A Qualitative Examination of a Snowball Sample Regarding Veterans’ Opinions About Reintegration into Civilian Life: An Exploratory Research

by Tanya Lewis
Northern New Mexico College
Department of BAIS: PSYCHOLOGY

Abstract
When the veterans finish their service and return to the civilian world, they enter into a completely different working environment. Many programs are needed to help break the cycle of a veteran finding work and then finding they don’t fit in, by creating a work environment that is veteran friendly we can aid in the healing process.

Statement of the Problem
There are not any or enough programs to assist recently separated or discharged for the military in finding and keeping the civilian working environment. I will also reach out to community based organizations to expand my chances of response.

Theory
There is a recognizable gap in the mindset of a veteran compared to a civilian, I would like to try and identify the gap in order to make the reintegration process into the civilian workplace easier for returning veterans.

Hypotheses
There is a need for specific training for management staff in regards to effectively managing veterans.

Data Collection & Methods
Participants
I will be using a structured interview along with a non-probability sample survey of veterans to gather information about the reintegration process from the perspective of a veteran. I will reach out to community based veteran groups. I will be using the snowball effect in order to obtain as many responses as possible.

Methods
I will conduct online self-administered surveys and also conduct face to face interviews using a structured set of questions that will be the same for every person interviewed. I have created an online survey for veterans asking their input about the civilian working environment. I will also set up a meeting with the veterans group on campus to administer the surveys in person as a means to obtaining higher results. I have also reached out to community based veterans group in the state of New Mexico to expand my chances of response.

Data Analysis & Findings
Table 2: Does the company you worked for have a program for Veterans?

Table 2: shows that 21 of the 23 respondents answered, 14 (70% of n=23) of them stated that there were not programs offered by the civilian companies to assist veterans in the workplace, one respondent stated, “Nothing formal. Many of us were hired through placement agencies.” The 4 respondents (20% of n=23) that answered yes were happy with the programs offered. In future research I would like to explore what those programs are and how they helped the veterans. 2 respondents (10% of n=23) were not sure if any programs were offered which would show no effort made on the company’s part.

Data Analysis & Findings cont’d

Table 4: Do you feel like your Supervisor is aware of.

Question 15 was an opportunity for the respondents to voice opinion. Something they notated as a frustration in the civilian jobs they held, the ability to voice frustrations to supervisors and feel like they were being listened to.

Q16 Is there anything that you would like to add that I did not already ask?

Understand Job Feeling
Question 16 the views expressed here gave me insight to areas I did not think about when I initially began this project. The need for marketable civilian type skills was expressed, “Going to school full time is a task due to the inability to understand the kids that have not served that have no respect or discipline.” Everyone leaving the military should obtain a degree while serving, this should be mandatory before being able to get released. That would make the individual more marketable in finding a good job. Most soldiers leave the military with military based skills and enter in to a new world of expectations, preparing these veterans with marketable nonmilitary based skills would also help exponentially in the reintegration process as a whole.

Conclusions
Based on the responses I collected I can accept the null hypothesis, each question shows a need for specific training for management staff in regards to effectively managing veterans.

I found in administering my surveys and having conversations with respondents that something I failed to represent was the amount of marketable skills the veterans obtained during their time in the service. A veteran can have 12 years of military experience but if they do not obtain marketable skills they do not have the experience recognized in the civilian work force to advance their civilian careers. Making it mandatory for veterans to complete schooling for a degree before they leave the service offering an accelerated degree, to utilize their time in service, so that it does not take an extended time to finish. This will give veterans the opportunity to begin the reintegration process with more tools in their extensive tool box to start a career.

Conclusions cont’d
In future research I would look more directly at the training that can change the mindsets of managers to effectively manage veterans to help them obtain marketable skills to help build their career path in the civilian sector. The interpretation of some of my questions were misunderstood, in the future I will more thoroughly explain my questions. Some of the questions were not specifically clear as to what I was trying to determine the answers, which intern caused them to over analyze what the response should be. Giving better examples as to the responses meant. The options should have been ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and how often as opposed to giving 1-5 options. A more direct approach is what was needed to receive more concise answers.

Ethics
The surveys are online and anonymous, with the option to withdraw the response at anytime. Respondents completing a verbal interview will be asked permission for use of any information they give and will also remain anonymous if they request.

References
Sayer NM, Noorbaloochi S, Carlson K, Gravelly A, Murdoch M. Reintegration Problems and Treatment Interests Among Iraq and Afghanistan Combat Veterans Receiving VA Medical Care. Psychiatr Serv. 2010

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