penetrates the brain. According to Gause et al., (2016), TBIs can create difficulties for the injured veteran. This can include behavioral difficulties as well as trouble with basic cognitive and perceptual skills.

From 2000 through 2011, 235,046 military service members were diagnosed with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) (Simcox et al., 2015). Research suggests that reintegration into the civilian sector is complicated for veterans with TBI due to the changes in the brain and cognitive ramifications (Meyers, Chapman, Gunthert, & Weissbrod, 2016). The Department of Defense (DoD) and The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have instituted distinctions regarding TBI to distinguish severity of the injury. Military healthcare professionals use the categories of "mild," "moderate," or "severe," when referring to the classification of TBI (Rossi, 2013).

Pogoda et al. (2016) found that the employment status of combat veterans was influenced by the severity of their TBI. Those with moderate to severe TBI were prone to have more employment complications than those with mild TBI. This study found that for veterans with mild TBI, employment is no more affected than those without TBI. Those with moderate to severe TBI were also more likely to have PTSD, lower education levels, depression, and anxiety. Pogoda et al., (2016) also revealed that active duty veterans were more likely to have TBI than National Guard or reservists.
Veterans with mental health conditions are not without resources. Research suggests that Veterans with TBI are more likely to take advantage of the vocational services available to them. Twamley et al., (2013) conducted a study which examined two national Veterans Health Administration (VHA) databases to determine how many veterans were accessing vocational services over a period. The research indicated that the strongest predictor of having a vocational encounter was having a greater number of mental health diagnoses (Twamley et al., 2013). These findings indicate that even though there's a presence of mental complication, veterans are yet striving to work and effectively transition into the civilian workforce.

A qualitative study conducted by Cifu et al., (2013) explored the needs and concerns of combat veterans with mild traumatic brain injury (m TBI) to come up with a conceptual model. The study assessed eight veterans diagnosed with m TBI who were interviewed via telephone. The participants identified specific needs and concerns across domains as they were reintegrating with the civilian society and familial circles (Cifu et al., 2013). The findings revealed that each veteran had developed strategies to compensate for the cognitive deficits related to m TBI. Where one had problems with memory, he compensates by utilizing a PDA to keep track of important aspects of the day. The veterans who experienced emotional difficulties found methods to assist with coping and managing their emotions. Additionally, the veterans reported financial concerns which were linked to the ability to sustain employment as a disabled veteran diagnosed with m TBI. These findings correlate with the high percentage of veterans with TBI utilizing vocational resources available through the Department of Veterans Affairs (Twamley et al., 2013).
Veterans with afflictions such as TBI are not without aid and/or assistance. Employers must note that injuries such as TBI can impair focus and impact job performance. In addition to the stressors associated with adjusting to new environments, veterans with TBIs have concerns that their injury could negatively impact their employment status (Pogoda et al., 2016). Thus, many veterans are prone to embrace the concept of being resilient. Studies show that resiliency is an important factor for veterans when striving to minimize the effects of mental health ailments (Simmons & Yoder, 2013).

Veterans and resilience. This section will discuss the importance of resiliency as it pertains to the transitioning veteran. The military affords and equips veterans with a level of resilience beneficial for both the veterans and society (Brown & Routon, 2016). For one to understand the resilience of veterans, one must conceptualize and consider the impact of military culture. Siegl (2008) argued military culture as the values, attitudes, and objectives that influence conduct which is embedded in customs, courtesies, and traditions. It is imperative to understand that each military branch has a unique set of moral and ethical codes. These codes frame how service members perceive and interpret everyday moments. These codes also frame how service members will react in situations of uncertainty.

Military culture promotes the concept of psychological strength and emotion management (Halvorson, 2010). In the context of military veterans and emotion management, resilience can be defined as the ability to adapt to adversity or to rebound from adverse situations (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2006). A content analysis performed by Simmons and Yoder (2013) found decreased mental health
symptoms and increased personal success because of high resilience. Low resilience consequently resulted in increased mental health symptoms and an increase in high-risk behaviors (Simmons & Yoder, 2013). Additionally, research reveals that resilience training during the inception stages of military service helps boost the confidence of the service members. (Adler, Williams, McGurk, Moss, & Bliese, 2015).

A quantitative study conducted by Elliott et al., (2015) examined the impact of resilient personality prototypes on depression and PTSD symptoms among war veterans. The study, which consisted of 127 male and female veterans, revealed that the resilient personality prototype positively influences veteran adjustment through the associations with greater social support, emotional flexibility, and decreased usage of avoidant coping (Elliott et al., 2015). It was concluded that personality characteristics influence the quality of life and well-being of military veterans.

In summary, Halvorson (2010) asserted that a service member’s psychological strength and resilience stems from the type of military culture they are a part of. Resilience refers to the ability of individuals who are exposed to significantly stressful situations yet maintaining healthy psychological functioning (Brown & Routon, 2016). Bonanno et al., (2006) suggests that resilience is also consists of the ability to adapt to stressful situations. Due to the intense regimented background, veterans in the civilian workforce are assumed to be resilient. This study will explore how veterans manage their emotions amid the stressful transition to the civilian workforce.

**Emotions and the professional environment.** This section of the review of literature will discuss the management of emotions, how emotions are regulated, the concept of emotion labor and emotional intelligence. These topics are important to
further understand the scope of the phenomenon being observed in this study. Employee emotions in the professional environment are rather complex and essentially reflects the downs and ups which occur in the workplace (Cho, Rutherford, Friend, Hamwi, & Park, 2017). Cho et al. postulates that failure to effectively manage emotions can result in job related stress which could eventually increase health risks.

Goleman (1998) maintains that individuals respond differently to events that require the self-regulation of emotion. Different industries, experiences and job functions all contribute to the notion of distinct methods of emotion control. Hammonds and Cadge (2014) conducted a study on emotion management strategies which examined how 37 intensive care nurses manage their emotions on and off the job. The findings indicate venting to fellow colleagues, utilizing cognitive approaches and reconstructing the negative moment as positive, were methods of on the job emotion management strategies of nurses. In addition to the examination of on the job emotion management strategies, Hammonds and Cadge (2014) examined the emotion management strategies off the job. The findings indicate calling in as a strategy for helping nurses construct emotional boundaries between personal and professional elements, i.e. home and work. Nurses also identified social support and engaging in activities as strategies for emotion management off the job.

Sloan (2012) examined gender differences in the emotion management of male and female employees in the workplace. The author hypothesized that men and women would differ in the types of emotion management they perform in the workplace. In 2004, questionnaires were mailed to 2500 male and female professionals functioning in various workplaces capacities. The intent of the project was to assess the emotions managed in
the workplace, overall worker well-being, and worker attitudes. Of the 2500 solicitations, 1533 (62%) returned completed questionnaires. Fifty-nine percent of the sample were women. Findings indicated that women managed their anger at work more frequently than men. Based on the findings, Sloan (2012) maintained that men were more prone to express anger and women were more prone to express happiness within the workplace. Results also revealed that the expressions of certain emotions, namely anger were linked to job characteristics. Workers who had little influence over their coworkers and workers who spent significant amounts of time with supervision controlled their anger while in the workplace.

Şchiopu (2015) conducted a quantitative study which examined employee perspectives on positive and negative workplace emotions and analyzed the effects of employee emotions on job satisfaction. The results indicated that employees experience more positive emotions in the workplace than negative. In addition, the results revealed that employee job satisfaction and company retention were both directly impacted by employee emotions. These findings implied that the higher the degree of positive emotions felt by the employee, the higher the degree of employee job satisfaction and company retention. The results indicated that the most positive emotions felt by the employee at work were trust, contentment, enthusiasm and curiosity while the most negative were nervousness, irritation, annoyance, hostility and boredom (Şchiopu, 2015). Emotional reactions and methods of coping are unique to each person (Goleman, 1998). What affects one person may not get the same reaction from another individual but could certainly have the same impact. Shaw and Hunter (2014) reported some displays of emotion in the workplace can be viewed as unprofessional and irrational. Singh (2015)
admonishes not to disregard emotions as they provide information that even the rational mind has yet to perceive. It is then essential for employees to identify emotion coping strategies and determine which are best suited for certain roles and job functions (Shaw & Hunter, 2014). Oren (2012) examined job-related stressors and coping strategies of self-employed and organizationally employed professionals. The findings revealed that organizationally employed professionals coped by avoiding problems whereas self-employed professionals coped by confronting them. Additionally, stress levels and active coping were negatively correlated while stress levels and passive coping were found to be positively correlated (Oren, 2012).

**Emotion regulation.** This section will discuss existing literature regarding the phenomenon of emotion regulation. Emotion regulation is a form of emotion management which is conceptualized as the efforts to influence emotions, when they are experienced, how they are experienced and how they are expressed (Gross, 1998). Hochschild (2003) submits that emotion management refers to the effort of controlling and managing feelings and emotions while keeping facial and bodily displays consistent with expectations in social interaction. Gross (1998) maintains that emotions can be regulated in manners which are antecedent-focused and manners which are response focused. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation occurs prior to the emotion being generated while response-focused emotion regulation occurs after the emotion has been generated (Gross, 1998). Furthermore, Gross (1998) notes, antecedent-focused emotion regulation involves a multiplicity of types:

- **Situation selection** - where an individual intentionally avoids persons or situations due to the potential likelihood of emotional impact
• **Situation modification** – where an individual modifies a given environment due to the potential likelihood of emotional impact

• **Attention deployment** – where one redirects his or her attention to influence their emotions; and

• **Cognitive change** - where one evaluates the current situation or their capacity to manage the situation to alter one's emotions. Response focused emotion regulation manipulates how emotional responses are displayed by “curtailing ongoing emotional experience, expression or physiological responding” (Gross, 1998, p. 225).

Grandey (2000) maintains that emotion regulation deals strongly with the reappraisal and suppression of emotions. Although the concepts of emotion regulation are commonly applicable, individuals differ in their approaches to regulating emotions and respond accordingly (Gross & John, 2003). Gross (2013) notes that individuals who are more prone to suppress emotions experience more negative emotions and less positive emotions. By contrast, individuals who utilize reappraisal more often experience and express less negative emotions and more positive emotions (Gross, 2013). Gross (2013) further maintains that individuals strive to decrease negative emotions such as anxiety and anger and increase positive emotions such as love and joy.

The regulation of emotion is not a foreign concept to military veterans. (Lane, Bucknall, Davis, & Beedie, 2012). Military service members are prone to experience situations where their emotions must be regulated to survive intense and hostile situations. Along with the call of duty comes the responsibility of abiding by rules and commands that may not seem agreeable to the service member, but must be carried out for the success of operations (Lane et al., 2012). This experience contributes to the resiliency of veterans which also relates directly to the suppression and regulation of emotions linked to PTSD.
Radomski and Read (2016) conducted a study which examined the mediating role of emotion regulation and assessed its relevance to PTSD status and alcohol use. The study consisted of a large sample \((N=466)\) of college students who actively used alcohol at the time of the study. Findings revealed that the individuals who have been exposed to significant trauma reported a greater difficulty with regulating emotions than those who had not been exposed to trauma. Additionally, results indicated that emotion regulation could be regarded as a critical link between alcohol use and PTSD, which support the inclusion of emotion regulation training in PTSD programs.

**Emotional labor.** This section explores existing literature concerning the concept of emotion labor. Emotional labor is a distinctive type of labor which involves an employee's regulation of emotions, to create visible facial and bodily expressions to fulfill requisite emotional display in organizational interactions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 2003). Hochschild (2003) defines emotional labor as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display.” According to Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) and Hochschild, (2003), emotional labor can be approached with a few strategies. The two strategies that have significant relevance to this literature review are surface acting and deep acting.

In surface acting, employees attempt to change their outward behavior to “exhibit required emotions” (Yoo & Arnold, 2014, p. 1278). Yoo and Arnold suggest that deep acting requires employees to display expected emotions to meet organizational expectations. Hsi-Peng and Her-Ran (2015) assert that surface acting is the masking of emotions while deep acting is the modification of emotions. Prior research has concluded that surface acting has negative connotations (Kim, 2008; Yang & Chang, 2008)
however, current research reveals the contrary regarding deep acting. Rathi (2014) proposed that more frequent use of deep acting subsequently leads to increased job performance and customer satisfaction.

Lu and Guy (2014) conducted a study which revealed job engagement as a positive consequence of emotional labor. The researchers utilized government employees in the People's Republic of China who worked in a large metropolitan area. The sample was comprised of 47.3% male and 52.7% female. The researchers revealed that 250 surveys were sent out and 201 were returned with sufficient data. Findings suggest that leadership’s role among the two constructs have developed significantly. Lu and Guy (2014) hypothesized that ethical leadership is a moderator between emotional labor and job satisfaction.

Service oriented employees are often expected to engage in emotional labor due to the pressures associated with providing customer service (Biron & van Veldhoven, 2012; Rathii, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2014). Maini and Chugh (2012) conducted a quantitative study which examined the extent of emotional pressures encountered by employees while conducting customer service. Furthermore, the study examined the antecedents and consequences of emotional labor as it pertained customer service. The study based its foundation on the primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that employees with a higher emotional labor quotient have lower emotional exhaustion and higher job satisfaction amid emotional, occupational pressures. Results also suggest that good interpersonal relationships with fellow employees positively contribute to emotional labor and job satisfaction.
**Emotional intelligence.** The topic of emotional intelligence will be investigated through a review of the current literature and reported in this section. Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence as a form of social intelligence and defined it “as the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions” (p. 5). Although human emotions are a common characteristic, every individual has a distinct way of monitoring one’s own feelings and emotions (Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou, & Niakas, 2012). Existing literature supports the notion that people are capable of self-assessing to regulate emotional outcomes.

According to Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is defined as a person's self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, commitment and integrity, and a person's ability to communicate, influence, initiate change and accept change. Goleman asserted that emotional intelligence was comprised of 5 domains: (a) self-awareness – knowing one’s self i.e. emotions, values, strengths, opportunities (b) self-regulation – understanding how to manage one’s responses or disruptive impulses (c) social skill- understanding how to effectively manage relationships in order to move people in a desired direction (d) empathy – considering the feelings of others particularly when making decisions (e) motivation – having the drive to achieve for the sake of achievement.

In his bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman (1997) suggested the concept of emotional intelligence refers to the ability to manage emotions subsequently increasing self-awareness. Mayer and Salovey (1997) concluded that emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional meanings, and to
effectively regulate emotions to promote better emotion and thought. Thory (2015) maintains emotional intelligence has significant value in the professional environments of today, deeming necessary for employees to understand how to manage emotions while functioning in the workplace.

Emotional intelligence is a key strength that benefits military veterans prior to transition and after. According to Bradberry and Greaves (2009), emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize the emotions of others and oneself while utilizing that understanding to monitor and control one’s behaviors. The military system of rank, chain of command and disciplined structure are strong proponents that benefit from the use of emotional intelligence amongst service members (Oden et al., 2015).

Oden et al., (2015) conducted a study which described the operational need for emotional intelligence tenets to be interwoven into the existing military training setting. The author(s) suggests that in numerous military operations, the success of the mission is critically dependent on the ability of the operational team to examine, leverage and manage and emotion (Oden et al., 2015). To accomplish this, operational leaders (and members) must be able to readily identify their own emotions and those experienced by others within the scope of operation. The author(s) conclude by recommendation that joining emotional intelligence and operational (immersion) training together would complement decision-making in cross-cultural settings (Oden et al., 2015).

In a recent study conducted by Gupta and Kumar, (2015), the authors highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence for military pilots. The literature revealed three parameters to framework the emotional competence of military pilots. Cognitive ability, Emotional Stability, Motivational Capability (Gupta & Kumar, 2015). Cognitive ability
refers to the pilot’s process of reasoning and problem solving which contributed to
multitasking and communication abilities. Emotional stability refers to the pilot’s ability
to stay calm under even life threatening pressure. Motivational capability refers to the
pilot’s self-motivation amid external pressures. The author(s) concluded that emotional
intelligence is one of the most vital parameters for military pilots (Gupta & Kumar,
2015).

Psilopanagioti et al., (2012) posit that emotional intelligence plays a significant
role in organizational outcomes namely job performance and job satisfaction, especially
when human interaction is a primary focal point. Kaur's (2014) study examines the
relationship between emotional intelligence and on-the-job behavior. The sample in this
study consisted of 311 service sector employees. Kaur hypothesized that there are
multiple factors which determine an employee's on-the-job behavior; Personality,
emotional intelligence, technical knowledge, perceived organizational support and
perceived equity. The findings in this study revealed significant relation between
emotional intelligence and on-the-job behaviors. Additionally, the findings suggest that
employees who exhibit high scores for emotional intelligence display more positive work
behaviors. Effective control of emotions has also been found to create positive work
environments (Jung & Yoon, 2016). Both Psilopanagioti et al., (2012) and Jung and
Yoon (2016) conclude that if an employee's EI is exceptional, it can assist them in
producing positive outcomes related to performance, emotional labor and job satisfaction.

This literature review contains an investigation of emotion management functions
to include emotion management strategies (Hammonds & Cadge, 2014) emotion
regulation (Gross, 1998), emotional labor (Hochschild, 2003) and stress coping (Wilczek-
Rużyczka, & Jabłeka, 2013). This literature review revealed that in today’s business society it remains critically imperative for employees to understand how to manage emotions while in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014; Thory, 2015). Further, by exploring emotion management in the transition process, this study could help bridge gaps of understanding in military to civilian transition literature. The findings of this study, expressed by lived experience(s) should provide further knowledge and insight regarding how veterans employ emotion management while reintegrating back to the civilian workforce. Addressing the phenomenon may potentially dispel negative myths and stigmas regarding the emotional state of transitioning veterans.

**Methodology**

During the survey of the literature presented in this section, the researcher reviewed both qualitative and quantitative studies relevant to the topic of veterans managing emotions while transitioning to the civilian workforce. Much of the studies cited in this chapter were qualitative in nature (Orme & Kehoe, (2012); Faurer et al., (2014); Badger and McCuddy (2014); Ahern et al., (2015); Romero et al., (2015); Connor, (2016); Gupta and Kumar, (2015); Oden et al., (2015); Cifu et al., (2013); Fassinger & Morrow, (2013). Among the reviewed literature, there were several studies that assessed the veteran transition however, the lack of literature concerning emotion management during transition suggests and confirms the gap in research (Minnis, 2014).

The decision to utilize a qualitative approach was informed by the results of searches within the Grand Canyon University Library online database. Several studies utilized a qualitative research method to study the veteran population. Oge and Burrell (2012) utilized a qualitative research design to examine tools to enhance leadership
behaviors of U.S. Army service members. Gordon (2014) utilized a qualitative research method to examine veteran’s war zone experiences. Faurer et al., (2014) utilized a qualitative research method to examine the effectiveness of the military’s transition assistance program as it relates to reducing veteran unemployment. A qualitative approach provides personal insight from a human perspective regarding lived experiences, which is less likely to be delivered from a quantitative approach, which generates numerical and statistical data (Moustakas, 1994). Badger and McCuddy (2014) utilized a mixed method approach to explore the strengths, challenges and factors impacting student veterans’ as they endeavored to use the college’s resource programs. The instruments of data collection for this study were qualitative surveys and semi structured interviews.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. Per Hale, Treharne, and Kitas, (2007), qualitative research is apropos when the researcher’s goal is to understand the personal perspective of an experience. Participants in qualitative studies are given the opportunity to voice their stories and provide insight to comprehensive areas of knowledge (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). Tufford and Newman (2012) affirm that the qualitative research methodology is most suitable for interpreting, understanding and discovering how phenomena is experienced. Quantitative research methods utilize numerical and/or statistical data to express quantity (Punch, 2014). Therefore, the qualitative research methodology is essential to further understand phenomenon and lived experiences.
**Instrumentation**

As noted in the methodology portions of this study, a qualitative phenomenological approach was determined to be appropriate for addressing the established problem. To accomplish this, the researcher used semi structured interviews as the primary means of data collection. Research reveals that the semi structured interviewing is effective in collecting data from the veteran populations. A semi structured interview approach was employed by Ahern et al., (2015) to study the veteran transition to civilian life. The interview allowed for thick, rich descriptions of data collection and provided a deeper understanding of the veteran transition to civilian life.

Mattocks et al., (2012), used a semi structured interview approach to understand how women veterans cope with military sexual trauma. Mattocks et al., (2012) notes that the semi-structured interview format was effective in that it promoted free expression. The semi structured approach allowed respondents to speak freely about their military experiences, reintegration challenges and coping mechanisms to minimize stress.

Pellegrino and Hoggan, (2015) examined coping strategies among military veterans who have transitioned to the college classroom. The researchers utilized a case study to deeply understand the experiences of veterans who were first year community college students. This research utilized semi-structured interviews as the primary means of data collection. The findings indicate that participants utilized time management skills gained from the military to reduce stress and manage emotions.

In conjunction with the semi structured interviews, the researcher utilized a data collection instrument comprised of 13 questions aligned with the current problem and research questions. The instrument was developed by the researcher and then sent to three
subject matter experts with earned doctorates in relevant content areas to test the integrity of the questions. Conducting an advanced preliminary test of an instrument allows problems and errors to be detected before the researcher embarks on the intended study (Doody & Doody, 2015). The preliminary test with the expert panel allowed the instrument to be critiqued and the researcher made corrections according to recommendations.

**Summary**

Chapter 2 presented a meticulous review of existing literature regarding the veteran transition and emotion management in the transition process. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the emotion management experiences of military veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce. Based upon the review of literature, a gap was identified which expressed a need to further examine ways veterans manage emotions while reintegrating back to the civilian society (Minnis, 2014). Minnis implied that further research is needed on the emotion management of veterans transitioning to civilian employment. Gaither affirms that the veteran transition challenges veterans to make necessary emotional adjustments (Gaither, 2014).

Theoretical foundations discussed in this section are Schlossberg’s model of Human Adaptation to Transition and Goleman’s Theory of Emotional Intelligence. Schlossberg (2011) provides a comprehensive framework that brings clarity to the key elements of the transition experience. Throughout theoretical literature, Schlossberg communicates a constant theme; everyone adapts to change differently (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011). Goleman (1998) posits that everyone will have distinct responses throughout this model which means that some will be more
proficient in certain areas of the model than others. These theoretical foundations guided and supported this study.

Research noted that the continual separation of service members increases the veteran population in the civilian workforce (Kirchner, 2015). Although there is an influx of the veteran population, research has indicated that sustaining employment in civilian establishments is significantly difficult for most veterans (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Gaither, 2014). Employment difficulties are attributed to several factors such as cultural adjustments (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Collins et al., 2014), lack of transition support (Rausch, 2014), psychiatric complications (McCaslin et al., 2013) and existing stigmas about veterans (Kintzle et al., 2015; Randall, 2015).

The analysis of existing literature revealed employer concern about veterans and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Zoroya, 2013). Zoroya notes that amongst executives, there are negative perceptions that exist regarding the hiring of military veterans at civilian establishments. The negative perceptions and stigmas are attributed to the increased media focus on mental illness and war trauma within the veteran population (Randall, 2015; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). Subsequently, the veteran perception of the civilian workforce becomes negatively impacted by stigmatized veteran knowledge and misconceptions existing amongst civilian employers (Delbourg-Delphis, 2014; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016).

In addition, this literature review contains an investigation of emotion management functions to include emotion management strategies (Hammonds & Cadge, 2014) emotion regulation (Gross, 1998), emotional labor (Hochschild, 2003) and stress coping (Wilczek-Rużycka, & Jableka, 2013). This literature review revealed that in
today’s business society it remains critically imperative for employees to understand how to manage emotions while in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014; Thory, 2015). Further, by exploring emotion management in the transition process, this study could help bridge gaps of understanding in military to civilian transition literature. The findings of this study, expressed by lived experience(s) provides further knowledge and insight regarding how veterans employ emotion management while reintegrating back to the civilian workforce. Addressing the phenomenon may potentially dispel negative myths and stigmas regarding the emotional state of transitioning veterans.

The next chapter presents a review of the process applied to explore the lived experiences of veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce. Chapter 3 discusses the methods utilized to conduct this phenomenological study. Chapter 3 also provides descriptive information regarding the procedures of research, instrumentation, sample participants and methodology utilized. Additionally, Chapter 3 will discuss ethical measures taken to ensure participant confidentiality is maintained.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. There was an apparent gap in the body of knowledge which indicates that further examination is needed regarding veterans managing the emotions associated with the military to civilian transition (Minnis, 2014). Minnis’ research suggests that engaging in civilian career matters necessitates military veterans to manage emotions to protect from the negative reactions of employers and their responses to those reactions. Gaither (2014) suggests that the greatest challenge for military veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce is the change in mentality which contributes to a wide range of emotions. In today’s business society, it remains incumbent upon all employees, veteran and non-veteran to understand how to manage emotions while in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014; Thory, 2015).

As previously noted, the growing population of veterans presents an increased need to understand the veteran population (Boutin, 2011). The target population for this study were prior enlisted military veterans who served on active duty between September 2001 and the present day. All participants will have been prior enlisted, and discharged from the military within the past 5-7 years. "Prior enlisted” refers to a veteran having obtained a rank of E-1 through E-9 while serving in an active duty status in any branch of the United States armed forces. The population consisted of prior enlisted veterans rather than prior commissioned (officer) veterans. This approach is due to significant differences between the two communities. In contrast, enlisted personnel are the largest
population the armed forces and are functionally hands on, while officers operate in an administrative managerial capacity to lead the enlisted personnel (Military Careers, 2014). A purposive sample of 10 prior enlisted veterans employed at various civilian establishments were interviewed using one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 1 provided a comprehensive introduction to this study which explained background, introduced purpose and highlighted the problem. Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical foundations of Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (Anderson et al., 2012; Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011) and Goleman’s Theory of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1997; Goleman, 1998) which preceded a review of literature relevant to this study’s purpose. This chapter will outline the problem along with the research questions and methodology for this phenomenological study. This chapter will also focus on the research design, population, and sources of data. Further, this chapter will address the validity and reliability of data, how data was collected and analyzed, as well as the ethical considerations associated with the participants. In conclusion, this chapter will address the limitations and delimitations of the research, and will summarize the components.

Statement of the Problem

It was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce. The intent of this phenomenological study was to capture the lived experiences of transitioning veterans’ emotion management practices while employed in civilian institutions. The need to study veterans is in part due to the large number of the population that exists today (Boutin, 2011). Additionally, there is a need to further understand the emotion management of transitioning military veterans.
as there is gap in the existing research (Minnis, 2014). The military to civilian transition process necessitates veterans to adapt culturally, socially and psychologically (Collins et al., 2014).

Identifying which emotions are encountered in the transition process and understanding how those emotions are managed is essential for veterans and employers. Research demonstrates that 42% of human resource managers found it difficult to hire veterans due to misconceptions of mental health issues (Minton-Eversole, 2012). Thus, there is a need for civilian employers to further understand military veterans (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). This study assists employers with understanding and awareness as it explores lived experiences of veterans employed in the civilian workforce.

**Research Questions**

The research questions utilized in this study will explore the emotion management phenomena as it applies to transitioning military veterans. The research questions were created based on a gap discovered in the literature and therefore has a clear relationship with the goal of the study (Minnis, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). Research question 1 focused on identifying the emotions veterans may experience while in the transition to the civilian workforce. Research question 2 expands to investigate how the emotions are being managed and Research question 3 sought to explore the necessity of emotion management as it relates to veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce.

**RQ1:** What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?

**RQ2:** How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?
RQ3: Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

The research questions for this study addressed the problem statement which states “It was not known how military veterans manage the emotions associated with the transition to the civilian workforce”. This study may be a contribution in the field of military transition training as it addresses a common phenomenon that continues to occur in the United States and around the world. Emotion management in the civilian workplace is a very important concept. Cho et al., (2017) noted that the failure to manage emotions in the workplace will increase the levels of job stress and health risks. By exploring how veterans approach managing emotions amid the arduous transition to the civilian workforce, the research enhances the current knowledge of the veteran transition phase.

Research Methodology

Wahyuni (2012) suggests that a research methodology is solely theoretical and refers to a model to conduct a research within the context of a paradigm. To examine the phenomena and lived experiences of veterans managing emotions in the civilian workforce, this study will utilize a qualitative research methodology. A qualitative approach was the best choice for this study as it provides personal insight from a human perspective regarding lived experiences, which is less likely to be delivered from a quantitative approach, which generates numerical and statistical data (Moustakas, 1994). The proposed method of data gathering was one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Through interviews, the researcher gathered data to address the research questions. The
qualitative data also addressed the problem statement by concisely addressing the gap identified in the literature.

Qualitative research is a beneficial methodology when studying the military/veteran population. Gordon (2014) utilized qualitative research to review and describe veteran’s war zone experiences across an array of original qualitative research. Oge and Burrell (2012) used qualitative research to identify tools to enhance ethical leadership behaviors of U.S. Army recruiters. As previously noted, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. Tufford and Newman (2012) asserts that the qualitative research methodology is most suitable for interpreting, understanding and discovering how phenomena is experienced.

Mayer (2015) advances that quantitative research involves measuring and counting which places emphasis on quantification in data collection and analysis. Punch (2014) notes that the key concept of quantitative research is utilizing numerical data to express quantity. Unlike quantitative studies which examine numerical data, this study will examine lived experiences which will assist with the understanding of personal involvements. Quantitative research does not consider the personal experiences of subjects; therefore, it was not selected as the methodology for this study.

Fassinger and Morrow (2013) affirms that qualitative research empowers participants by helping them to voice their stories and by honoring their strengths, needs, and values. Exploring how veterans manage emotions associated with transitioning to the
civilian workforce allowed veteran’s voices to be heard from a phenomenological perspective. Thus, a qualitative methodology was the best choice for this study.

**Research Design**

The design selected for this study was the phenomenological research design. Converse (2012) advanced the notion of phenomenology being a philosophical perspective that aids researchers’ efforts to explore and comprehend daily experiences minus pre-supposed knowledge of those experiences. Wilson (2015) posits that phenomenology empowers people and promotes understanding of others by allowing the lived experience to be experienced vicariously. The researcher conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews which yielded personalized data regarding the lived experiences of participants. Gee et al., (2013) proposed that in gaining knowledge of a phenomenon, it is imperative to revisit individuals lived experience of the phenomenon. Thus, a phenomenological design was appropriate for this study.

Phenomenology investigates consciousness through the examination of its actions (Broome, 2011). Phenomenology utilizes lived experiences as a path to understand phenomena (Duckham & Schreiber, 2016). This study utilized the lived experiences of prior enlisted, transitioning military veterans as a path to understand the phenomenon of managing emotions while in the workforce transition. Further, this study applied a phenomenological approach to address the research questions, utilizing 10 prior enlisted military veterans employed at various locations in Southern California.

The use of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews in this study allowed participants to produce personalized and reliable data. Broome (2011) posits that an interviewing strategy is not intended to “spur” the participants to remember obscured
specifics, but rather help them to simplify and fully convey what it was like for them during their individual experiences. The semi-structured approach to interviewing is effective in collecting data from the veteran population. Ahern et al., (2015) employed the semi-structured interview approach to study combat veterans’ transition into civilian life. Wolff and Mills (2016) utilized semi-structured interviews to examine women veterans’ experiences seeking assistance for incidents of military sexual trauma (MST). Kramer, Savary, Pyne, Kimbrell, and Jegley (2013) used the semi-structured interview approach to explore veteran perceptions of virtual reality to assess and treat PTSD.

Grounded theory, ethnography, and case study are other forms of qualitative research which were considered for this study were not sufficient. The grounded theory, which is also referred to as a general research method, deals primarily with generating new theory (Lowe et al., 2015). The grounded theory design was not appropriate for this study as the aim is not to produce new theory but to explore lived experiences and phenomena to deepen the understanding of such. Ziakas and Boukas (2013) affirm that the goal of phenomenology is to enlarge and deepen the understanding of a range of experiences.

Ethnographic studies involve participant observations in a setting to understand the participant’s daily environment from a social and cultural perspective (Rashid et al., 2015). An ethnographic study strives to capture a moment to moment snapshot of a certain context to observe a culture or social group. For this study a phenomenological design was better suited compared to the ethnographic approach because the focus is not on one setting or cultural group, but the lived experiences of diverse population.
A case study is described as a strategic inquiry in which the research explores a program, process, activity, event or one or more persons. Case studies search for problems or concerns by investigating or studying cases within limited parameters (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013). The phenomenological design is better suited for this study rather than the case study because the focus is exploring lived experiences of veterans that are employed by distinct companies in distinct capacities. A case study has a more limited focus. A case study could potentially fit this study if the participants were all employed by the same company and in the same department. Although that is an interesting approach to study the emotion management of transitioning veterans, it did not fit this study.

The research designs (Grounded theory, ethnographic and case study) were not selected for this study as neither examined lived experiences to understand the phenomena. Further, phenomenology seeks to gain insight into the personal lived experiences of human participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The researcher collected data from the participants utilizing one-on-one semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the personal lived experiences.

**Population and Sample Selection**

The target population for this study was prior enlisted military veterans who served between September 2001 and present day. This era is known as the Gulf War Era II (Walker, 2008; U.S. Department of Labor, 2016c). The sample size for this study was 10 prior enlisted veterans employed at various civilian establishments in Southern California. A recent phenomenological study conducted by Rea, Behnke, Huff & Allen (2015) utilized a sample size of 10 to evaluate military personnel during deployments.
The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method, which intently selects informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (R. S. Robinson, 2014). Purposive sampling assisted the researcher with selecting participants based on veteran status, civilian career level and demographic location.

Inclusion criteria for participation in this study included: (1) participant must have been honorably discharged from the military within the past 5-10 years, (2) participant must have served on active duty for a minimum of 4 years (1 enlistment), (3) participant must have been employed on the current job for more than six months, (4) participant must be a current resident of Southern California. To become a participant in this study, an individual must meet all the criterion. The goal was to collect data to explore lived experiences of transitioning veterans managing the emotions associated with the transition.

Voluntary participation for this study was solicited through the online message boards of LinkedIn and Facebook. The researcher utilized personal LinkedIn profile to solicit participation and utilized online veteran groups with the approval of the group administrator. For Facebook solicitations, the researcher utilized personal profile to solicit participation and engaged the administrators of veteran groups to get permission to solicit. Once prospects confirmed their desire to participate, the researcher contacted them individually to ensure criteria was met.

Individuals selected to participate were briefed on ethical principles of conducting interviews for study. Once the participants have been briefed, the signed informed consent was obtained by the researcher. The Belmont Report affirms that research
involving human subjects requires respect for persons which demands that subjects enter the research voluntarily and with adequate information (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). The goal in this regard was to ensure the participants are well cognizant of their rights in the process prior to consent.

**Sources of Data**

This qualitative study used one-on-one, semi-structured interviews and the researcher’s journal as primary sources of data collection. The one-on-one, semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to collect data from all participants, while having the latitude to further explore certain themes and/or responses (Englander, 2012). Interviews were conducted in accordance to the established interview protocol, and utilized the established data collection instrument (Appendix D) which is a list of 13 questions aligned with the current problem and research questions.

The 13 questions were developed by the researcher based on the literature, the problem and the purpose of the study. Interview questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 were based on Schlossberg’s transition theory. Schlossberg communicates a constant theoretical premise throughout the literature which suggests that everyone adapts to transitional change differently (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011). Questions 9-13 were developed and based on Goleman’s theory of emotional intelligence. Goleman (1997) describes emotional intelligence as a mechanism of emotion and impulse control even during frustrations. Questions 4 and 6 were based on Gaither’s (2014) article on Military Transition Management. In the article the author explores several challenges military veterans should overcome in the transition process.
To confirm that each of the 13 interview questions were in alignment with the research questions for this study, the researcher developed a comprehensive research question matrix (Appendix F). Additionally, the instrument was submitted for expert panel validation by the Content Expert in the researcher’s committee, Amy Blowers, Ed.D, and two volunteer university professors, (Wayne K Richards, DBA and James Jackson, Ed.D) who have conducted similar studies. Further information regarding these individuals’ is contained in Appendix G of this study.

The prospective participants in this study had the opportunity to review the goal of the study, and the necessitated criteria for participation. Those who elected to participate contacted the researcher to confirm their choice. According to Wilson (2015), phenomenological research participants should have interest in and be committed to contributing their lived experience(s). Once participation was confirmed between the prospect and researcher, the researcher arranged a date, time and place to meet to initiate the interview process.

The interviews for this study were conducted in a location of convenience for the participant. The interviews were recorded using an audio recording device. The researcher utilized a professional transcription service to transcribe each recorded interview session. To protect participant’s identity, distinct identifiers were removed and each veteran was assigned an alphanumeric identifier (VET1, VET2, VET3 etc.) and a pseudonym. The researcher journalized observations and response interpretations in the researcher’s journal. Wilson (2015) theorized that interpretation is often based on verbalized descriptions of experiences. Wilson asserts further that researchers should
reflect on their interpretations during the research process. The researcher’s journal assisted with documenting concepts relevant to the participant’s responses.

Prior to conducting the interview, participants were provided with the informed consent documentation (Appendix B). The researcher verbally explained the document’s content and ensured participants fully understood prior to signing their signatures. The researcher also encouraged all participants to speak freely and to thoroughly answer each question. Additionally, the researcher reiterated to all participants that they are at liberty to stop the interview if they so choose. The interviews were conducted for a minimum of 43 minutes. Prior to asking the interview questions the researcher conversed for a minimum of 10 minutes to establish a comfort level with each participant. The allotted timeframe allowed the interviewer and participant to engage without rushing. Wilson (2015) hypothesizes that phenomenology requires patience and is not good practice if the interviewer is in a rush to collect data. All interview questions were presented in an open-ended manner to elicit appropriate responses.

Validity

The main objective of establishing research validity is to ensure collected data are accurate and authentic throughout the study. The process of data collection will include expert validation by 3 doctoral prepared experts who will evaluate the interview protocol to determine the viability of the interview procedure. One expert serves as the Content Expert on the researcher’s dissertation committee. The second expert is a university professor who holds a doctorate in business administration (DBA) and has published phenomenological research. The third expert is a university professor who holds a doctorate in education (Ed.D.) and has published qualitative research.
**Member Checking.** The researcher utilized member checking to ascertain validity of the findings. Member checking is frequently used in qualitative research to ensure validity of information (Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Mays and Pope (2000) cited member checking as an effective process of error reduction through respondent validation. Validity was also being increased through comprehensive recording of interview data using digital recording device and interview transcription. Upon completion of the interview, the researcher (interviewer) sent the participant (interviewee) a copy of the transcripts for review of accuracy. This gave the participants the opportunity to annotate corrections or provide feedback regarding the data.

**Reliability**

Qualitative reliability specifies that a certain approach is reliable and consistent across diverse researchers and diverse projects. Leung (2015) posits that reliability refers to the replicability of processes and results. Roberts, Priest and Traynor, 2006 suggest that reliability can be conceptualized as trustworthiness of the research conducted and the subsequent data presented. This qualitative study is certainly replicable due to the increasing population of military veterans (Kirchner, 2015), and the present need to study the veteran population (Boutin, 2011). Additionally, the interviewer provided candid steps throughout this study which could assist with replication if necessary.

Through the utilization of semi-structured interviews and detailed interview protocol, the content expressed in this chapter, and in the appendix, provide sufficient information if replicability was a goal. The participants in this study were recruited utilizing professional social media sites, LinkedIn® and Facebook. After deciding to participate in the study, the prospective participants confirmed with the researcher their
willingness to be interviewed. They were then emailed the informed consent for review. The prospective participants then reviewed the informed consent. Once the informed consent was reviewed by the participant, the participant confirmed with the researcher their willingness to participate. Those who elected to participate were scheduled to interview. Prior to the interview, the researcher requested confirmation of participant’s veteran status through verification of the veteran’s discharge document (DD-214) or veteran’s identification card.

Upon completion of the interview, further credibility was established by the researcher conducting a comprehensive review of the transcripts prior to the initial coding process. This review allowed the transcripts to be critically examined to further understand the context and perspectives of the participants. Once the transcripts have been thoroughly reviewed, the participants were given the opportunity review the interview transcripts and adjusted if necessary. This method is called member checking and assisted with ascertaining reliability in this study. Member checking is commonly referred to as a process of error reduction through participant validation and confirmation (Mays & Pope, 2000).

Data Collection and Management

Prior to conducting the prescribed method of data collection, the researcher first obtained a letter of approval from GCU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon the approval of the GCU Institutional Review Board, the researcher requested permission to recruit in online veteran groups through LinkedIn and Facebook. The recruitment request was submitted to the administrators/moderators responsible for the maintenance of the group. Once approved by the entities, the researcher proceeded to post the recruitment on
a personal profile and within the veteran group message boards. Once volunteers agreed to participate, the researcher proceeded to brief them and schedule the interview session(s). Participation criteria was met prior to participation. The researcher collected data using one-on-one, semi structured interviews. The interview questions were presented in an open-ended manner.

The population selected for this study were prior enlisted Gulf War Era II military veterans (who served between September 2001 and present day). The sample size was 10 prior enlisted veterans employed at various civilian establishments, who all resided in Southern California. Each participant was being given a one-on-one semi structured interview and was asked a total of 13 interview questions. The interviewer recorded (audio) each interview session with prior permission from the sample and documented responses for analysis. The goal of this purposeful data collection was to gather sufficient data that would answer the research questions.

1. The first step in collecting this data was to get approval from Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study.

2. The second step was to submit recruitment requests to the administrators of veteran groups through Facebook and Linkedin.

3. Upon approval, the researcher utilized the group’s message boards to solicit participation from the targeted population. The researcher also utilized personal profile to recruit participants. Participants were provided with a thorough summary of the study itself prior to participating.

4. The interviews were conducted via one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. With consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded via audio recorder. Each recording was assigned a number to assist with anonymity and tracking of data.

5. To ascertain validity, the researcher utilized the validity determining method of member checking to assist. The interview transcripts were sent to the participants for review and annotation.
Security of the data and participant’s identities were both maintained. The researcher elected to assign unique identifiers and pseudonyms (VET1, VET2, VET3 etc.) to protect participant’s identities. For example, the first participant will be assigned VET1; the second participant will be assigned VET2; the third participant VET3 and so on. As previously mentioned, a digital recording device was used in each interview session. When all interviews were complete, the digital files were then uploaded for transcription by a professional transcription service. The selected data analysis software (NVivo11) also assisted with data management and security by requiring a password to access the data. Upon completion of the study the audio files were destroyed. The transcribed data and field notes used in this research were stored in a locked file cabinet accessible only by the researcher. After a period of 3 years, the research data and field notes will be destroyed.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Three research questions guided the collection of data for this qualitative phenomenological study. The first question, what various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce, focused on identifying the emotions veterans are experiencing while transitioning to the civilian workforce. The second question, how do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce, investigated how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning to the civilian workforce. The third question, why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce, investigated why the veteran feels it is necessary to manage their emotions while transitioning to the civilian workforce.
The primary data collection instruments were the one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, the recorded interview data and the researcher’s journal. A descriptive summary of participant’s demographic profile is included in Table 1 consisting of unique identifier, age, gender, branch of service and combat experience. The participant’s years of military service is compared with their time as a veteran in Table 2.

In qualitative research the data analysis involves critical steps consisting of collection, organization, and lastly interpretation (Yin, 2013). The data for each research question was collected utilizing one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The digital audio recordings were transcribed through Trint.com’s transcription service and placed in Word format. Once transcription was complete, the researcher then conducted a thorough analysis of the interview transcripts by thoroughly simultaneously reading them and listening to the digital files. To ensure the transcripts matched the digital audio recordings, the researcher made corrections throughout the transcripts until text and audio congruency was achieved. The transcripts were then imported into NVivo 11 for data analysis.

Once imported, NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software assisted with organizing and categorizing the data. By utilizing the NVivo11 software, the researcher could manage the empirical data in a single location (Oliveira, Bitencourt, Zanardo dos Santos, & Teixeira, 2016). Furthermore, the material was coded by being placed into distinct categories where the information is indexed accordingly (Oliveira et al., 2016). NVivo11 conducts qualitative data analysis through a process of managing data, idea organization, querying the data, displaying the data of the research (Bazeley & Jackson,
2013). The data associated with this study was be coded and categorized into interrelated themes.

The researcher began the analysis by reviewing the transcripts and identifying certain topics anticipated to appear in the data. These topics were utilized as initial codes. The NVivo11 software assigned codes based on the transcribed interview data. The researcher assigned additional codes upon further review of the data. The coded data was categorized and reviewed to identify patterns which assisted with the development of themes. The researcher then provided a descriptive summary of what’s conveyed within the themes. The information is displayed on tables and available in Appendix I of this study.

The researcher considered the use of other qualitative data analysis software programs (Atlas.ti, MAXQDA) but decided NVivo11 would be more appropriate for this study. The researcher’s rationale behind selecting NVivo11 instead of the others was supported by a comparative analysis of all 3 programs, a consideration of each program’s capabilities and the researcher’s familiarity and experience with NVivo’s coding functions. The researcher utilized NVivo software on previous qualitative projects that consisted of interview transcription and data analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

Potential ethical concerns included veteran’s feeling that their disability (if mental) is being addressed for study. Another concern is the fear of some form of negative viewpoint. The researcher ensured that no descriptive information (name, age, position, current company etc.) is disclosed and will sign documentation to affirm. Participants included military veterans that have been discharged within the last 5-7
years. All participants were recruited using the assistance of the social media group administrators. Upon approval from the GCU Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher requested site approval from the group administrator. Upon approval, the researcher then solicited participants for the study through a posting in the selected group.

The participants were provided informed consent information of why the research is being performed and were provided with copies of confidentiality agreements. As mentioned, The Belmont Report affirms that research involving human subjects requires respect for persons which demands that subjects enter the research voluntarily and with adequate information (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). The goal was to ensure the participants were well informed prior to consenting to participate in this study.

The researcher affirmed that all research was conducted under the assumption that subsequent findings will remain anonymous. The interviews were recorded utilizing a digital recording device to ensure accuracy of communicated information. To assist with organization and confidentiality, each session has been numbered. Additionally, names and personal identifiers were not utilized and each veteran was assigned an alphanumeric identifier (VET1, VET2, VET3 etc.) to supplement name usage.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Ioannidis (2007) argues that identifying limitations in research requires an understanding of the significance and impact of errors within the research. The limitations associated with this study include the sample size, participant criteria and potential social desirability bias. A description of these are numbered below:

1. Sample Size. This qualitative phenomenological study involved 10 veterans, in Southern California who volunteered to become participants. The researcher
followed the guidelines of Ritchie et al., (2013) which suggested that qualitative samples should essentially be small. The limitation of 10 participants allowed the researcher to reach the point of data saturation however, an increase of sample size may or may not introduce new concepts regarding the phenomenon. Recommending a larger sample for future research could be a strategy for minimizing the consequence of this limitation.

2. Employment criteria - This study only assessed individuals who have civilian employment experience. As noted in the criteria for participation, participants in the study have been employed in the civilian sector for a minimum of 6 months. Although the noted period is a short time constraint, the transition phenomena is yet present prior to the 6-month period. Removing the 6-month stipulation may or may not introduce new concepts to regarding the phenomenon.

3. Social desirability bias. Social desirability bias is a known measurement error that takes place when a respondent offers a response that is considered more palatable than his/her true conduct. Social desirability bias is a definite possibility when examining the lived experiences of the veteran population. Because of the nature of the study, it was assumed that some participants might have felt the need to express information that would be commonly accepted as positive. Moreover, due to the negative stereotypes concerning the veteran population, it was assumed that some participants might have been more inclined to express what they felt was more palatable to readers. Prior to the interview, the researcher conversed veteran to veteran to foster an environment of trust and common ground comfortability thus minimizing potential bias. Wilson (2015) assumes trust to be a potential limitation in phenomenological studies.

Summary

Chapter 3 presented a detailed analysis of the methodology employed for this study. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. This chapter outlined the problem along with the research questions and methodology. Furthermore, this chapter analyzed the research design, source(s) of data collection, validity and reliability of data and the data analysis approach.

The qualitative research methodology is most suitable for interpreting, understanding and discovering the experiences of phenomena (Tufford & Newman,
2012). Qualitative research is an apropos means of fostering a deeper understanding of lived experiences and phenomena (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The research design utilized in this study is phenomenological. Wilson (2015) assumes phenomenology promotes the understanding of others by allowing lived experiences to be expressed in a vicarious fashion. The researcher collected qualitative data from a sample of 10 Southern California military veterans to bridge the gap identified in the literature.

Data collection in this study consisted of the following (a) researcher is approved to conduct research from Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board, (b) initiate recruitment of participants via LinkedIn® and Facebook ® (c) confirm interview with qualified participants, (d) scheduling of interview via email and telephone, (e) conduct one-on-one, semi structured interview at a designated location convenient for the participant, (f) transcription of the interview, and (9) analysis of collected data. Chapter 4 will discuss the data analysis and findings that emerged from the lived experiences of military veterans transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. The research intent of this study was to address the gap which demonstrated that it was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian environment. The social intent of this study was to assist military veterans and the civilian work population with conceptualizing the emotion management of veterans in the workplace. Addressing the gap was imperative as the growing number of veterans transitioning to civilian roles necessitates exploration and examination of the transition process (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016). Gaither (2014) acknowledges that during the military to civilian adjustment, one of the most significant challenges faced by the veteran is the change in mentality which is a precursor to various emotions. This study explored the lived experiences of transitioning veterans who have employed emotion management techniques while working in the civilian workforce.

The researcher recruited 10 Gulf War Era II military veterans utilizing social media outlets LinkedIn and Facebook. The participants were invited to participate in semi-structured interview sessions, which were recorded with an Apple iPhone 7, transcribed, coded and analyzed using online transcription service, Trint.com. Data analysis for this study was conducted for the identification of themes which surfaced while answering the following research questions:
This chapter provides a detailed description of the participant’s demographic characteristics, the procedures of data collection and the processes of data analysis and coding. Furthermore, the results of this study were found to be in alignment with the research questions. A summary section is presented at the end of this chapter to describe the researcher’s approach, structure of the chapter and pertinent conclusions.

Descriptive Data

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology and a phenomenological research design. The qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to adequately explore lived experiences of 10 Gulf War Era II military veterans who’ transitioned to the civilian workforce in Southern California. The participants consisted of eight males and two females who elected to participate in semi structured interviews, which lasted between 43 and 72 minutes. This approach allowed the researcher to collect rich data which contributed to a robust analysis.

Upon approval from the Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and social media group administrators via Facebook and LinkedIn, the researcher posted the recruitment for participation within selected social media groups (Appendix H) and on the researcher’s, personal LinkedIn and Facebook page(s). As veterans who
took interest in participation contacted the researcher, explanation was provided to ensure each veteran met the criteria for participation. The participation criteria were as follows: (1) participant must have been honorably discharged from the military within the past 5-10 years, (2) participant must have served on active duty for a minimum of 4 years (1 enlistment), (3) participant must have been employed as a civilian for a minimum of six months, and (4) participant must be a current resident of Southern California.

The population of veterans that volunteered to participate in this study were employed by various institutions in Southern California. Five of the participants worked as civilians within organizations which provide support to military units. Two of the participants worked within the local government capacity and three were employed by non-government, privatized businesses. All participants have been civilians for over 3 years. The participant demographics revealed age ranges between 31 and 53 years of age, with a median age of 36 (see Table 1).

**Demographic checklist.** A demographic checklist was completed in the participant’s presence prior to the interview (Appendix C). The checklist allowed the researcher to collect descriptive data specific to each participant. During the preliminary portion of the interview a Study Identifier and Pseudonym was assigned. Table 1 displays the information gathered to complete the demographic checklist.
Table 1.

Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Identifier</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Branch of Service</th>
<th>Combat Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET 1</td>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 2</td>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 3</td>
<td>Dru</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 4</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 5</td>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 6</td>
<td>Claud</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 7</td>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 8</td>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 9</td>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 10</td>
<td>Danae</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>ARMY</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A veteran’s experience in the military is an important factor when considering the transition to the civilian workforce. Retired veterans receive pensions from the government and usually have a minimum of 20 years while other honorably vets have less years and no pension. Those who have had more recent experiences such as service during the Post 9/11 period have a more difficult time adjusting to the new environment than those who have served during prior campaigns (Morin, 2011). As Figure 1 illustrates, the participants’ length of military service is considerably different.
Out of ten participants, three (Adam, Counsel & Mack) were retired, serving twenty plus years in the military. Each participant had a minimum of three years post military civilian work experience. Sierra, Claud, and Jay were the only participants with more veteran work experience than time served in military service. Danae was the only participant that had equal military and veteran work experience.

**Interview process.** The researcher conducted a field test prior to officially interviewing the participants of this study. The field test allowed the researcher to assess the validity of the interview questions. The researcher commenced the field test by conducting two interviews of which none of the data collected were analyzed as part of this study. The feedback from the field test provided the researcher with an opportunity to adjust interview questions, for the enrichment of data collection. The field test revealed that the interview questions were sufficient for this study and did not warrant any changes.
For this study, each participant was given an individual semi-structured interview as a means of data collection. Semi-structured interviews follow a predetermined protocol of questions asked of each respondent, but allow for spontaneous follow-up questions and variation in how questions are asked (Labaree, 2014). The method of interviewing enabled the researcher to explore the lived experiences of ten military veterans who’s transitioned to the civilian workforce. Three research questions framed the design of this study. The researcher utilized thirteen interview questions to assist with the data collection process. Prior to the interview, the researcher requested confirmation of participant’s veteran status through verification of the veteran’s discharge document (DD-214) or veteran’s identification card.

Prior to beginning the recoded session, the interviewer spent a minimum of 10 minutes building a rapport with each participant. Rapport building consisted of conversing with the participant about the veteran life, the study’s informed consent and completing the demographic checklist. Pathak and Intratat (2012) found that rapport building in semi structured interviews are useful to gain further perspectives and insight. Wilson (2015) assumes trust to be a potential limitation in phenomenological studies.

The interviews lasted between 43 (shortest interview) to 72 minutes (longest interview). The first three participants’ interviews were the shortest. Jimmy expressed tiredness during the preliminary conversation. Sierra’s interview was conducted during her extended lunch break which encouraged her to be prompt with her responses. In consideration of her time, the researcher did not use probes as much. Dru expressed tiredness during the preliminary interview conversation as he exercised prior to work that day. In consideration of his time, the researcher did not use many probing questions.
After each interview question was presented, the participants were given adequate time to thoroughly respond. During the study, to encourage elaboration, the researcher inquired further by utilizing probes and thought provoking interjections while discussing the participant’s answers. Pathak and Intratat (2012) suggest that thought-provoking interjections indicate to the participant that the researcher (interviewer) would like to hear further elaboration on an answer.

With the participant’s permission, the interviews were recorded with an iPhone 7 cellular phone, voice memo feature. The researcher utilized Trint.com to transcribe the audio files. One hundred and twenty pages of transcription documents were produced in Times New Roman with a 12pt font. In addition to the transcribed pages the researcher’s field notes produced 10 pages of additional thoughts and observations. The researcher’s field notes were utilized to record participant’s nonverbal expressions during the process of data collection. The use of field notes enables the researcher to record the participant’s initial thoughts during the interview. Sophie (2012) suggests, to enhance the quality of data management in qualitative studies, transcripts, field notes and audio recordings should be used together. A summary of interview data is displayed in Table 2:
Table 1.

*Interview Overview*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Identifier</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
<th>Transcribed Pages</th>
<th>Field Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET 1</td>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td>Vet’s Home Office</td>
<td>4/11/17</td>
<td>8:27am</td>
<td>9:10am</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 2</td>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>Researcher’s Office</td>
<td>4/11/17</td>
<td>1:34pm</td>
<td>2:17pm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 3</td>
<td>Dru</td>
<td>Vet’s Home Office</td>
<td>4/11/17</td>
<td>5:45pm</td>
<td>6:35pm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 4</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>Public Park</td>
<td>4/12/17</td>
<td>3:45pm</td>
<td>4:45pm</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 5</td>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>Public Park</td>
<td>4/19/17</td>
<td>3:50pm</td>
<td>4:49pm</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 6</td>
<td>Claud</td>
<td>Public Park</td>
<td>4/19/17</td>
<td>8:30pm</td>
<td>9:30pm</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 7</td>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>Vet’s Home Office</td>
<td>4/20/17</td>
<td>2:50pm</td>
<td>3:49pm</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 8</td>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>Public Park</td>
<td>4/20/17</td>
<td>7:57pm</td>
<td>9:01pm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 9</td>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Vet’s Home Office</td>
<td>4/26/17</td>
<td>12:10pm</td>
<td>1:10pm</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET 10</td>
<td>Danae</td>
<td>Vet’s Home Office</td>
<td>5/4/17</td>
<td>6:51pm</td>
<td>7:51pm</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview setting.** The setting for each participant interview was of the participant’s choice. The researcher provided the option to meet at his own home office or any place that is quiet and comfortable for the participant. VET 2 (Sierra) elected to meet at the researcher’s home office because it was near her location on the day of the interview. VET 1 (Jimmy), VET 3 (Dru), VET 7 (Counsel), VET 9 (Jay) and VET 10 (Danae) elected to meet in their home office(s). VET 4 (Adam), VET 5 (Dee) and VET 6 (Claud) all elected to meet in a public park of their choosing.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

**Data preparation.** This section describes the data preparation process leading up to the analysis of data. All interviews were transcribed promptly after each individual interview session to maintain credibility and reliability of the data. Stuckey (2014) observed that prompt verbatim transcription is necessary to establish trustworthiness and dependability of the research content. The researcher utilized Trint.com, an online transcription service to transcribe the interview sessions. To ensure audio recordings and
transcripts were congruent, the researcher played the audio session while reading the text, making corrections within the transcript as necessary. Trint’s program did not provide data labels, so while conducting the text to audio analysis, the researcher labeled responses throughout the text. The data labels show distinction between the researcher’s commentary and the participants lived experience.

Upon transcription completion, the data was prepared to initiate the process of member checking. In qualitative research, member checking is commonly used as a viable means of error reduction through participant validation (Mays & Pope, 2000). McBrien (2008) submits that member checks are one of the most robust methods of assuring credibility in qualitative studies given that it seeks the participant’s perspective on the consistency of findings. Member checking allowed the researcher to examine and compare the transcripts with the audio recordings to ensure accuracy. Once the researcher ensured the transcripts were congruent with the audio files, the transcripts were delivered to the participants via email along with instructions on the member checking process. The email explained to the participants that they were allowed five days to review and return the transcripts with any corrections they may feel necessary. Once the five-day period expired, the researcher assumed the original transcribed documents were accurate and ready to be imported into NVivo 11 for data analysis. Following the process of member checking, the researcher commenced the analysis of the data.

**Analysis of data.** This section describes the data analysis process utilized by the researcher to explore how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment. Data analysis for this study was formulated using guidelines from Saldaña (2013) and Silverman (2016). The data
analysis began with the highlighting words, sentences and phrases and giving them a label. This process is known as in-vivo coding Silverman (2016). The researcher used NVivo 11 software for qualitative data analysis to assist with coding, managing the data, and concisely displaying the content (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). According to Saldaña (2013, p.3) a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data. Seidman (2014) suggests coding is the process of noting the interesting and significant portions of the data. The coding associated with this study was facilitated in two phases, first cycle and second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2013).

The researcher initiated the process of first cycle coding (in-vivo) by thoroughly reading all transcripts to get a general understanding of the information and the meaning thereof. The researcher conducted a line-by-line examine of each interview transcript. The purpose of this step in the analysis process was to identify repetitive words and key phrases regarding the participants lived experiences. The words and phrases that occurred repetitiously were written down and highlighted by hand (Silverman, 2016). These were designated as the initial codes in the analysis process. The researcher continued the process of first cycle coding until no further codes could be identified.

Next, through the second cycle of coding (axial), the codes were then grouped together into distinct categories. Amongst the recognized codes, themes were identified when the researcher noted connections within each of the distinct categories (Seidman, 2014). The researcher then created a theme outline to ensure all codes lined up with the corresponding theme. This helped the researcher choose a word or passage and assign it
to the relevant theme. After the process of coding and categorizing, the researcher conducted a thorough review of the themes to ensure accuracy and clarity. The transcripts were then uploaded into NVivo 11 qualitative analysis software. NVivo 11 enabled the researcher to organize and categorize the data more succinctly. A table of seven prevalent themes and the corresponding codes has been included in Appendix I of this study.

The researcher created Nodes in NVivo which captured repetitive words, statements, and phrases that concurred with the node. These nodes mirrored the content identified in the first and second cycles of coding. Additionally, the organization of the data allowed the researcher to identify relevant phrases that were not identified in the initial coding stages. The new node tab allowed the research to create and name the node in accordance with the codes identified in the data. NVivo enabled the researcher to cluster similar phrases and nodes into themes. These emerging themes provided comprehensive context based on the participant responses regarding emotion management in transition from the military to the civilian workforce.

There were two limitations that impacted the data presented in this study. The first limitation was the slang usage and heavy accents of certain participants. Several participant responses required extensive edit within the transcript. Trint’s transcribing software was unable to accurately transcribe certain words and phrases. The researcher addressed this by carefully reviewing the audio recordings and editing the transcript to ensure both were harmonious.

The second limitation that impacted the data analysis was the environmental factors associated with the interview location. Participants Adam, Dee, Claud, and Mack were interviewed in a public park. During the data analysis, the researcher observed
several inconsistencies on the transcript due to sounds of wind, passerby voice, car horns, police sirens and motor sounds. Counsel, whose interview was conducted in his home office, dog barked several times during the interview session. Trint’s transcription software was unable to accurately transcribe during these moments of audio interruption, creating inconsistencies within the transcript. The researcher addressed this by carefully reviewing the audio recordings, along with the field notes and editing the transcript text to ensure harmony was established between text and audio.

Three research questions provided guidance for the direction of this study: What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce? How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce? Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce? The research questions were informed by the phenomena of emotion management during the veteran transition (Maxwell, 2013). The interview questions were aligned and configured to answer the research questions.

Interview questions 1 through 8 sought to identify the various emotions associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. Interview questions 9 through 10 were used to identify how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce. Interview questions 11 through 13 were used to examine why veterans felt it was necessary to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce. Table 3 contains a question matrix which displays the correlation of interview questions and research questions.
Table 2.

Question Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1. What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2. How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?</td>
<td>9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3. Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?</td>
<td>11,12,13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field notes and observations. During the interview portion of this qualitative study, the researcher captured minute nuances and expressions that were not recorded via audio. The face to face format allowed the researcher to document participant voice tones, facial expressions and body language to give context to certain statements and responses. Additionally, the researcher’s own expressions and impressions were also documented.

Throughout the interview sessions the range of emotions varied. For instance, Jimmy and Sierra were both very reserved and calm during the interview sessions. Both however, became very animated when explaining a time where they had to manage their emotions to get a positive result. Counsel was very energetic and talkative during his session and once he began to talk about his emotion management experiences in the civilian workforce, he started to utilize profanity.

Some of the participants provided very short descriptions which then required the researcher to utilize probes to grasp an in-depth understanding of their lived experiences. Some participants would reflect and get on a tangent of which the researcher had to
strategically redirect the conversation. Most of the participants were extremely cooperative, enthusiastic, and positive regarding the research topic.

One of the most memorable moments during the interview sessions was with Counsel. When asked about a moment when he had to manage his emotions to get a positive result, he reflected on a time where he experienced racism and was about to have a physical altercation. Counsel expressed that he wanted to get into a physical altercation and at that moment he quit the job. His elevated voice tone and mannerisms and use of profanity were indicative of a very high comfort level. The use of the field notes aided the researcher in ensuring the tone and context of participant responses remained consistent with the interview session(s)

Results

This section discusses the results of the data collected through semi structure interview with 10 Gulf War Era II prior enlisted veterans. The data was examined until it was determined that no new themes would emerge. To protect participant identity, the researcher assigned each participant an alphanumeric code of VET1 to VET10 and each code was assigned a pseudonym to further simplify throughout the body of results.

Research Question 1. What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce? Four prevalent themes emerged from participant responses:

1. Frustration
2. Anxiety
3. Fear
4. Feelings of unpreparedness
**Theme 1. Frustration.** The initial theme that emerged from the lived experiences of the military veterans managing emotions in the civilian transition process was **Frustration.** After analyzing all transcripts, it was determined that all 10 participants (100%) acknowledged the emotion of being frustrated during the transition process. Ahern et al., (2015) posited that one of the primary contributors to veteran frustration is the observable distinctions between the structured military environment and the less structured civilian environment. All participants expressed how frustration arose with the actual process of transitioning which includes the acclimation to the civilian work environment and even the job search itself. Participant Claude explicitly describes his experience(s) and how the new environment can lead to frustration and eventual detriment.

“Well exiting the military going into. Going into the civilian sector. It takes longer than that. You know you wait you get impatient you wait sometimes two sometimes six months and you don't hear nothing. So, you get impatient and sometimes you get discouraged and that discouragement brings on alcoholism. Whatever is your coping mechanism like the drink you drank, smoked cigarettes or whatever. You smoke weed, smoking cigarettes or whatever and you get kind of frustrated”. (*Claude*)

As presented below, Adam expressed the emotion of frustration because of separating from the military environment and striving to adapt to a new work culture where performance feedback is not as prominent.

“And in fact, I'm not the only one who thinks this a lot of people veterans I talked to feels this. It’s about feedback and getting feedback. You know. If I'm not doing
something right, just tell me and we'll fix it. You know it's not a big deal. You're not going to hurt my feelings or if this wasn't exactly what you wanted. Just tell me so I can get you exactly what you want. It's not a big deal and I think we. I don't know, that's kind of a generalization. But I'll say, it's probably a safe one, in the military, we don't take things personally. We don’t take them to heart. But you know, if you're unhappy with my performance, I don't sit there and go “oh my gosh, I'm the worst person ever”. I just go “OK” this is an area that I'm obviously underperforming so what can I do to fix it.” (Adam)

Participant Sierra elaborated on the hard time she was having trying to get into the federal government as a veteran. Many military members elect to pursue federal employment because of the benefits of having veteran’s preference. Per Johnson (2015), Veterans’ preference promotes the selection of military veterans for federal jobs. Sierra explained:

“So, it was a little difficult in that aspect being that that's a big goal for some veterans to get into the federal government. So, that was frustrating and difficult. It brought me down a little bit but I continued to you know work at it put in work to gain the experience they were looking for” (Sierra)

In similar fashion, Participant Mack noted frustration as an emotion connected to his inability to secure government employment. Mack explains:

“That’s another thing that gets me frustrated. You're a veteran and can’t get a government job. Isn't that crazy. That's something that will get your emotions all over the place.” (Mack)

Danae expressed having the feeling of frustration at the brink of her discharge from the Army. She explains:
“Almost for a second it felt like I was making the wrong decision and that I should stay in the military and continue on. I became a little frustrated with the process being so fast and not being able to have everything in place” (Danae)

The responses provide insight to how frustration was a common emotion experienced by veterans transitioning out of the military. Several participants expressed the same tone of transition frustration in like context. Zivov (2013) noted that the lack of practical civilian job skills and the striving to secure such could contribute to an increase of veteran frustration in the transition process. Table 4 provides participants comments on the emotion of frustration while in the transition process.
### Table 3.

**Participant's Comments on Frustration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td>It makes you <em>Frustrated</em>. You know you gotta try not to go off on somebody. Try not to snap on somebody. Even when you're not the snap on somebody type of person you know it kinda cause you want to snap on someone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dru</td>
<td>So I had to suppress these emotions and stick to the basics which was this employee did not do what his supervisor told him to do. Out of <em>frustration</em> I wanted to kind of get a little bit loud. I wanted to have a fuss with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>I say that I see the situation right now. But it's more that I'm mean in the workplace. Me I'm in it myself I'm <em>frustrated</em> about the entire situation that's going on about all this extra added unnecessary work and bad management from the V.A. But the positive result is. The group. The team that I'm on. We all have camaraderie and we are all facing the same aspects and we do try to help each other but at the same time we all understand that we all got to get our own individual things. But the positive results of that is yeah the coach looks good because we're breaking our necks trying to you know do what they want. But at the same time at what cost. You know what cost is it to the members of that team. Got people as <em>frustrated</em> that going through depression. You know they're just encountered a lot of things bad health high elevated hypertension all kinds of things as you know that's affecting them. But the positive of that is the work is getting done. And does making the coach look good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>And I did give up. I gave up plenty of times. I would feel myself saying this is pointless. I'm not going to get a job. This is pointless I'm never going to find anything as good as the military. And I just have to continue to push myself. To actually make myself believe that. In time, I would find something that not only fit me like the Navy did but fit me as well as the Navy life goes on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>It was different to process and difficult in understanding the process because. Once again, you're dealing with something that you're not familiar with and until you are able to learn and adapt to how it works it may be difficult because there was some <em>frustration</em> because as I mentioned earlier typically in the Navy you had billets to feel and depending on your time frame of either your service time or your time and when you were stationed if there was a need you would pursue that. As opposed to looking for a job trying to figure out how your skills translate to civilian world from a military world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 2. Anxiety.** The next prevalent theme that emerged from the lived experiences of the military veterans managing emotions in the civilian transition process was *Anxiety*. Mostly all participants (90%) experienced the emotion of anxiety while transitioning to the civilian workforce. Previous research determined that the transition phenomena itself can be a primary contributor of emotional anxiety (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Green, Dawson-Fend, Hayden, Crews, and Painter (2016) noted that
the drastic change of transitioning from the military can build anxiety regarding what the veteran will do to gain and sustain employment. After serving 14 years in the NAVY, Jimmy reported his struggle with anxiety while preparing to search for a job:

“You know and then and then you know it was anxiety set in and for me I was trying to do a resume and take that military slang and put it in the civilian sector terms.” (Jimmy)

In a similar fashion, after spending 9 years in the NAVY, Dru expressed the emotion of anxiety while trying to plan how he would attain the same measure of success as a veteran that he attained while serving in the military:

“I believe that my separation was stressful. I experienced some anxiety there. I was worrying about what it would be like. I had a fear of if I would succeed as much as I've succeeded in the military is very uncertain. And that uncertainty caused me to question my abilities.” (Dru)

Counsel describes the emotions faced during the transition as a battle of present and past. He explains:

“I’m pretty sure just like everybody it was difficult to kind of feel a little separation anxiety. The transitional process has been really difficult. Because you're thinking forward. But at the same time, you're thinking back and you're trying to keep that backwards mentality in the future.” (Counsel)

The transition from the military to the civilian workforce involves a drastic change in the veteran’s life which impacts veterans in several different ways. When service members separate from the military, changes occur in almost every area of life; the way they talk, think, believe, act and even their interpersonal communication
(Gaither, 2014). Table 5 provides participant’s comments concerning anxiety in the process of transitioning from the military:

Table 5.

Participant’s Comments on Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>(Regarding performance feedback). And so, I'd be like OK am I doing everything else was doing and I'd ask my boss and she goes No you're fine you're just you know you're two months in you're still learning the ropes. OK because I'm not getting anything and it makes me feel antsy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>You know in the military when you get down to the last 100 days and you count down 99 days and wake up 50 days and then wake up, closer that it was coming to that last day the more anxiety there was because you kind of start realizing that. Your whole new life is going to change and you start to also realize how invested you are into the military Not just the service of the branch but the people that you meet. So, I would say there was some anxiety as the day approached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>I was very nervous because, I hadn't been a civilian since I was 19. I was a kid. And now I was a grown man with a wife and a family. And I didn't have any job security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claud</td>
<td>(describing the feelings to leave the military) Sometimes loneliness’ sometimes anger, anxiety. Little bitterness, and bitterness against the military. You know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>If you don't get the proper training. The proper guidance when it’s time to transition. <em>You may already be a Nervous wreck.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danae</td>
<td>Definitely anxious and fearful. I had a sense of fear of. Not knowing what was going to happen next. Whether I was. Going to find a good job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 3. Fear.** The third recurring theme of prevalence concerning the emotions experienced by veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce was fear. A significant percentage (70%) of the participants described portions of their transition as fearful. Schlossberg (2011) theorized that in the variable construct of role transition, some individuals might experience feelings of uncertainty and fear. Based on participant responses, fear is a common emotional response prior to the departure from military service. Participant Jimmy stated:

“My transition experience was it was fearful realizing that you know I had to get out of something that I dedicated 14 years of my life to… Again, it felt, like there
was a fear there because for me I had the G.I. bill but I also had the severance pay
but it was like man this could run out you know.” (Jimmy)

Some participants exhibited fear of the unexpected as an emotional response to
the transition experience. In the military, there are programs that aid veterans in the
preparation of exiting service however, these programs are only informational. The
transition experience and the emotions that accompany are life altering and have a
significant impact on the veteran’s outlook and approach to the nuances of the new
environment(s). In a study conducted by Smith et al., (2015) it was determined that the
civilian job interview is a fear induced employment barrier for veterans. In response to a
probe that inquired on the first interview as a civilian, Participant Dee responded:

“It was different from what I spoke in my head. I had complete fear at the end and
I thought I wouldn't speak well. I thought I wouldn't have asked this for the
questions. But in reality, the questions were simple.” (Dee)

During this study, Participant Counsel highlighted some of the elements of transition that
he believes could potentially induce fear in the hearts of transitioning veteran. He states:

“What I realized is that the transition process itself needs to be overhauled from
my observation. Certain things that I encounter that they didn't explore in the
transition process or TAP class was first the job. You know, if you if you don't
have your income set up at a certain way, that can that you can maintain a
survivability level of holding things together with your family you're going to be
in trouble next. That’s a scary thought. Also, I think that's stability of their income
from savings will help maintaining their lifestyle but at the same time you don’t
wanna deplete your savings.” (Counsel)
When probed concerning the involvement of fear in the transition process, Jay responded:

“If I made a mistake. Wondering did I do the right thing. Especially when you when you are on a college campus and you've seen things and did things that these people play video games about.” (Jay)

In response to interview question 3 “From an emotional perspective. Describe how it felt to separate from the military.” Sierra responded:

“Emotionally I was very nervous and afraid a little bit. I was anxious and excited. I was filled with so many different emotions a little bit of worry on whether or not I'm going to have a seamless flawless transition. Whether or not I'm going to find somewhere that would be able to give me benefits and pay to where I can maintain the lifestyle that I had in the military.” (Sierra)

Like Sierra, it is noted that some veterans leave the military concerned about career progression. Dru described: “I was worrying about what it would be like. I had a fear of if I would succeed as much as I've succeeded in the military” (Dru) With regard towards the fear of the unknown, Danae expressed the feeling of fear when sharing how she felt separating from the military. She described:

“I was scared and didn’t know what to expect but I was also excited to be able to become a civilian and go to school while working. I was looking forward to the opportunity to separate and to start working on doing a little more of what I really wanted to do.” (Danae)

**Theme 4. Feelings of unpreparedness.** The fourth and final theme linked to RQ1, which emerged from participant’s responses, is the feeling of being unprepared. Eight (80%) participants expressed the unpreparedness an emotion associated with the military
to civilian transition. According to Ahern et al., (2015) preparation is an essential element within the construct of the veteran to civilian transition. When asked interview question number one “Describe your transition from the military to the civilian workforce”, Adam responded:

“Well it was not planned very well. I exited after 23 years so you could say it is institutionalized. I thought I was prepared to get out but when the day came after the day I was out. It was different to say the least. You know you lose your brother your sisterhood your second family. Kinda sorta and I don’t think I was really ready to get out.” (Adam)

In response to a probe that asked “Do you feel the military helped you prepare to transition out of the military?” Dee responded:

“The military they had a class. For vets to help us prepare for the transition. But nothing prepares you for life like experience going through it. So it gave me an understanding of what it would be but going through it was a different experience in itself.” (Dee)

In a similar context, Counsel elaborated on the feeling of unpreparedness when trying to interview for a job as a veteran. He explains:

“The tap interview in tap class. I don’t think it prepared me. What it did was it gave me key points. It gave me basic key points on how to. How to open it up or how to lead questions you open answered. But it didn't knock away the nervousness of the new situation of being back in the workforce. It didn't help me with feeling like I was being judged as a veteran” (Counsel)
Table 6 provides commentary on participant experience with the feelings of unpreparedness in the transition from the military to the civilian workforce:

Table 5.

Participant’s Comments on Feelings of Unpreparedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>I was 17 years old (At the time of enlistment). So, when transitioning out of the military this was big you know I haven't interviewed. I didn't think I had the skills. I was unsure of questions how the interview works. I was nervous. I just I didn't know if I was ready for it. So, while interviewing I was shaking in my seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dru</td>
<td>Uncertainty caused me to question my abilities. I had a loss of confidence and I was somewhat worried very challenging transition. But the separation from the military I was worried concerned that I wasn’t prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claud</td>
<td>Tap didn’t prepare me, it was a one day breeze. One thing about vets, we like to know what we are up against. If things pop up, then the emotions will follow. If you let me know about certain things, I can be prepared for. It’s about preparation and readiness. Vets don’t like to go in things blindly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>When I was about to reach my eighth year, my mind was made up just to get out. No plan. No. Schooling. Just the military and my high school diploma. Looking to get a job based on my experience for seven years, seven months and a few days. You didn't get the guidance that you get today as you prepare to leave the military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>I wasn't prepared for civilian life even though I thought I was. Even though I don't you know being where I was stationed and being close to home I still was going back and forth from home to back to my duty but I wasn't prepared. Like I thought.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 provides a percentage summary of respondent’s contribution to the themes associated with RQ1:

Table 6.

Percentages of Respondents Contributing to RQ1 Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Respondents contributing to theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>10(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>9(90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>7(70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of Unpreparedness</td>
<td>8(80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2. How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?
Two prevalent themes emerged from the participant responses:

1. Considering the big picture
2. Removing self from situation

**Theme 1. Considering the big picture.** This prevalent theme emerged from the participants’ responses regarding the management of emotions while transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. Each participant (100%) expressed how considering the big picture served as means to manage emotions during the transition period. Commonly referred to as psychological distancing, considering the big picture allows one to mentally take a step back from an intense situation as a means of managing emotions (Nook, Schleider, & Somerville, 2017). Dru shared his perception on how considering the big picture helps him. He explains:

“I step back and I look at the big picture that helps me to cope. I look at the big picture because I feel that if I lash out or if I don’t manage my emotions then, this will get worse. So, in order to cope I step back look at the big picture sometime I will leave take a walk and I think about this thing.” *(Dru)*

In considering the big picture, participants report that they have explored how their actions will affect a situation. Dee explains how a moment of emotion management on the job with consideration of the big picture was worked out in his favor:

“I had a situation with a homeless person. Well I had to ask him to move his bag full of his belongings from the front of the property. He became extra confrontational and aggressive with me. He actually spit at me. I had to calm down. I had to calm him down and calm myself down from not losing my cool even though the spit didn't hit me. He spit at me. I had to calm myself not going
off on his guy trying to lose my temper. And I had to talk to myself. I talked to myself and I had to tell myself, everything is this guy owns is in his bag. So, if I'm asking him to move this bag, I’m asking him to move his house. So, I understood that that will make him feel hurt. That will make him feel pushed over. So, I caught myself. I talked with the guy to move his things. And even though he moved them he was upset. But he didn't put up a fight anymore.” (Dee)

The consideration of the big picture also involves understanding that others may have a different perspective and therefore would not feel the same emotionally. This would be considered employing emotional intelligence. According to Bradberry and Greaves (2009), emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize the emotions of others and oneself while utilizing that understanding to monitor and control one’s behaviors. Adam explains how the consideration of other’s job experience(s) in contrast with his, helped him to manage his emotions. In a setting where he was frustrated with a certain process initiated by senior management, Adam states:

“How is that going to make us look if you said “hey you need to do all this extra work and oh by the way, never mind it's useless.” I said that. And so, I was able to work the meetings and do them. And yeah, did I have to do a lot of work? Absolutely. But guess what, that's what you get paid for. And so, I had to manage my emotions because I don't think many of my peers have been in a leadership position or even understood. I was able to kind of compose and basically say “look we get paid to do these things”. We just ask and there was a ton of money an hour spent getting this to us. So, that's actual money spent. You know for these
employees to put in the hours to do this for us, you know we're wasting resources” Instead of going: You guys are a bunch of idiots.” (Adam)

Danae utilized the method of considering the big picture when she experienced conflict with another co-worker. Through communication and dialogue, she was able to see the error of her ways and take everything into account in order to reach resolve. She explained:

“She was more willing to communicate with me and tell me how she was feeling. She was actually having a really rough week at home and that was kind of having you know, a negative reaction in the workplace for her. And I didn't see that side of things.” (Danae)

Considering the big picture also helps camaraderie within the spectrum of emotion management in the workplace. Claud described, in the moment of workplace conflict, he considers the potential challenges the conflicting party. Claud, in response to question 10 states:

“You know like ok well maybe he has issues. I don’t know what is going on in his life. So maybe you know, let me try to encourage him. Maybe he didn't mean to say what he said or maybe, he just has a lot going on.” (Claud)

Similarly, Counsel referenced how camaraderie in the workplace is a critical element which helps the consideration of the big picture while managing emotions. Counsel explains:

“I'm frustrated about the entire situation that's going on, about all this extra added unnecessary work and bad management from the V.A. But the positive result is, the group. The team that I'm on we all have camaraderie and we are all facing the
same aspects and we try to help each other but at the same time, we all understand that we all got to get our own individual things…But the positive of that is the work is getting done” (Counsel)

Table 8 displays participant’s comments on how considering the big picture was a method of emotion management in the transition from the military to the civilian workforce:

Table 7.

**Participant Comments on Considering the Big Picture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td>Sometimes you gotta learn to show compassion. Sometimes I think you gotta learn how to be compassionate and be considerate of others. You know even while you may be going through something they may as well. I think selflessness has to come into play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>I try to look at myself first before I respond. I don't want to respond because I'm trying to impress somebody else. It's just in me to make a change by learning how to communicate. I share with people that They're worth something. I believe you may have something that can teach me. I may know this over here but you may have something and you may be 20 years old. I believe you got something to contribute to. Whether it be this job or wherever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>(In response to Question 10: While on the job, what are some effective coping strategies you've implemented to avoid negative outcomes?) Stepping back re-evaluating the situation looking at both sides of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Because everyone that being at this chain of command is always somebody above some by somebody you know. So in this particular situation. I was upset. I was angry I was mad. I wasn't confused. I wondered how can this person be in this position and allow this to happen. And so ironically this person was also former military. However, I discovered that he was he only made it to the academy and didn't pass academy. So although he claimed to be military, he was not. He did not get outside the Air Force academy. So anyway, the situation was rectified by me recognizing that regardless of how I personally feel about this person, regardless of my disappointment. The job still had to be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 2. Removing self from situation.** The theme of self-removal from certain 70% of situations as a means of emotion management was prevalent throughout participant responses. Many of the participants elaborated on situations that became intense which subsequently necessitated a sudden change in setting. Mack reflected to a
moment on the job where he employed the act of self-removal and benefitted from the situation. He describes:

“So, me and this other guy was working with him, he's a computer operator two and I'm a one. Things wasn't going right for him. So, he wanted to speak down on the other guy and myself. What he really was doing was he was trying to impress the manager. So instead of me saying. And I did say something to him. To me he was trying to put us out there. Trying to put us down. So, I told him, I said you're talking to the wrong person. I said don't, because you want to impress somebody. Don't take your mess out towards us. I said “You need to check yourself and before I say anything else, I’m gonna walk off” So I walked off. Went outside. I seen this building up. So, in order to maintain and not get out of character, I walked outside. I won this guy over. He came back and talked to me and apologized. Walking away from it gave me time to cool down.” (Mack)

Danae cited walking away to reach a positive result in a situation that could have warranted a heated emotional reaction. She explains:

“Dealing with one of my coworkers who didn't have a sense of worth or work ethic that I had. Goes back to that word lazy to me. I had to deal with that situation. With that I had to manage my emotions by walking away and not dealing with her straight on because I know that I would have probably had an attitude if I would've went directly to her what my concerns. But in that direct situation, I walked away, took a breath, relax a little bit and then I did go back to her and explain some of the things that I was feeling after I had calmed down. With that I've received a positive result from her because she was more willing to
communicate with me tell me how she was feeling she was actually having a really rough week at home.” *(Danae)*

Self-removal allows the time to reflect on the risks and consequences of actions. Dru explains how he acknowledges the reality of his family depending on him thus, walking away and reevaluating is essential in certain moments. Dru states:

“I find that these things have helped me; take a walk thinking about the situation. You know I have a family. So. The job basically is it's something that I need to help my family to be fulfilled and to be nourished and to support our lifestyle.” *(Dru)*

Table 9 displays participant’s comments on removing self from situations:

Table 8.

*Participant’s Comments on Removing Self from Situation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>Taking a walk. Stepping back re-evaluating the situation looking at both sides of the situation breathing walking. I walk a lot during my morning break in the afternoon great as well as lunch break. Taking a 15-minute walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td>At some posts, I work at I walk a lot you know. So, I tend to like walk outside. You know some spots takes me seven minutes to do my patrol, some and spots it takes me about like 14 to 60 Minutes so I just walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>You know you've got to stay within those guidelines showing that you aren't working while you are attempting to work. But you know what does the most for me deep breaths. Walking out, going outside get some fresh air and trying to clear my mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>So. If we had one individual who was a shift lead a supervisor. And. He mentioned well what if people come at me aggressively and we said obviously, you have the right to defend yourself but. Better yet why are you putting yourself in that position that store is approximately 20 thousand square feet. So, you can get some standoff distance and walk away to defuse the situation because he was telling us that there are some people that come in there all the time and they're very aggressive. And he goes “Well what if they're going to hit me” Well you definitely don't hit them even if they do it you can defend yourself but only defend yourself. Push him away. You can't get him on the ground and kick him and he basically wanted us to tell him that it was OK to be aggressive back. He was missing the point where it's better to just defuse the situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 provides a percentage summary of respondent’s contribution to the themes associated with RQ2:

Table 9.

Percentages of Respondents Contributing to RQ2 Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Respondents contributing to theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considering the Big Picture</td>
<td>10(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing Self from Situation</td>
<td>7(70%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 3.** Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce? One prevalent themes emerged from participant responses:

**Theme 1. Continuity of business and personal well-being.** All participants (100%) felt that it is necessary for emotions to be managed in the transition from the military to the civilian workforce. Mack explained some of the consequential detriment associated with not managing emotions particularly in the workplace. He states:

“'I've seen fights break out myself. I tried to stand in between them. They cussed people out saying you don’t know me. I've seen people just lose it at work. If you don’t manage your emotions, you get less productivity, you get fired, words get thrown around and it can be all bad. It ain’t that serious.” *(Mack)*

Jimmy explained how certain occupational specialties require emotions to be managed simply because of the job nature.

“Like you never know like what a person can be going through or dealing with. So sometimes you gotta learn to show compassion. Sometimes I think you gotta learn how to be compassionate and be considerate of others. You know even
while you may be going through something that as well. I think selflessness has to come into play. Certain jobs in security law enforcement, you have to be able to channel your emotions somewhere else you know you know. You gotta take up some kind of extracurricular activity or hobby you know that'll help you cope with your emotions especially in the civilian workforce.” *(Jimmy)*

Like Jimmy’s rationale, under the guise of business continuity, Sierra also noted that others in the workplace could be affected by the lack of emotional management. Sierra describes:

“Just being able to manage your emotions and being well-grounded emotionally helps your performance with your job. Helps you and your relationships with other people and coworkers as well as management allows you to focus more on the job and not put your emotions into it. Working with claims and people's lives and work with disabilities people filing claims for disability. If I brought my emotions to it, I wouldn't be providing the best service that I could. So, they do have to be managed.” *(Sierra)*

In addition to others being affected, several veterans noted how not managing emotions could halt productivity by way of workplace violence. Dru explains:

“In team environments, not managing your emotions you can affect the team, you can affect your own performance and the performance of other people because negativity will bring more negativity. Lashing out and using harsh words toward each other as it breeds more negativity. You can even initiate some type of workplace violence if there isn’t management of your emotions. You don't know what the other coworker has been dealing with.” *(Dru)*
Emotion management for the continuity of business and personal well-being was explained by Adam as he described an interaction between himself and a disgruntled customer. Adam states:

“My time at Kohls. Let's just say because of my military appearing I dressed better than the majority of the sales associates there. Nice dress shirt. They said business casual I dress business casual. So, I would oftentimes look like a manager. So, I would get yelled at by customers even though I was just the sales associate and I would just smile at them and apologize. And I knew that I can't get angry at them because they're obviously not happy about the level of support. It could be they had a bad day like this one lady. So, it was after Christmas. And it was a big return season. She wanted to return some items. No, she wanted to purchase some items. And there were some in line at some of the cash registers. Not super long but long enough. There was a long line back at the customer service because people were trying to return and buy things. She basically said you're treating us like cattle. Why don't you have more people? And I explained to her you know, I'm really sorry for you for your problems. You know it's a long wait. I know I apologize. We have registers down so we can handle as many people as we can. We are working on it right now. We put in a trouble call. I know it doesn't help you now but if you really want to purchase, even the lines longer in the front. It's going to go faster because there's more sales associates. And you know I knew she was basically yelling at me I couldn’t do anything.”

(Adam)
Table 11 displays participant’s comments on the continuity of business and personal well-being:

Table 10.

*Participant’s Comments on Continuity of Business and Personal Well Being*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claude</td>
<td>(Referring to managing emotions on the job) Oh yeah. Yeah that too is a must. It has to get done. If not, then things won’t get done. If you’re at war, if everyone is depending on emotions, you’re dead. Simple as that. It affects business, teams, everything. If it affects business, it’s going to affect you. It affects you it affects your family. You’ll go down as it trickles down. It's just transferred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>Managing your emotions definitely helps with security because you're going to deal with all types of people. You're going to deal with transients, you're going to deal with people that had a bad day and they’ll get to screaming at you. What are you going to do what you're going to deal with violent people? You’re going to deal with drunk people. Are you going to be able to manage your attitude and deal with all these different personalities on a daily basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>I think it is very necessary for you to manage your own emotions. I mean prime example: Back in the day when postal workers got frustrated. Some came in laid everybody down. You know that is a disgruntled person. And you know what, that shows that you got to have some type of control in place to rectify and help a person deal with managing their emotions on the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danae</td>
<td>I think it is very necessary to manage your emotions in the civilian workplace. Not Managing emotions could lead to you being fired. It could lead to you not doing your job effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Emotion management benefits especially in personnel matters. When hiring someone, you can teach anyone to do a certain job. Can this person emotionally fit in with the group? Can this person, does this person have the wherewithal to be able to learn? Being able to manage emotions, you can be upset at some point and you can be ugly but you cannot take it personally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 provides a percentage summary of respondent’s contribution to the themes associated with RQ3:

Table 11.

*Percentages of Respondents Contributing to RQ3 Theme*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Respondents contributing to theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of business and personal well being</td>
<td>10(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relevance of study results. The purpose of this chapter was to present the results from 10 face to face semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 Gulf War Era II
military veterans. This study sought to address the gap identified in literature by exploring the lived experiences of veterans who have transitioned into the civilian workforce. Figure 2 displays the results of the thematic analysis as they correlate to this study’s research questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ1. What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ2. How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considering the big picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ3. Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of business and personal well-being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Thematic analysis

The insights offered by the veteran and the results of the study provided valuable information for transitioning service members and civilian employers who employ military veterans. The first research question (RQ1) was addressed by the emergence of four prevalent themes. Each theme represented the various emotions participants experienced during the transition from the military. The second research question (RQ2) was addressed by the emergence of two prevalent themes. The themes demonstrate emotion management methods employed by veterans that have transitioned into the civilian workforce. The third research question (RQ3) was addressed by the emergence of one theme which encompasses the primary reason why emotion management is necessary for veterans in the civilian workforce. The results of this study showed that veterans have
methods of managing emotions and are aware of the necessity of doing so amid variable transition challenges. From the review of literature, in today’s organizations it remains imperative that employees understand how to manage emotions while in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. The participants for this study were all prior enlisted military veterans who have worked in the civilian workforce longer than six months. The study was guided by three research questions: RQ1. What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce? RQ2. How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce? RQ3. Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

The first research question (RQ1) was addressed by the emergence of four prevalent themes. Each theme was synonymous with the various emotions experienced during the transition from the military to the civilian workforce. The first theme was frustration. The second theme was anxiety. The third theme was fear and the fourth theme was feelings of unpreparedness. These themes captured the lived experiences of military veterans who transitioned from the military to the civilian workforce.

The second research question (RQ2) was addressed by the emergence of two prevalent themes. The themes were representative of emotion management methods employed by veterans who have transitioned into the civilian workforce. The first theme
was the consideration of the big picture. The second theme was removal of self from situation, which refers to one leaving the scene of a workplace issue to manage emotions.

The third research question (RQ3) was addressed by the emergence of one overarching theme. The research question investigated why it was necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. Based on participant responses and data analysis, the theme “Continuity of business and personal well-being” emerged and addressed research question 3. Table 13 provides a percentage summary of respondent’s contribution to the themes associated with RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3:

Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Percentages of Respondents Contributing to Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of Unpreparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering the Big Picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing Self from Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Business and Personal Well Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the data collection process, one limitation was noted as limitations are an integral part of conducting research (Conrad & Scott-Tilley, 2014). The researcher served in the NAVY while ninety percent of the participants served in the same branch. Thus, the data collected during the interview might have been interpreted with a significant degree of familiarity and affinity. Per Chenail (2011), “The degree of affinity researchers has with the population under study including researchers being a member of the group themselves can introduce a question of bias in the study” (p.257). However, given the nature and emotional implication of the study, it is assumed that the researcher’s familiarity
enhanced the data collection (Grossoehme, 2014). Jain et al., (2016) suggests that peer support amongst the veteran community contributes to overall comfort and well-being.

Two limitations impacted the data analysis of this study. The first limitation was the slang usage and heavy accents of certain participants. The second limitation was the environmental factors associated with the interview locations. The researcher addressed this by carefully reviewing the audio recordings, along with the field notes and editing the transcript text to ensure harmony was established between text and audio.

The lived experiences of 10 prior enlisted, Gulf War Era II military veterans residing in Southern California was presented in this study. The qualitative software NVivo 11 assisted the process of coding participant responses. Chapter 4 provided an introduction, sample description, research methodology, analysis of data, results with correlating participant responses and summary. Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive summary of the study, a review of the findings and an exploration of study implications. Additionally, Chapter 5 provides recommendations for further research.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. As previously demonstrated, it was not known how veterans managed the emotions associated with transitioning to the civilian workforce. The increase of military veterans in the civilian workforce necessitates further understanding of the transition phenomenon (Boutin, 2011; Kirchner, 2015). Research indicates that the veteran to civilian transition presents a host of challenges for the transitioning individuals (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Collins et al., 2014; Robertson & Brott, 2014). Due to the exposure, nature and potential impact of the veteran transition challenges, employers now have heightened concerns regarding the mental and emotional condition of transitioning veterans. (Zalaquett & Chatters, 2016).

This qualitative study was important as the veteran transition to the civilian workforce is accompanied by several uncommon stressors (Kato, Jinkerson, Holland, & Soper, 2016). Hall (2016) reported that many service members return home from military duties dramatically changed by the experience. The veterans then strive to adjust to an entirely different setting and culture within the civilian society. One of the greatest challenges veterans face while readjusting is the culture shock associated with the civilian way of doing business (Collins et al., 2014). Such an adjustment has emotional implications which substantiate the need for this study.

The problem addressed in this qualitative phenomenological study was that it was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with the transition to the
civilian workforce. Phenomenology is often defined in terms of the study of phenomena as people experience them - human experience in his or her life (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). This study explored the lived experiences of military veterans, who have transitioned from the military into the civilian workforce. To address the problem, this study utilized research questions informed by the phenomena (Maxwell, 2013). The phenomena being studied is the management of emotions while transitioning from military to the civilian workforce. The research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1: What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?

RQ2: How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

RQ3: Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

Ten military veterans participated in face to face semi-structured interviews. Seven themes emerged from participant responses, which contributed to existing knowledge by providing robust descriptions of lived experiences: Frustration, Anxiety, Fear, Feelings of Unpreparedness, Considering the big picture, Removing self from situation and lastly, Continuity of business/ Personal well-being. This study’s findings allowed space for further research on the subject matter. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and presents the conclusions of this qualitative phenomenological study. Further, Chapter 5 presents implications and recommendations for future research based on the study’s findings.
Summary of the Study

For the veteran, the military to civilian transition is pivotal and an unnerving element of life. With recent reduction in force efforts, the downsizing of the military and subsequent defense budgets cuts, thousands of military veterans are entering the civilian workforce (Cozza, 2015). The transition from the military to the civilian workforce impacts every veteran differently. Along with the existing differences, one must consider the emotional response to that impact. The problem statement of this research study was: It was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with the transition to the civilian workforce.

Ahern et al., (2015) asserts that significant differences exists between the veteran’s expectations and reality when entering the civilian work environment. Goleman (1998) maintains that individuals respond differently to events that impact the emotional state of a person. This study explored the lived experiences of military veterans who have transitioned to the civilian workforce and have subsequently had to employ measures of emotion management amid the challenges.

Emotion management is described as the effort of controlling and managing and emotions while maintaining facial and bodily displays consistent with expectations in social interaction (Hochschild, 2003). This study examined military veteran’s application of the emotion management concept in the transition to the civilian workplace. This study bears importance because the management of emotions is an integral part of occupational wellbeing (Sarkar & Suresh, 2013). Furthermore, this study addressed a problem as it was not known how veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce.
This study utilized a phenomenological research design to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of 10 military veterans residing in Southern California. Wilson (2015) posits that phenomenology empowers people and promotes understanding of others by allowing the lived experience to be experienced vicariously. This study was guided by three research questions: (a) What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce? (b) How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce? (c) Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met the specific criteria. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method, which intently selects informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). Participants were selected based on them meeting the following criteria: (1) participant must have been honorably discharged from the military within the past 5-10 years, (2) participant must have served on active duty for a minimum of 4 years (1 enlistment), (3) participant must have been employed in the civilian workforce for more than six months, (4) participant must be a current resident of Southern California. Through semi-structured interviews, 10 military veterans could share their lived experiences of managing emotions in transition to the civilian workforce.

The semi-structured interviews were guided by 13 research informed interview questions. Prior to scheduling the interviews, an expert panel review was conducted to examine the validity of the interview protocol. Conducting a preliminary test of an instrument allows problems and errors to be detected before the researcher embarks on
the intended study (Doody & Doody, 2015). The expert panel review allowed the instrument to be critiqued by the panel and the researcher could make corrections per expert recommendations.

Before the interview session convened, the researcher and participant completed a demographic checklist (Appendix C). One hour was dedicated to each interview session with a 10-minute preliminary introductory conversation. During the preliminary 10 minutes, the researcher reviewed and signed the Grand Canyon University Informed Consent (Appendix B) with each participant. As a means of maintaining confidentiality, each participant was assigned an alpha-numeric identifier and a pseudonym.

Interview sessions for this study lasted between 43 to 72 minutes. Each interview was conducted in person. As indicated by Patton (2002), interviews enable the researcher to explore the experiences of participants using dialogue. Such dialogue enabled the researcher to identify themes with the assistance of NVivo 11 qualitative software. The themes identified in this study are as follows: (a) frustration (b) anxiety (c) fear (d) feelings of unpreparedness (e) considering the big picture (f) removal of self from situations and (g) continuity of business and personal well-being.

The remainder of Chapter 5 includes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research. Each theme that emerged from participant responses will be summarized in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the strengths and weaknesses associated with this study. Recommendations for future practice, practical implications, theoretical implications and future implications will be also be reviewed within Chapter 5.
Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The exploration of military veterans’ emotion management experiences while transitioning to the civilian workforce was designed to address three research questions. The research questions focused on the emotions veterans experience while transitioning to the civilian workforce, how they manage those emotions and why it is necessary. Gee et al., (2013) suggested that in gaining knowledge of a phenomenon, it is imperative for individuals lived experiences to be revisited. This study explored the lived experiences of 10 military veterans residing in Southern California (South of Los Angeles). Results from participant responses revealed that veterans experience frustration, anxiety, fear and feelings of unpreparedness while transitioning from the military to civilian life. Additionally, veterans reported that during the transition, emotions are managed by removing themselves from situations and considering the big picture. Every veteran associated with this study believed that it was necessary to manage emotions in the civilian workplace. This study revealed that managing emotions to that extent is essential for continuity of business and personal well-being.

Research Question 1. What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?

Four themes emerged from participant responses. Summarization of the themes are listed below:

Theme 1. Frustration. The initial theme that emerged from the responses regarding emotion experienced during the military transition was frustration. McCaslin, et al., (2013) noted that the critical life adjustment experienced by transitioning veterans contributes to frustration. All 10 participants (100%) acknowledged that they have
experienced the emotion of frustration in relation to the transition to the civilian workforce. Participants shared different moments where frustration arose after experiencing the culture clash of adapting to a new way of doing business.

Prior research revealed that frustration is the subsequent response to veterans striving to adjust to the less structured civilian work environment. (Ahern, et al., 2015). Participants elaborated on the struggle to adapt to a new way conducting business in the workplace while striving to produce in the same environment. Jay explained …

“It was different to process and difficult in understanding the process. Once again, you're dealing with something that you're not familiar with and until you are able to learn and adapt to how it works, it may be difficult because there is some frustration.”

Participants also expressed having the feeling of frustration about the difficult time securing employment after they were discharged from the military. With more than 20 years in the NAVY, Mack expressed:

“That’s another thing that gets me frustrated. You're a veteran and can't get a government job. Isn't that crazy. That's something that will get your emotions all over the place.”

Military veterans have a difficult time with mentally accepting the fact that change is a reality outside of the military. Thus, facing difficult challenges while striving to regain a secure lifestyle contributes to a wide range of emotions (Gaither, 2014). Additionally, there are significant differences that exists between the veteran’s expectations prior to transitioning and the reality inevitably experienced during the transition (Ahern et al., 2015).
The lack of cultural transferability was also found to be a source of frustration experienced by veterans in this study. The military environment has its own culture and each branch, job classification, occupational community, etc. has sub cultures within that construct Siegl (2008). Prior to becoming veterans, military service members spend years striving to perform per set expectations and guidelines that are oftentimes are foreign to non-veteran individuals. The transition to from the military to the civilian workforce introduces a change that affects the routines and habits of veterans entering the new environment (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Frustration is the residual emotional outcome of routines and habits being interrupted (McCaslin et al., 2013).

**Theme 2. Anxiety.** The next prevalent theme that emerged from the participant responses in this study was anxiety. Mostly all (90%) of the participants expressed the emotion of anxiety as an emotion associated with the transition from the military to the civilian workforce. Anderson and Goodman (2014) suggests that transitions are a type of change and the phenomena of change itself can cause emotional anxiety to the person in the change process. Participants reported having anxiety associated with having to meet unfamiliar demands and protocol. Jimmy noted anxiety being connected to his inability to do a standard resume on his job search. He explained…

“You know and then it was anxiety set in and for me I was trying to do a resume and take that military slang and put it in the civilian sector terms.”

The challenge to translate skills is a common obstacle that veterans face in several civilian industries (Miles, 2014; Dyar, 2016). Veterans are often unaware of how skills will correlate with corporate America (Roney, 2015).
Several participants expressed anxiety as the emotion that arose in response to them considering if they’d be able to achieve job security once again. After leaving the military ranks, job security and the need to sustain or advance his/her lifestyle post veteran transition is critical. Participant Dee sourced his anxiety to his struggle of conceptualizing not having a job yet providing for his family. He explained…

“I was very nervous because. I hadn't been a civilian since I was 19. I was a kid. And now I was a grown man with a wife and a family. And I didn't have any job security.”

It is contended that individuals who exit the military may experience “release anxiety” as the separation from the military occurs when the service member has earned status and increased responsibility (Naphan & Elliott, 2015). Participants in this study generally connected their anxiety to the uncertainties associated with the military to civilian transition.

**Theme 3. Fear.** The next prevalent theme that emerged from participant responses was fear. Seventy percent of the participants reported fear as an emotion associated with the transition from the military to the civilian workforce. Schlossberg (2011) theorized that some individuals can rapidly acclimate to new roles, relationships, habits and assumptions whereas others may experience a strong sense of uncertainty and fear. Danae’s response demonstrated the reality of uncertainty and fear in the transition process. Danae explains…

“I was scared and didn’t know what to expect but I was also excited to be able to become a civilian and go to school while working. I was looking forward to the
opportunity to separate and to start working on doing a little more of what I really
wanted to do.”

The veterans in this study were seemingly experiencing the emotion of fear when
considering the uncertainty of the near future. Jimmy reported that he was fearful of his
civilian benefits running out, which would impact him and his family’s well-being.

Participant response revealed that fear was also associated with the civilian job
interview. This finding is consistent with previous research which determined that the
civilian job interview can be a fear induced employment barrier for military veterans.
Fear in the job interview was explicitly described in Dee’s response. Dee stated…

“It was different from what I spoke in my head. I had complete fear at the end and
I thought I wouldn’t speak well. I thought I wouldn’t have asked this for the
questions. But in reality, the questions were simple.”

Additional fears experienced by veterans are focused around healthcare, stability,
occupational well-being and preparedness. In response to research question 3, Sierra
described …

“Emotionally I was very nervous and afraid a little bit. I was anxious and excited.
I was filled with so many different emotions a little bit of worry on whether or not
I'm going to have a seamless flawless transition. Whether or not I'm going to find
somewhere that would be able to give me benefits and pay to where I can
maintain the lifestyle that I had in the military.”

**Theme 4. Feelings of unpreparedness.** The last prevalent theme emerging from
participant responses to address research question 1 is feelings of unpreparedness. Mostly
all the participants (80%) expressed feelings of unpreparedness as an emotion associated
with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. The feeling of unpreparedness was connected to what some perceived as inadequate preparation to leave the military.

Recently the United States government has increased funding and support to assist service members with transition preparation (Cleymans & Conlon, 2014). Service members attend a comprehensive workshop-Transition Assistance Program (TAP) within 6 months of service departure, to get educated about reintegration into civilian life the program consists of a core curriculum, pre-separation counseling and a capstone project (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016b).

Participants in this study sourced some of their transition challenges to inadequate preparation prior to discharge from the military. Preparation is an essential element pertinent to success in the veteran to civilian transition (Ahern et al., 2015). Preparation for veterans to adequately deal with the reentry into society is essential and is enhanced when supportive resources are utilized prior to and after separation (Rausch, 2014). Dee noted that the military’s efforts were informative yet there was disparity between information and experience. Dee stated…

“The military, they had a class for vets to help us prepare for the transition. But nothing prepares you for life like experience going through it. So, it gave me an understanding of what it would be but going through it was a different experience in itself.”

Similarly, Counsel indicated that TAP class lacked the content to adequate prepare him for what he was about to experience as a veteran. He reported…
“The tap interview in tap class. I don’t think it prepared me. What it did was it gave me key points. It gave me basic key points on how to. How to open it up or how to lead questions you open answered. But it didn’t knock away the nervousness of the new situation of being back in the workforce. It didn’t help me with feeling like I was being judged as a veteran”

Faurer et al., (2014) conducted a study which determined that TAP’s effectiveness is not apparent in every veteran’s transition. This notion is consistent with Schlossberg’s (2011) assumption of everyone responding to change differently. Claud’s interpretation of TAP gave the impression that it was ineffective and didn’t address what was needed to help him post separation. Claud states…

“Tap didn’t prepare me; it was a one day breeze. One thing about vets, we like to know what we are up against. If things pop up then the emotions will follow. If you let me know about certain things, I can be prepared for. It’s about preparation and readiness. Vets don’t like to go in things blindly.”

**Research Question 2.** How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

Two themes emerged from the participant responses regarding how veteran’s emotions are managed while transitioning to the civilian workforce.

**Theme 1. Considering the big picture.** The first prevalent theme that addresses research question 2 is considering the big picture. Each participant (100%) expressed how considering the big picture served as means to manage emotions during the transition to the civilian workforce. When an individual considers the big picture, an evaluation of the current situation occurs as the individual takes a step back to make
observations. This action is referred to as psychological distancing. It is suggested that “getting some distance” from stressful situations can reduce negative emotions and help people cope in those situations. (Nook et al., 2017). Additional research reveals that psychological distance can reduce the subjective experience of difficulty associated with task complexity and anxiety (Thomas & Tsai, 2014).

The findings in this study are consistent with the concepts of considering the big picture to manage emotions. Dru explained how psychological distancing helps him to cope when necessary. He explained…

“I step back and I look at the big picture that helps me to cope. I look at the big picture because I feel that if I lash out or if I don't manage my emotions then, this will get worse. So, in order to cope I step back look at the big picture sometime I will leave take a walk and I think about this thing.”

Dee provided a response that spoke the essence of what it meant to take a step back and consider the big picture. While working security, a homeless gentleman spat at him because he was being asked to move from in front of a business. Dee elaborated …

“He actually spit at me. I had to calm down. I had to calm him down and calm myself down from not losing my cool even though the spit didn't hit me. He spit at me. I had to calm myself not going off on his guy trying to lose my temper. And I had to talk to myself. I talked to myself and I had to tell myself, everything is this guy owns is in his bag. So, if I'm asking him to move this bag, I’m asking him to move his house. So, I understood that that will make him feel hurt. That will make him feel pushed over. So, I caught myself.”
Taking a step back and considering the big picture prevented what could have turned into an unpleasant situation. Dee could get the gentleman to move his belongs from in front of the business without any further hassle. Thus, considering the big picture proved to have positive results even in intense occupation related conflicts.

**Theme 2. Removal of self from situations.** The second theme that emerged from participant responses to address research question 2 was removal of self from situations. This method of emotion management by way of emotional intelligence consists of the veteran physically changing their location for the moment to avoid a negative emotional response. Several participants cited walking away as a means of reaching resolve in potential conflict. Danae explained a situation where she utilized emotional intelligence and the act of walking away to prevent emotional mismanagement. She explains…

“Dealing with one of my coworkers who didn't have a sense of worth or work ethic that I had. Goes back to that word lazy to me. I had to deal with that situation. With that I had to manage my emotions by walking away and not dealing with her straight on because I know that I would have probably had an attitude if I would've went directly to her what my concerns. But in that direct situation, I walked away, took a breath, relax a little bit and then I did go back to her and explain some of the things that I was feeling after I had calmed down. With that I've received a positive result from her because she was more willing to communicate with me tell me how she was feeling she was actually having a really rough week at home.”

Prior research reveals that in professional environments, emotional intelligence has significant value and benefits employees, employers and the nature of business.
(Thory, 2015). In a study conducted by Schutte and Loi (2014), emotional intelligence was found to be significantly related to more work engagement and more satisfaction with social support in the workplace. Mack employed the method of walking away to avoid a potentially intense situation in the workplace. Mack describes…

“So, me and this other guy was working with him, he's a computer operator two and I'm a one. Things wasn't going right for him. So, he wanted to speak down on the other guy and myself. What he really was doing was he was trying to impress the manager. So instead of me saying. And I did say something to him. To me he was trying to put us out there. Trying to put us down. So, I told him, I said you're talking to the wrong person. I said don't, because you want to impress somebody. Don't take your mess out towards us. I said “You need to check yourself and before I say anything else, I’m gonna walk off” So I walked off. Went outside. I seen this building up. So, in order to maintain and not get out of character, I walked outside. I won this guy over. He came back and talked to me and apologized. Walking away from it gave me time to cool down.”

Mack’s response is consistent with Smith, Tutor and Phillips, (2001) assertion that when potentially destructive emotions are involved, a cool-down period (i.e., a walk-away period) may be necessary to maintain professionalism. Mack could cool down and garner and apology from the same person who initiated the offense.

**Research Question 3.** Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce? One overarching theme emerged from participant responses to address research question three.
**Theme 1. Continuity of business and personal well-being.** In the civilian workforce, it is imperative that employees understand how to manage emotions while performing their functions in the workplace (Nica & Molnar, 2014). From an organizational perspective, employees effectively managing emotions in the workplace benefits the occupational experience. (Sarkar & Suresh, 2013). The management of emotions in the workplace is seemingly referred to as emotional labor. Morris and Feldman (1996) define emotional labor as the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions. Emotions need to be managed in the workplace to sustain the current morale, productivity and healthy atmosphere of the operation.

All participants (100%) in this study agreed that it was necessary to manage emotions in the workplace. Furthermore, all elaborated on how not doing so could have negative impact on the organization. Mack explained from his experiences and concluded with the consequences and perceptions of not managing emotions in the workplace. He stated…

“I've seen fights break out myself. I tried to stand in between them. They cussed people out saying you don’t know me. I've seen people just lose it at work. If you don’t manage your emotions, you get less productivity, you get fired, words get thrown around and it can be all bad. It ain’t that serious.”

Sierra pointed out the impact emotion management has on the social environment in the workplace which has influence on the function of business. She stated…

“Just being able to manage your emotions and being well-grounded emotionally helps your performance with your job. Helps you and your relationships with
other people and coworkers as well as management allows you to focus more on the job and not put your emotions into it. Working with claims and people's lives and work with disabilities people filing claims for disability. If I brought my emotions to it, I wouldn't be providing the best service that I could. So, they do have to be managed.”

The findings in this study were consistent with prior research on emotion management and the veteran transition. The participants explained in their own words the emotions associated with transitioning to the civilian workforce as well as ways emotions are managed during the transition process. This study was guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?

RQ2: How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

RQ3: Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

The themes that emerged from participant responses to address research question 1 are frustration, anxiety, fear and feelings of unpreparedness. The themes that emerged from participant responses to address research question 2 are considering the big picture and removal of self from situations. The final theme that emerged and addressed research question 3 was continuity of business and personal wellbeing. These findings contribute to the lack of understanding mentioned in Chapter 1 regarding the veteran transition and misconceptions about the emotion management of military veterans (Randall, 2015;
Implications

Theoretical implications. The theoretical frameworks this study was based upon were Schlossberg’s Transition Model (Anderson et al., 2012; Schlossberg, 2011) and Goleman’s Theory of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1997; Goleman, 1998). Throughout the literature, Schlossberg communicates a constant theme; everyone adapts to change differently (Schlossberg, 2011). Goleman posited that the concept of emotional intelligence refers to the ability to manage emotions thereby increasing self-awareness. Participants in this study communicated lived experiences which seemingly paralleled with the noted theoretical frameworks.

Schlossberg’s Transition Model was selected as the theoretical framework because it addresses the variable nature of change adaptation (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011). Schlossberg (2011) suggests that significant changes such as the change of career, dramatically alters a person’s life. All participants in this study reported that the significant change from military to civilian altered their lives in several ways.

Schlossberg’s transition model identifies four coping factors (Situation, Self, Supports and Strategies) known as 4S, which influence how individuals cope within the context of the transition (Schlossberg, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, 2011). Each participant in this study reported a specific moment and context which required them to manage their emotions for positive outcome. This parallels with the “situation” coping factor of Schlossberg’s (2011) 4S system. Each participant reported a sense of personal
accountability insomuch that managing emotions or the lack thereof could affect their personal well-being. This parallels with the “self” coping factor of the 4S system. Many of the participants noted the importance of communicating with family and other veterans during the transition. This parallels with the “support” factor of the 4S system. Finally, each veteran reported that they’ve employed self-care strategies to manage emotions during the military to civilian transition. This parallels with the “strategies” factor of the 4S system.

Goleman’s (1998) model placed emphasis on emotional intelligence as a broad range of social and emotional competencies consisting of five focal points: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy, and motivation. Each participant reported understanding the need to implement emotion management, and doing so which are both forms of self-awareness and self-regulation. Many of the participants reported to have employed social skills as they communicated to others to achieve resolution. Each participant in this study reported the use of empathy as they considered the big picture in times of emotional frustration. Lastly, all participants demonstrated the motivation to succeed in the civilian workforce, thereby interviewing well, striving to adapt and managing emotions.

**Practical implications.** The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment in Southern California. The findings of this study provided important information regarding the military to civilian workforce. The information presented in this study could be useful to pre-separation / discharge counseling and veterans who are transitioning out of the military. Furthermore, the
information presented is useful for hiring managers and those in leadership to understand further the veteran transition process.

There is a population of civilian human resource professionals that believe the military professional approach to leadership is solely based on “barking” orders to get something done (Vinezeano, 2010). For non-veteran hiring managers to further understand the veteran translation, they must gain "humanized exposure" to veteran narratives (Zivov, 2013). This contribution to the body of knowledge exposes military and non-military professionals to a comprehensive and personal perspective of the veteran transition.

For transitioning veterans, the difficulties associated with leaving the military have proven to be extremely prevalent. Additionally, the results of this study reveal that the feeling of unpreparedness is present during the transition from the military. The information presented within this study would be useful for veterans in the transition and those who are making plans to leave the military. The findings reveal practical strategies of emotion management, employed by veterans who have left the military and had success with getting hired as a civilian.

**Future implications.** Although this qualitative phenomenological study has advanced the body knowledge regarding the veteran transition, this study presents a need for further examination. This study consisted of 10 prior enlisted military veterans which subsequently excludes the officer population. Future researchers could expand the sample demographic and incorporate more participants from the officer community. Additionally, due to the study’s geographical area (Southern California) the amount of nearby NAVY personnel contributed to 90% of the participants being NAVY veterans.
Further research could include prospects from other regions of the country and other branches of the military.

This study examined the lived experiences of military veterans employing emotion management while transitioning to the civilian workforce. Aside from the employment arena, another area of transition complication for military veterans is the area of full time student (Pellegrino & Hoggan, 2015). Future research could investigate how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning to the role of full time student veteran.

**Strengths and weaknesses.** One strength associated with this study is the researcher’s military background. The researcher was also a prior enlisted, Gulf War era II military veteran who resides in Southern California. Grossoehme (2014) posits that “qualitative methodologies accept that the investigator is part of what is being studied and will influence it, and that this does not devalue a study but, in fact, enhances it” (p. 112). In the initial portion of the interview the researcher developed a rapport with each participant. The rapport enabled the participant to relax and speak beyond concern. Pathak and Intratat (2012) found that rapport building in semi structured interviews are useful to gain further perspectives and insight.

One weaknesses found in this study is that it is not representative of all veterans but many NAVY veterans. The veterans associated with this study had a minimum of 6 months’ post military civilian employment experience. Amongst the ten participants, the amount of time served in the military is variable. Another weakness associated with this study is the small sample size of 10 military veterans. In that population, two of eight are female. One could argue that the themes identified are drawn based on a heavy masculine
tone. The sample size was 10 veterans which is a relatively small size compared to quantitative approaches. Future research could consider interviewing a more balanced group of participants.

**Recommendations**

This current research explored the lived experiences of military veterans managing emotions transitioning to the civilian workforce. Based upon this research, several gaps were identified in the body of knowledge regarding emotion management and the veteran to civilian transition. Because of the findings associated with this research, the following recommendations were made:

**Recommendations for future research.** This study consists of 10 military veterans residing in Southern California (South of Los Angeles). A recommendation for future research would be to explore the phenomenon of emotion management during the military to civilian transition in another state with high veteran population. The participants in this study have been employed as civilians for a minimum of six months. Exploring emotion management in another region’s workforce could reveal some interesting findings and would expand the knowledge base veteran transition studies. It also may be beneficial to complete a longitudinal research design that observes participants’ experience before they transition out of the military, while they are transitioning and up to six months after they have transitioned.

Fifty percent of this study’s participants worked within organizations which provide support to military units. Twenty percent of the participants worked within the local government capacity and thirty percent were employed by non-government,
privatized businesses. A recommendation for future research would be to explore the emotion management of veterans employed within non-government related industries.

This qualitative phenomenological study consisted of 10 military veterans of which 8 were men and 2 were female. A recommendation for future research would be to explore military veteran’s emotion management, with a comprehensive focus on female veterans. Extant research reveals that female veterans have been shown to be at higher risk for depression than male veterans (Goldstein, Dinh, Donalson, Hebenstreit, & Maguen, 2017). Exploring the emotion management of female veterans would add to the existing body of knowledge concerning the veteran’s transition to the civilian workforce.

Another recommendation for future research is to explore the emotion management experiences of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. The topic of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and veterans has gained much attention in recent years. This attention has contributed to negative stigmas concerning veterans being hostile, overly emotional and aggressive (Interian et al., 2012). This study did not place focus on whether individuals had PTSD. Existing research reveals that veterans diagnosed with PTSD are negatively impacted by employer misconceptions prior to entering the civilian workforce (Smith et al., 2015). Exploring the emotion management experiences of transitioning veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder would expand add to the current body of knowledge regarding the veteran transition.

Finally, this study explored a population of enlisted military veterans. Further research should investigate the emotion management of veterans who were commissioned officers while serving on active duty. When discharged from the military, former military officers leave the military with degrees whereas having a degree is not a
requirement when enlisted. Additionally, officers are given an extensive level of leadership responsibility above that of enlisted personnel. Studying the emotion management of former military officers in the civilian workforce would expand the existing body of knowledge regarding military veterans.

**Summary of recommendations for future research.** The suggestions for future research on this topic include the following:

1. Exploring the veteran transition and emotion management phenomenon of military veterans in another region other than Southern California.
2. Explore the emotion management of veterans employed within non-government related industries.
3. Longitudinal research design that observes participants’ experience before they transition out of the military, while they’re transitioning and up to six months after they’ve transitioned.
4. Investigate military veteran’s emotion management, with a comprehensive focus on female veterans in the civilian workforce.
5. Explore the veteran transition and emotion management of military veterans diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the civilian workforce.
6. Investigate the emotion management of veterans who were commissioned officers while serving on active duty

**Recommendations for future practice.** Because of the current study on exploring military veterans' emotion management experiences while transitioning to the civilian workforce, the following are recommendations for future practice. The results of the current study reveal that there is a reality to veterans feeling like they were not adequately prepared to leave the military. Several responses regarded the military’s Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) as ineffective and unhelpful. Such programs should include a component that addresses the topic of emotion management while transitioning to the civilian workforce. Currently, the three day professionally trained
workshop educates service members about job searches, career development, resume writing, interview techniques and information concerning the benefits and opportunities provided for veterans (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016b). Incorporating a component covering emotional intelligence and emotion management would serve a noble purpose, better preparing our veterans to leave military service and enter the civilian workforce.

The current study was unique in two ways. First, this study explored the emotion management of military veterans who have worked in the civilian workforce for a minimum of six months rather than those who have recently transitioned and are still striving to get hired. Second, this study used a phenomenological research method to conduct semi-structured interviews in person. The United States Department of Labor, Military Fleet and Family Support units and Veteran Support Organization nationwide should utilize these recommendations for future practice and investigate further, the emotion management of military veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce.

Conclusion

This study explored military veterans’ emotion management experiences while transitioning to the civilian workforce in Southern California. Studies revealed that the veteran transition is a multidimensional process as seven themes emerged from the lived experiences of 10 participants. Per participant responses, frustration, anxiety, fear and feelings of unpreparedness are the emotions associated with the veteran transition to the civilian workforce. The veterans in this study reported that they have managed their emotions by considering the big picture and removing themselves from potentially conflicting environments. Finally, this study revealed that veterans saw it necessary to
manage their emotions because of the impact emotion management has on the continuity of business and personal well-being.

This study is significant because it increases the awareness of what military veterans are experiencing from an emotional perspective during the transition period. This study also unveiled the fact that veterans understand how to manage emotions in the civilian work environment and veterans understand the necessity of doing so. Military leaders and civilian human resource professionals can incorporate the findings of this study into existing training protocol to educate veterans and civilians on emotion management amid transition challenges. Thus, future veterans and even civilian employees could benefit from the information and application of emotion management concepts while in the workplace. While the findings and results of this study contributed to the body of knowledge regarding the veteran transition, the growing population of military veterans deem it necessary for continuous observation and further research of the transition phenomenon.
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doi:10.1037/mil0000068


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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

DATE: 
April 10, 2017

TO: 
Benjamin Andrew, Th.M. MBA

FROM: 
Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: 
[953985-1] Exploring Military Veterans’ Emotion Management Experiences While Transitioning to the Civilian Workforce

IRB REFERENCE #: 
New Project

ACTION: 
APPROVED

APPLICATION DATE: 
EXPIRATION DATE: 

REVIEW TYPE: 

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7.6 and 7.7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document. The approved, watermarked informed consent is included in your published documents in your IRBNet submission for use with your study.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Greetings,

I am a graduate learner under the direction of Professor Michael Cosimano, Ed.D in the College of Doctoral Studies at Grand Canyon University. I am conducting a research study to examine the emotion management experiences of military veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce.

I am recruiting military veterans who meet the following criteria:

- served on active duty between September 2001 and September 2016
- served on active duty for a minimum of 4 years (1 enlistment)
- employed by a civilian establishment in Southern California longer than 6 months

I am recruiting individuals to participate in a one-on-one, in person interview at a comfortable location of his or her choice. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes. Each individual interview will be recorded via audio for transcription purposes to assist with the analysis of data. All interview recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet for a period of 3-years after the study is complete.

Should you choose to volunteer as a participant in this study, your identity and place of employment will remain confidential and will not be released under any circumstances. For more information regarding participation in this research study, please feel free to contact me via phone at (619) 227-5750 or email at benandrew@live.com.

Respectfully,

Ben Andrew Th.M, MBA

CONSENT FORM

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this form are to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.

RESEARCH

Benjamin F Andrew, Doctoral Learner, Grand Canyon University has invited your participation in a research study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY PURPOSE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of the research is to further understand how military veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning into the civilian work environment.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY</th>
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<tr>
<td>If you decide to participate, you will join a study involving the research of 10 to 15 self-identified military veterans in the United States. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted for periods of time ranging between 30 and 45 minutes. The interviews will be recorded with a digital recording device. You are allowed to skip any interview questions asked by the interviewer.</td>
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<tr>
<th>RISKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are no known risks from taking part in this study, but in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.</td>
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<tr>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
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<tr>
<td>The possible/main benefits of your participation in the research include helping fellow military veterans understand ways emotions can be managed though transitioning.</td>
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<tr>
<th>NEW INFORMATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the researchers find new information during the study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will provide this information to you.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>CONFIDENTIALITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. The results of this research study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researcher will not identify you. To maintain confidentiality of your records, Benjamin F. Andrew will only use alphanumeric identifiers (VET1, VET2-VET10) to identify your answers to the interview questions. A list of the corresponding names to each alphanumeric identifier will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s residence for 3 years and then destroyed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>WITHDRAWL PRIVILEGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is ok for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time. If you elect to withdraw, your recorded interview all records of transcripts will be destroyed via document shredding. The researcher will then inform you of the destruction via confirmation email.</td>
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<tr>
<th>COSTS AND PAYMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is no payment for your participation in the study.</td>
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</table>

| VOLUNTARY CONSENT |
Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Benjamin F. Andrew, 38236 Hermosa Ct, Murrieta CA 92563, and phone number (619)227-5750. If you have questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, through the College of Doctoral Studies at (602) 639-7804.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given (offered) to you.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in the above study.

___________________________  __________________________  __________
Subject's Signature         Printed Name                   Date

___________________________  __________________________  __________
Other Signature             Printed Name                   Date
   (if appropriate)

INVESTIGATOR’S STATEMENT

"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. These elements of Informed Consent conform to the Assurance given by Grand Canyon University to the Office for Human Research Protections to protect the rights of human subjects. I have provided (offered) the subject/participant a copy of this signed consent document."

Signature of Investigator ________________________________
Date__________
Appendix C

Demographic Information

Alphanumeric identifier (VET1, VET2, VET3 etc.)

1. Current age range: (a) < 30 (b) 30 to 40 (c) 41 to 50
2. Gender: (a) Male (b) Female
3. # of years in the military: (a) < 4 (b) 4 to 6 (c) 6 to 10 (d) 10 to 15 (e) 15 to 20
4. # of years in the civilian workforce: (provided by participants)
5. Combat experience: a) Yes b) No
Appendix D

Interview Question

1. Describe your transition experience from the military to the civilian workforce.

2. What is it like being a veteran in the civilian workforce?

3. From an emotional perspective, describe how it felt to separate from the military.

4. How did you feel about your first job interview as a veteran?

5. Describe how you felt adjusting to the civilian workplace.

6. Do you feel that you are a good fit in your current position? Why do you feel this way?

7. Describe one positive experience linked to the transition to the civilian workforce and how it made you feel.

8. Describe one negative experience linked to the transition to the civilian workforce and how it made you feel.

9. Describe a time when you had to manage your emotions in the workplace in order to get a positive result. In that situation, what did you do to manage your emotions?

10. While on the job, what are some effective coping strategies you've implemented to avoid negative outcomes?

11. Explain why it is or is not necessary for emotions to be managed in the civilian workplace.

12. Tell me one example where you have seen the benefits of managing emotions in the workplace (positive results/outcomes)

13. Tell me one example where you have seen the consequences of not managing emotions in the workplace (negative results/outcomes)
Appendix E

Interview Question Matrix

1) Describe your transition experience from the military to the civilian workforce.

2) What is it like being a veteran in the civilian workforce?

3) From an emotional perspective, describe how it felt to separate from the military.

5) Describe how you felt adjusting to the civilian workplace.

7) Describe one positive experience linked to the transition to the civilian workforce and how it made you feel.

8) Describe one negative experience linked to the transition to the civilian workforce and how it made you feel.

9) Describe a time when you had to manage your emotions in the workplace in order to get a positive result. In that situation, what did you do to manage your emotions?

10) While on the job, what are some effective coping strategies you've implemented to avoid negative outcomes?

11) Explain why it is or is not necessary for emotions to be managed in the civilian workplace.

12) Tell me one example where you have seen the benefits of managing emotions in the workplace (positive results/outcomes).

13) Tell me one example where you have seen the consequences of not managing emotions in the workplace (negative results/outcomes).

4) How did you feel about your first job interview as a veteran?

6) Do you feel that you are a good fit in your current position? Why do you feel this way?
Appendix F

Research Question Matrix

**Research Questions**

RQ1. What various emotions are associated with transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce?

RQ2. How do veterans manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

RQ3. Why is it necessary for veterans to manage the emotions associated with transitioning from the military into the civilian workforce?

**Interview Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Will Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Describe your transition experience from the military to the civilian workforce.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is it like being a veteran in the civilian workforce?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. From an emotional perspective, describe how it felt to separate from the military.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How did you feel about your first job interview as a veteran?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Describe how you felt adjusting to the civilian workplace.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you feel that you are a good fit in your current position? Why do you feel this way?</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Describe one positive experience linked to the transition to the civilian workforce and how it made you feel.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Describe one negative experience linked to the transition to the civilian workforce and how it made you feel.</td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Describe a time when you had to manage your emotions in the workplace in order to get a positive result. In that situation, what did you do to manage your emotions</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. While on the job, what are some effective coping strategies you've implemented to avoid negative outcomes</td>
<td>RQ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
<td>Will Answer</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Explain why it is or is not necessary for emotions to be managed in the civilian workplace.</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tell me one example where you have seen the benefits of managing emotions in the workplace (positive results/outcomes)</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Tell me one example where you have seen the consequences of not managing emotions in the workplace (negative results/outcomes)</td>
<td>RQ3</td>
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## Appendix G

### Expert Review Panel for Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel</th>
<th>Degree / Yr</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy Blowers</td>
<td>Ed.D/ 2015</td>
<td>Military veteran content expert at GCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Jackson</td>
<td>Ed.D</td>
<td>Professor; Qualitative research;</td>
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</table>
Appendix H

Site Approval Letters

Site approval letters are on file at Grand Canyon University.
### Appendix I

#### Prevalent Themes/Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalent Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Frustrated, impatient, if I’m not doing something right just tell me, difficult, I wanted to get a little bit loud, I’m never going to find anything as good as the military, anger, bitterness against the military, had no idea what I wanted to do, brought me down,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Anxiety, nervousness, my separation was stressful, antsy, nervous wreck, worry, nerves, uptight, cope, high-strung, trust issues, very shocking, uneasy, confused,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Afraid, fearful of the interview and job search, scary, extremely concerned, worried, not coming to something that I’m used to, uncertainty of success, complete fear, it (the interview) was different from what I spoke in my head, If I made a mistake, wondering if I did the right thing, sense of fear, frightened,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of unpreparedness</td>
<td>I wasn't confident, I wasn't prepared, I felt lost, not planned, but nothing prepares you for life like experience, didn't know if I was ready, unprepared, I don’t think I was ready to get out, no idea, not even knowing I was about to get out of the military, didn’t have all the necessary tools, unsure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considering the big picture</td>
<td>Empathize, I talked to myself and I said what would be the negative aspects if I go off, stay calm truth will prevail, you never know what a person can be going through or dealing with, take a step back, learn to show compassion, evaluate the situation, regardless...the job still had to be done,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing self from situation</td>
<td>Taking a walk, left the room, I walked off, get some fresh air, clear my mind, do some squats, step away until calm, re-evaluating, pray, talk to my wife, counting to 10, take my 15 min breaks, talk to someone about how I’m feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of business and personal well-being</td>
<td>helps your performance with your job, helps you and your relationships with other people and coworkers, you can affect the team, workplace violence, smile and apologize, it affects business, it affects your family, being fired, doing your job effectively, cannot take it personally, morale would fall, I had to suppress, wanted a positive result, lose clientele, you can mess up business, you can get reported, lost productivity</td>
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