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U.S. Marine Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars Diagnosed with PTSD: Perceived Employment Barriers Faced by Marines with PTSD Upon Discharge

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Glossary

Discharge	retirement from the active military, naval, or Air service; and (b) the satisfactory completion of the period of active military, naval, or air service in the case of a person who, due to enlistment or reenlistment, was awarded a discharge or release from such period of service at the time of such completion thereof and who, at such time, would otherwise have been eligible for the award of a discharge or release under conditions other than honorable (38 USC § (18)).
Gulf War Veteran	military officer or enlisted person who served in combat operations in the Persian Gulf during Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn.
Reservist	a member of a reserve component of one of the Armed Forces (38 USC § (27)).
Service-connected	with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated, in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service (38 USC § (16)).
Veteran	a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable (38 USC § 101 (2)).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	a psychiatric disorder occurring in people who experienced a traumatic event (American Psychiatric Association).

List of Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities
DVOP	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
E2I	The Education and Employment Initiative
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
ISMI	Internalized Stigma of Mental Illness
LVER	Local Veterans Employment Representative
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OND	Operation New Dawn
OWF	Operation Warfighter
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
TAP	Transitional Assistance Program
USSERA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
VA	Veterans Affairs
VETS	Veterans' Employment and Training Service
(VR&E)	The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
W2W	Warriors to Workforce
WWBW	Wounded Warrior Battalion (West)

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived employment barriers faced by Marines with PTSD upon discharge. Many such affected Marines were discharged from the Marine Corps and entered the civilian job market with ambiguous expectations. Through this qualitative study, the researcher examined the experiences of 11 U.S. Marines from Camp Pendleton, California, who were all diagnosed with PTSD upon their discharge from military service. The findings revealed negative issues in current programs designed to help Marines and other military personnel transition to civilian life. Participant interviews revealed the following themes: (a) civilian employers did not understand military personnel, (b) civilian employers consider Marines a liability, (c) PTSD effects on finding employment, (d) PTSD can be seen by others, and (e) civilians are intimidated by Marines. Marine Corps training programs designed to aid discharging disabled veterans need enhancements as communication efforts between Marines and civilian employers lack cohesion. Rumors and misconceptions between Marines and their civilian employers have contributed to false speculation, which has led to negative employment outcomes. Conjecture regarding veterans with PTSD needs to be better understood, as the current states of concern and avoidance have resulted in negative employment conclusions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On September 11, 2001 (9/11), two passenger airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Virginia. Both World Trade towers collapsed because of the catastrophic collision, resulting in over 3,000 civilian deaths. A thorough investigation led the United States government to place blame on Osama Bin Laden, the former leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, who later admitted responsibility for the attacks. The U.S. military deployed combat forces to the Persian Gulf region in response to the 9/11 attacks. The United States and other foreign governments sent military forces to engage in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were titled Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF, Afghanistan, 2001–2014), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF, 2003–2011) and Operation New Dawn (OND, 2010–2011). The Marine Corps provided infantry, aviation, and logistical personnel support for the war.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), 4.1 million veterans served during OEF, OIF, and OND, of which 47 percent were deployed to the theater. Many military veterans who returned from OEF, OIF, and OND had suffered both visible and unseen injuries. Because of combat engagements, many returning Marines have experienced a diminished capability of finding civilian employment due to being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This study focused specifically on PTSD and its effects on civilian employment outcomes.

Military Veterans Employment Statistics

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2019), 3.8% of military veterans were unemployed in 2018. Also, 41% of Iraq-Afghanistan veterans had reported a service-connected disability. Veterans with disabilities were unemployed at a rate of 5.2% in 2018, which was 6% higher than those with no disability. As of August 2018, a total of 4.1 million veterans had served during OIF, OEF, and OND. Approximately 32% of veterans with a disability worked in the public sector in 2018. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2019) reported that about (53%) veterans separating from military service would face an unemployment period. Many veterans struggle to reestablish normality when they return to their previous lives in the civilian community (Perkins et al., 2019). As a result of these veterans' struggles, they are less likely to be employed than civilians (Amara et al., 2019).

Extended military deployments, PTSD and other disabilities are associated with unemployment. Veterans seeking employment were faced with difficulties, not only dealing with themselves but directly with employers. There is also a social stigma associated with veterans revealing they had PTSD (Ghaffarzadegan et al., 2016). Military veteran patients suffered a higher likelihood of losing their jobs and discrimination in the workplace, as well as lower income and greater difficulty renting residences. Pugh et al. (2015) added that OIF, OEF, and OND veterans with PTSD suffered as much as 20 percent higher unemployment rates than the general public. "Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) interferes with a person's ability to function at work and negatively affects sustained employment

and income. Veterans who screen positive for PTSD are more likely to be unemployed than are those without PTSD" (Davis et al., 2018, p. 317).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), approximately 284,000 veterans were unemployed in 2019. Fifty-six percent of these were between the ages of 25 to 54 years, while 39 percent were aged 55 and above. The unemployment for veterans serving on active duty was 3.1% in August 2019. Veterans with a service-connected disability during OEF, OIF, and OND was approximately 41%. Approximately 11–20% out of every 100 veterans who participated in OIF or OEF are diagnosed with PTSD (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2019). Most combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan were profound and elongated. Such deployments resulted in an increased diagnosis of mental disorders and concern over employment prospects among returning service members (Horton et al., 2013).

Gender and Diversity

The number of women serving reached 12.65% during OEF and OIF. Women serving in the military had a higher diagnosis rate of PTSD than men. Women also screened higher than men for PTSD and depression (Maguen et al., 2010). The roles of women serving in military service have changed in the last 20 years. Women served specifically in combat roles that were historically held by their male counterparts. Due to these role additions, female veterans have recently and continually been exposed to the combat-zone. Such experiences have likely led to a heightened diagnosis of PTSD in women veterans. Boyd et al. (2013) argued that women have been exposed to combat during OEF and OIF and suffered injuries more than any other time in U.S. History. During OIF, OEF,

and OND, nearly one third of all veterans were identified as having some form of psychosocial disorder.

Relationships and Perspectives

Through this study, the researcher aimed to explore the perceived relationship between unemployment and PTSD from the perspective of U.S. Marines. These perspectives will be identified and analyzed to help resolve negative post discharge employment outcomes. Much of the military support used in the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions had been a costly endeavor both in terms of price and the harm inflicted upon large portions of the 1.7 million men and women who participated these conflicts. Veterans of these wars suffered physical and psychological harm and suffered personal, familial, and communal sacrifices. Many American service members and their families have endured an unprecedented number of military deployments and operations, which have caused harmful and increased exposure in combat zones (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). Simpson and Armstrong (2009) agreed, citing that an unprecedented number of veterans who return from Iraq and Afghanistan had contracted PTSD and other illnesses.

Thousands of veterans continue to receive combat-related treatment and benefits because of injuries such as PTSD. At times, symptoms remained with the service member for years, even after their military service time expired. Zoli et al. (2015) revealed that 38 percent of military veterans considered finding a civilian job was a significant challenge due to their service-connected disability.

As a matter of policy, the Marine Corps rotated personnel in and out of the warzone to curb the harmful effects and over-exposure in combat zones that have

often contributed to PTSD. A diagnosis of PTSD in service members makes them eligible to receive combat-related medical treatment after their service has ended. Military members are often faced with the decision to retire or exit military service. Such decisions require service members to find employment to sustain themselves and their families. The transition from military to civilian functions frequently poses complex situations for veterans with mental and physical health issues (Vogt et al., 2018).

Status of Veterans

Military veterans and their growing issues in attaining post-military employment seem to be ongoing. Accordingly, Amick et al. (2018) stated, "Military personnel from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) face significant challenges reentering civilian life after structured military careers" (p. 30). Psychiatric disorders such as PTSD have contributed to these reintegration issues as more research to find answers is needed. Over $1 billion is currently spent annually on costs attributable to PTSD in terms of lost work and productivity. Veterans with PTSD continue to face significant barriers to employment (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2019).

PTSD has negative effects that are broadly associated with employment outcomes (Smith et al., 2005). Employment issues are fundamental as more Marines are leaving military service with the intent of finding civilian employment. Ricks (1994) also argued that service members who have been discharged from service or are in the process often believe that their chances of finding civilian employment are reduced based on their acquiring PTSD. Harrell

and Berglass (2012) argued that post-9/11 veterans' unemployment rate is usually at least one full percentage point higher than for those who have never served; this effect is worse when sorted by age. Efforts and research studies to address these issues are ongoing. Also, potential employers were generally not enthused with service members and their time in the military even though many of them purport to be. Many veterans returned from war to a less-welcoming employment outlook, as their skills were not seen in a positive light with employers. Many service members became bitter because they had unusual difficulty in attaining employment after discharge. Marines' attitudes and perspectives play a significant role in seeking postmilitary civilian employment after their service, coupled with disabilities such as PTSD (Ricks, 1994).

Post-service employment issues have negatively impacted U.S. Marines and their families, causing anxiety, stress, and even depression. Other related employment issues include apprehension toward reentering society, reenlistment back into the military for lack of vision, seeking welfare assistance, and the adverse effects on marriage. Adding to this issue are the vast issues concerning family problems. Karney et al. (2012) suggested that service members were more likely to be married than their civilian counterparts and more likely to be divorced. Injuries, job loss, and change contribute to detrimental effects on Marines as they exited the service.

Current public sentiment regarding military members reflects the sincere desire and positive support to ensure the future success and prosperity of those who have served. Instead, however, many veterans return from war to find civilian employment challenging to attain. Many of these veterans resort to

navigating a labyrinth of alternative measures to find jobs as some attempt to hide their military service in anticipation of negative backlash. Gordon and Graham (2013) reported that some military members often considered omitting their military service from their resumes due to the high level of discrimination. To compound alleged employment discrimination issues, military members also returned from war with mental and physical problems. Levy and Sidel (2013) concluded that the war in Iraq (2003–2011) produced more than 31,000 deployed military members who suffered PTSD and other neuropsychological disorders. Those veterans returned to a challenging job market in which they faced employment discrimination.

U.S. military organizations play a vital role in U.S. government security. Therefore, their personnel's well-being is essential. Kalin (2008) argued that it is also important to care for postwar military veterans and ensure that they are provided with the necessary resources to readjust to civilian life.

Individual service members and their families have been the subject of much legislation in the recent past. President Obama (2012) stated, "We have a moral sacred duty to our men and women in uniform. The graves of our veterans are hallowed grounds" (p. 1). In part, the United States' security and well-being rest on its ability to defend itself as a strong military, which has been its hallmark for many years. Military men and women take an oath to support and defend the United States, some of which die in the line of duty. Faulty employer perceptions about military veterans have negatively altered employment outcomes. Some organizations are convinced that veterans' skills and abilities are limited to driving tanks and throwing hand grenades (Rosser, 2009). Many people join the

military out of a sense of commitment and sacrifice, but often exit with a high degree of frustration about their lack of employment opportunities. President George W. Bush (2014) argued that PTSD is an injury, not a disorder, opining that if PTSD is called a disorder, then veterans may believe that it is not treatable. President Bush was adamant that PTSD and veteran employment issues were a serious problem.

In this study, the researcher attempted to identify what personal attributes and perspectives influence Marines' behavior when diagnosed with PTSD. Also, how that behavior has impacted their employment experiences after their obligated service had expired. It is anticipated that exploring these items will bring to the surface specific issues regarding the hurdles that Marines believe they will encounter during their employment search.

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), and other laws have provided legal protections that can benefit veterans, disparities still exist. Legal requirements and violations of applicable laws, along with moral and ethical considerations, make veteran employment a critical issue. Veterans and unemployment have been at the forefront of issues regarding those who served. Investigative reports and medical research have highlighted employment challenges associated with war veterans of OEF, OIF, and OND. Veterans struggle to find jobs upon departure from military service as their attitudes and perspectives contribute to new knowledge on new and innovative ways of assisting them. Their perspectives on their health influence their behavior. This

struggle to find civilian jobs during their transition can become dire, especially if they have families.

The researcher defined and analyzed Marines' health elements pertaining to its effects on civilian employment. Specifically, this study focused on Marines' perception when they exit from military service having been diagnosed with PTSD. Marines' experiences hold crucial elements in developing solutions to aid in their search for post-service employment. Accordingly, Stern (2017) argued that approximately 50 percent of OEF, OIF, and OND veterans indicated finding a job as their greatest challenge. Veterans experience high rates of mental disorders and diminished employment conclusions, which are consistently connected to veterans' mental disorders (Adler et al., 2011; Zivin et al., 2011). According to Vogt et al. (2018), it is expected that a targeted research approach can offer valuable solutions from an individual perspective.

Significance of Study

The findings of this study will inform the development of focused programs and processes regarding treating PTSD, prevention, and employment. They will also help develop pathways and services to better understand military service members' perspectives and employment future after being diagnosed with PTSD. Bryant et al. (2015) argued that millions of people, civilians, and military are affected by traumatic injuries yearly, of which 23% developed PTSD at 12 months after their injury. Such injuries affect these individuals' present and future employment. PTSD affects many different sectors of uniformed personnel and a spectrum of diversities. Planning and assistance to aid service members in their transition are critical. Based on the findings, the researcher offers

explanations and recommendations regarding Marines' perspectives with PTSD and their outlook on future employment to raise awareness of the ongoing difficulties with PTSD. Although there are significant studies that provide research regarding veterans and employment, there was a limited selection, based on this research, directly related to PTSD and service member perceptions on post-employment. There is room to expand research into PTSD and veterans' employment.

Over five million military personnel were projected to return to the civilian workforce by the end of 2020, and the navigation of such a transition can be difficult and complicated (Stern, 2017). Vietnam War veterans witnessed mass backlash and repudiation upon their return, while veterans of subsequent wars have returned to a more welcoming and thankful citizenry. Mikulski (2014) agreed that it is prudent to promote postservice assistance and rewards for those who serve in the military willingly with an all-volunteer workforce. The United States enjoys much of its freedoms because of its robust military that deters foreign aggression (Mikulski, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify perceived employment barriers faced by Marines with PTSD upon discharge. Negative perceptions about this population have led to prolonged joblessness, homelessness and ultimately affect entire families. Understanding this phenomenon can inform the creation of quality programs to aid affected Marines and all military veterans. Current training and readiness efforts must be reexamined and given a more focused approach to address veterans' self-imposed barriers.

Research Question

The following question guided this study: What are the perceived employment barriers faced by Marines with PTSD upon discharge from military service? The veterans participating in this study all served in OIF, OEF, and OND or deployed to a combat area designated in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) declared under Congressional proclamations.

Evaluation and diagnostic tools consist of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) and specialized medical examinations from multiple professional sources. These sources include Veterans Affairs, private medical care, and counseling services. Employment outcomes are defined as the employment result of an afflicted veteran after their military service.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a federal government operated benefit system that provides services for military veterans, their families, and survivors. The VA has a Cabinet Secretary level executive and enjoys full national congressional attention. "Time in theater" refers to the amount of time the veteran spent deployed, on the ground, in the participation of OIF, OEF, and OND.

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental condition defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and used in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5). The DSM-5 defines and assigns PTSD to people who have been exposed to a formidable traumatic experience. The DSM-5 identified the following criterion required for a diagnosis of PTSD: exposure to death, threatened death, or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence:

- Direct exposure
- Witnessing the trauma
- Learning loved one was exposed to such trauma
- Indirect exposure to trauma
- Persistent unwanted memories
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks of violent incidents
- Emotional distress after a traumatic event
- Physical reaction after traumatic event or reminder

Moore and Jongsma (2014) provided the following behavioral definitions regarding PTSD:

- Desires to leave military service
- Expresses feelings of letting fellow service members, unit, and country down
- Recognizes increased marital and family conflict
- Recognizes increased interpersonal conflict in friendships, other service members and seniors
- Expresses thoughts of suicide or homicide
- Causes eruptions of verbal or physical violence or threats of violence with little or no warning

Seedat (2013) identified PTSD as among the most prevalent of all anxiety disorders:

> Also, the disorder represents a pathological response to a traumatic event, characterized by symptoms of recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event (e.g., nightmares, a sense of reliving the experience with illusions, hallucinations, or dissociative flashback episodes, intense psychological or physiological distress at exposure to cues that resemble the traumatic event); avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma (e.g., inability to recall important aspects of the trauma, loss of interest, estrangement from others); and increased arousal (sleep disturbances, irritability, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, and exaggerated startle response. (p.1)

Seedat (2013) also argued that PTSD could be a chronic disorder. PTSD symptoms often show up immediately after a traumatic event, abate in many people, but endure in approximately 40% in the form a chronic PTSD.

Limitations

The scope of this study was limited to U.S. Marines at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, a military installation located in San Diego County with slightly over 70,000 people. Surrounding cities include San Diego, Oceanside, Carlsbad, and Fallbrook—all highly populated metropolitan cities. Each participant who participated in the study gave their permission and willingly disclosed their diagnosis of PTSD to include relevant information and surrounding circumstances. This study was also limited to Marine Corps veterans of OIF, OEF, and OND. Marines during this era of war were sent into combat specifically due to Congressional actions on the September 11 attacks on the United States. This study was also limited to one female participant (P4), who was assigned to a

Marine Expeditionary Force level component. P4 was as intricately engaged and exposed in the Battle of Fallujah and other combat skirmishes as the other male participants.

It was important for this researcher to be vigilant of any opinions expressed in the data during the interviews that may have influenced the outcome. It was equally important for the researcher to be cognizant that his own story was not introduced into the research process. All precautions were taken to ensure that such opinions did not influence the processes of data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter contains a review of the existing body of literature regarding PTSD, veteran employment, and related perspectives. The complexity of Marines' thoughts and beliefs regarding their employment prospects required an in-depth study of their physical and cognitive limitations, employment environment, perception, and perspectives. Stereotypes and employer bias as an influence on Marines' perspectives were also incorporated in this study. The current researcher's understanding of how Marines feel about their employment prospects is based on studies into past issues, histories, and relevant literature. The literature review is organized into the following categories: mental illness stigma, effects of PTSD, race, and gender, veteran barriers to employment, employer viewpoint, political opinion, perspectives, and legal protections.

Mental Illness Stigma

The stigma and social consequences associated with people suffering from mental illness are complicated and affects lives. Mental illness has long been connected to social distancing practices, and negative stereotyping as those considered to be "normal" often fear those afflicted. Social norms also play a role in people who would discriminate against others affected by mental illness. Reducing such stigma has been the work of numerous professionals internal and external to the healthcare profession. Norman et al. (2008) found that the healthcare profession faced significant challenges in reducing the stigma of mental illness. Adverse reactions from people who have mental illness are believed to assist in their delay in looking for help. Those who have participated

in psychiatric treatment are at a disadvantage in areas including employment, income, living arrangements, social relationships, and medical care.

People often react to those with mental illness by staring, speaking negatively, and even shaming them. Latalova et al. (2014) distinguished two types of social stigma: public stigma and self-stigma. Public stigma is what people perceive in others who have mental illness and may view them socially unfit and undesirable. Such perceptions often lead to negative attitudes, prejudice, and ill-treatment by society, family members, the general community, and healthcare workers. Latalova et al. argued that stigma is a leading impediment in treating PTSD, depression, schizophrenia, panic disorder, and bipolar disorder. Diminishing the stigma of mental illness, however, has continued to be a challenge.

Hensley (2006) agreed that public perception of mental illness is troubling and concerning to most healthcare professionals. The stigma generated by those with mental illness often leads to adverse outcomes in patient placement, assessment, and treatment plans. Self-stigma is assessed using an instrument identified as the Internalized Stigma of Mental Illness Scale (ISMI), which relies on the individual's personal experience. The ISMI includes 10 questions using a 5-point Likert scale to test for agreement or disagreement. Self-stigmatization is also defined as persons diagnosed with mental illness who are conscious of their illness, agree with, internalize, and act upon it (Corrigan et al., 2010).

Veterans with PTSD are at a greater risk for not only the health-related quality of life problems, but they are also exposed to heightened levels of unemployment (Dillahunt-Aspillaga et al., 2015). A study conducted by Vogt et

al. (2018) revealed that 20% more veterans with PTSD who participated in OEF, OIF, and OND reported being out of work than veterans without PTSD. In this study, 50% of men with PTSD had a higher likelihood of succumbing to work performance impairment than 16% without PTSD. It is important to note that men both with and without PTSD reported that they were satisfied with their employment during this study. Women with PTSD were twice as likely to be dissatisfied with their employment than women without. Generally, male veterans with PTSD had a higher probability of being in the workforce than their female counterparts.

Kukla et al. (2015) agreed that veterans with mental illness have a significant problem regarding unstable employment. Also, 65% of military veterans, identified by their use of the VA Healthcare System, were unemployed. OEF and OIF veteran unemployment rates were calculated at 13.1% compared to 8.1% of those who had not served (Zivin et al., 2011). Veterans with PTSD are more prone to discern a stigma when seeking medical help as they perceive it as exposing weakness (Hoge et al., 2004).

Brown and Bruce (2016) agreed that 20–22% of OIF and OEF military service veterans were diagnosed with PTSD. Those affected with mental health issues witnessed detrimental effects on employment. The social stigma associated with veterans and PTSD can influence their willingness to seek treatment, thus compounding the problem. Veterans who avoided seeking treatment did so for fear of the effects on their military and future civilian careers (Greene-Shortridge et al., 2007). Norman et al. (2008) argued that stereotypical beliefs surrounding mentally ill people were that they were dangerous, responsible for their demise,

unpredictable, and altogether inappropriate. The social fears and behaviors exhibited by veterans can affect their employment outcomes.

Effects of PTSD

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), PTSD can occur if a person is exposed to a traumatic or stressful event. The DSM-5 (APA, 2013) contains criteria that define and explain relationships between PTSD and people. Such criteria include but are not limited to persons exposed to death, either threatened actual or serious injury, or sexual violence. "Immediately following exposure to a traumatic event, many individuals experience psychological and physiological reactivity in response to reminders of the event" (Mattson et al., 2018, p. 475). Kane et al. (2013) stated, "PTSD is a persistent and, at times, debilitating clinical syndrome that develops after exposure to a psychologically traumatic event. It is the second most common illness among OEF/OIF combat veterans, with an estimated prevalence of 3% to 20%" (p. 402)

Other criteria regarding PTSD include traumatic and recurring memories, nightmares, and flashbacks that often cause emotional distress. Individuals with PTSD must have been exposed to actual death or under the threat of death or severe injury. Bisson (2007) also provided the following interpretation of the symptoms of PTSD referencing the DSM-5:

- Recurrent and troubling recollection of events
- Recurrent and troubling dreams
- Re-enacting or feeling reoccurring events

- Mental reactivity based on cues
- Avoiding social conversation and thoughts of traumatic events
- Feelings of shortened future
- Sleep and concentration difficulty
- Exaggerated startle response

PTSD includes two overlapping symptoms: sleep problems and irritability. Persons with PTSD exhibit aggressive behaviors that can affect their employment outcomes. Many symptoms of PTSD and the association of related traits such as anger, hostility, and aggression were specifically prevalent in many returning Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans and have potentially contributed to the employment outcomes. Reports show that veterans that screen positive for PTSD expressed increased trait anger and hostility. These veterans were also more likely to exhibit aggression than those veterans who had not who screened negative (Jakupcak et al., 2007). Veterans diagnosed with PTSD also exhibited hypervigilance, anxiety, and concentration complexities, as many veterans have admitted to increased substance abuse, chronic pain, and other issues as a result. Accordingly, Mattson et al. (2018) argued that neuroticism also is a strong predictor of PTSD. Neuroticism is the degree to which people see the world as an unsafe or threatening (Britannica, n.d.).

Combat operations in OEF, OIF, and OND employed approximately 4.1 million veterans, 47% (1.9 million) who were physically deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). These combat operations resulted in 21.8% of veterans deployed diagnosed with PTSD and 17.4% with

depression from 2002 to 2008 (Seal et al., 2009). Post-Gulf War veterans witness increased difficulty in securing employment as compared to their civilian counterparts (Glantz, 2010).

Anger and aggression were a common complaint by returning combat veterans that led to issues, especially when veterans attempted to find employment. Wilk et al. (2015) argued that there is a correlation between trait anger, combat exposure, aggression, and PTSD. High rates of alcohol abuse were also prevalent in returning war veterans, as VA healthcare facilities witnessed high rates of PTSD diagnosed veterans and alcohol misuse (Brief et al., 2018).

Suicide is also a factor in the development of PTSD. The Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that approximately 20 veterans per day had died by suicide in 2014. Veterans in OEF, OIF, and OND seem to be at a heightened risk for PTSD and suicide risk (Bryan, 2016). Accordingly, 18% of all the adult suicide deaths in the United States were veterans, which was extraordinary considering that only 8.5 % of the United States population are veterans (VA Suicide Prevention Program, 2016). PTSD is a significant factor in suicide risk that has affected approximately 17.3% of OEF, OIF, and OND veterans (Hermann et al., 2012).

Although not all veterans who participated in OEF, OIF, and OND were diagnosed with PTSD, it was difficult to predict who would eventually develop symptoms. Direct exposure to combat operations has led many service members to develop PTSD (Wynn et al., 2018). Researchers have consistently indicated that male veterans with PTSD suffer from increased violence rates, aggressive

behavior, hostile social actions, and decreased control over their anger in comparison to veterans who do not have the disorder (Taft et al., 2007).

Vogt et al. (2018) concluded that there is a need for intervention to help solve the negative effects of PTSD on several aspects of work and family issues among these veterans due to its severity and impact.

> Walton et al. (2017) argued, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental condition characterized by a constellation of symptoms that occur following exposure to a traumatic event, is thought to affect between 7% and 9% of the population and is more common among individuals whose occupation involves an increased risk of exposure, such as military personnel. (p. 254)

A diagnosis of PTSD would indicate exposure to stressors in which a person responded with fear, horror, or helplessness. Smith et al. (2005) added that the reexperiencing of traumatic events and hyperarousal associated with PTSD can be debilitating.

Race and Gender

Early research revealed a connection between race and PTSD as African American males have been diagnosed with the disorder more frequently than their white male and Hispanic counterparts (Penk et al., 1989). A minority designation alone, however, did not account for the elevated levels of African Americans having PTSD. Other contributing factors such as their different life experiences compared to their counterparts, were also a factor. Dursa et al. (2014) agreed that African American and Hispanic veterans had higher rates of PTSD than whites and Asian-Americans. Hall-Clark et al. (2017) also noted that

socioeconomic factors, exposure to trauma, and psychiatric history among African Americans contributes to the acquisition of PTSD during and after their military service.

Minorities experience a higher proportion of life stress and receive less social support than their White counterparts. This imbalance could increase the risk of PTSD among minority populations (McClendon et al., 2019). African Americans, Hispanics, and multiracial veterans are at higher risk for acquiring PTSD as they separate from military service. African Americans and Caribbean Blacks have an increased risk of attaining PTSD versus White Americans in military service (Coleman, 2016). Current research is ongoing regarding differences in levels of PTSD by race, as there is an indication that minorities have higher attainment of PTSD than White Americans (Alcántara et al., 2013).

Tolin and Foa (2008) found that women veterans had twice the probability of acquiring PTSD than men. Women attained higher rates of PTSD stemming from sexual harassment and general lack of support as a significant antecedent to PTSD, instead of engagement in direct combat in a war zone, than their male counterparts. Street et al. (2013) reported that approximately 73% of female military members were exposed to combat. Although current military regulations prohibit women from serving in direct combat roles, a larger portion of men reported combat exposure. Over 20% of both male and female veterans detailed evidence of PTSD. OIF, OEF, and OND witnessed a significantly higher probability of combat exposure than earlier wars for women.

Veterans' Barriers to Employment

Significant barriers to civilian employment for veterans suffering from mental health issues exist. There is a need for interventions for veterans with PTSD (Vogt et al., 2018). Accordingly, mental health issues such as PTSD have consistently been present in veteran versus nonveteran studies; these disorders are linked to unemployment (Bhattacharya & Long, 2015).

Many veterans often ignore or minimize PTSD symptoms due to the social stigma related to these disorders. Koven (2018) argued that PTSD had increased the social cost incurred from veterans' failure to assimilate into society. Such assimilation includes a veteran's ability to be gainfully employed and provide for their families. Smith et al. (2005) stated, "A diagnosis of chronic war-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been linked consistently to poor employment outcomes" (p. 89). These difficulties most likely play a part in transitioning veterans to civilian employment reintegration problems. Such problems among veterans are not new and continue to be the subject of research. Many veterans struggle to find employment when dealing with PTSD.

Resnick and Rosenheck (2008) argued that veterans diagnosed with PTSD were approximately 19% less likely to be employed when released from military service. Stone and Stone (2015) also argued that military veterans had suffered numerous issues while attempting to gain employment after their service has ended. Veterans diagnosed with PTSD are often perceived as incompetent and even dangerous in the labor market. Mental illness labels have created stereotypes and misconceptions about veterans. The public has been distressed about veterans transitioning into the civilian labor force after their discharge for

various reasons. This rationale may be why Marines are intentionally overlooked for employment as employers fear their mental and physical injuries from the war (Loughran, 2014). Knickerbocker (2013) also argued that military veterans faced employment difficulties when they returned to the civilian sector because of mental health issues resulting from their military service in OEF and OIF. Specifically, the difficulties in which Marines and other service members deal are related to transition issues associated with the effects of PTSD. Knickerbocker agreed that reentry back into life as a civilian is not easy for those military members who served in uniform and have returned home.

Loughran (2014) argued that military service often resulted in service members left in poor physical and mental health, which is a major cause of unemployment. Mental health issues present a conundrum for those who decide to reenter the workforce. Those who have mental illness face decisions related to seeking employment, including the type of employment, how many hours to work, and what information they need to disclose to employers (Goldberg et al., 2005). Military members with PTSD are significantly less likely than those without it to find employment (Resnick & Rosenheck, 2008).

Bullock et al. (2009) argued that returning military veterans might have lacked the necessary education skills and vocational adjustment as many of them entered the military immediately after high school. An absence of basic education and usable vocational skills also play a part in the agitation of negative perspectives when returning to civilian employment. Faberman and Foster (2013) agreed that veterans' unemployment rates were partially due to many of them being younger and less educated than the average worker.

> Kraaij and Garnefski (2006) argued that when individuals are faced with traumatic events similar to those experienced by many of today's veterans, they are presented with conflicting information with their existing schemas about themselves and the world. Veterans who have faced unemployment, homelessness, substance use issues, and mental illness may experience an amplified version of these traumatic effects resulting in a decreased ability to cope, increased negative thinking, and a greater perception of barriers to having a successful career. (p. 173)

Such amplified versions of traumatic events veterans have experienced impact perspective. "Negative thinking" and "decreased ability to cope" when seeking employment influence adverse employment outcomes. Adler et al. (2011) argued that returning OEF, OIF, and OND veterans had a "substantial negative impact on their work functioning" (p. 44) and subsequently noticed by potential employers.

Employer Viewpoint

It is essential to understand how civilian employers consider hiring post-war veterans with PTSD. Glantz (2010) argued that most returning veterans often faced alienation from their civilian counterparts, as most Americans do not relate to combat tested veterans who desired to work alongside them. PTSD was ranked high on a list of military-to-civilian career inhibitors, causing dysfunction and deficient outcomes (Bullock et al., 2009; Burnett-Zeigler et al., 2011; Horton et al., 2013). Additionally, Stern (2017) also found that most Americans have minimal understanding of the military or its impact on civilian employment as almost half of 9/11 veterans admitted that finding a civilian job was their most

demanding objective. Harrell and Berglass (2012) argued that many organizations entertained a gamut of negative stereotypes and employment concerns regarding new hires and PTSD. The selected literature was consistent in these arguments; employers are hesitant in employing veterans because of PTSD. They did not want to hire people that they anticipated to have unknown behavioral issues, which would render them potentially "damaged." Harrell and Berglass (2012) wrote, "I've heard about some veterans coming back and going on rampages. I've never had this happen to me personally, but I always wonder if it is a possibility" (p. 24).

True et al. (2015) argued that today's veterans do not receive timely or adequate treatment for many Gulf War illnesses, making PTSD symptoms more open to employer scrutiny. Accordingly, Jakupcak et al. (2007) outlined the strong relationship between PTSD and anger, hostility, and aggressiveness, which affects veterans' employment perspectives and outcomes. Employers can be very reluctant to hire veterans based on misinformation and bias. A recent job interview involving two U.S. Marines was asked when they had been in a combat zone. “And then they asked me how long ago did I leave combat zone? And I told them three years, and then they told me, 'Oh, then you're good, we don't want to deal with guys who just came back'" (Keeling et al., 2018, p. 67).

Wereschagin (2010) indicated that many veterans struggled with the transition from military to civilian employment. Bullock et al. (2009), Burnett-Zeigler et al. (2011), and Horton et al. (2013) agreed that veterans with PTSD who were transitioning to civilian careers were also deficient and dysfunctional. The literature indicated that civilian employers were biased against hiring veterans

for fear of mental breakdowns or relapses on the job, increasing liability, and placing others in potential danger. Harrell and Berglass (2012) suggested that people have generally positive opinions of military veterans; however, PTSD is a "dark area" that renders applicants "unknowns" in how they would behave toward others and "wondering if this guy is going to go postal one afternoon on my job site" (Harrell & Berglass, 2012, p. 24). While it is prudent and good planning to consider the safety of current employees, it is also important to fully understand disabled veteran's causes and issues. Employers who do not understand PTSD often form a bias against it, as there is much negative information about the illnesses available (Stern, 2017).

Stone and Colella (1996) argued that employers use specific factors affecting individuals with disabilities when making hiring decisions. Those factors include veteran's attributes, the observer's characteristics, the nature of the job, perceived skills transfer, and organizational culture. To segregate potential veteran hires, some employers assign them to a category (e.g., "Gulf War Veteran") and create stereotypes to categorize the individual (e.g., PTSD "Vet," alcoholic). Those employers create and apply schemas to support their beliefs about an affected veteran's behavior (e.g., the veteran has PTSD, so they may not be able to do this job very well) and rate the veteran as less qualified than others. Such processes often result in the veteran not being hired (Stone & Colella, 1996). Understanding the employer's perspective in the hiring process can also help answer the research question and help identify and focus on the stereotypes affiliated with people with disabilities. An understanding of veterans'

perspectives helps to reveal key factors that likely influence employment decisions and help create strategies to integrate veterans in the organization.

Several factors contribute to adverse employment outcomes. Transferable military skills to the civilian sector are an issue that has caused higher rates of veteran joblessness. Military members who attempted to enter the civilian labor market during an economic downturn are also adversely affected. Alternatively, military demand for new service members' recruitment had caused service organizations to relax their recruitment standards during wartime. Individuals with low aptitude, skills, and abilities, who might otherwise have been considered unfit were accepted for military service and counted among recent veterans when they exit to enter the civilian workforce. Such practice created pools of unqualified job applicants.

Keeling et al. (2018) argued that although some human resource (H.R.) professionals were willing to employ military veterans with PTSD, several believed that employing such veterans would increase costs, consume more management time, and produce a general concern of violence in the workplace due to the diagnosis (Rudstam et al., 2012). Zogas (2017) agreed that many veterans who are eventually ready to look for civilian work are unprepared due to their specific skill set.

Layoffs, transitions, mergers, acquisitions, bankruptcies, and the national economy have also influenced veterans' employment outcomes. Veterans who have service-related mental health disabilities, coupled with a national economic downturn, find it much more difficult to find a job after their military service has ended (Wereschagin, 2010). Bill et al. (2006) added, "Persistent unemployment

is central to the financial hardship confronting many people with psychiatric disability" (p. 219). Loughran (2014) also found that veteran employment rates are consistently below those of nonveterans.

Political Opinion

The influence and impact of public opinion on veteran's employment issues was examined. Numerous political figures have presented legislation or published positive and supporting statements on behalf of U.S. Veterans regarding employment issues. Congressman Henry C. Johnson Jr. (2017) spoke on the BRAVE Act (H.R. 974), presenting the argument that post-9/11 veterans had been faced with much more difficult economic realities than other American citizens, citing that veterans' unemployment rates are higher than the national average. Congressmen Tulsi Gabbard and Scott Perry were instrumental in passing legislation like the Clay Hunt SAV Act, which aimed to help returning military veterans and their fight against homelessness, mental health issues, unemployment, and medical treatment.

Congressman Perry argued that it is the duty of the United States Congress to honor the veterans who served in uniform and sacrificed so that Americans could enjoy their freedom. Many such service members served globally, as many of them returned with emotional and psychological injuries because of their service (Targeted News Service, 2015). Such service produces questions about the complexities of the public policy challenges that arose when helping veterans adjust to civilian life after their service. Those questions included addressing mental health care and Veterans Administration culpability.

The U.S. government has a substantial budget in place for military veterans. President Barack Obama sought an increase to $1.63 billion to bolster veterans' spending to increase the already sizable funding, which included $68.4 billion for medical care and other programs (Dow Jones Industrial News, 2015). President Obama proposed the increase of hiring veterans to effect veterans' unemployment.

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) (2011) referred to veteran's unemployment as "deplorable." Congressman Jeff Miller (2011) mentioned that that OEF, OIF, and OND participants suffered an unemployment rate as high as 13.1 percent and that current Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) for military members were available but not sufficient. Senator Casey also reported that out of 232,000 veterans who participated in OEF, OIF, and OND, 12.1 percent were unemployed. "These men and women have made innumerable sacrifices in defense of our country, yet many are struggling to find employment in today's labor market, despite their training and experience" (Casey, 2011, p. 1). Blankenship (2013) agreed that separating veterans often found great difficulties in attempting to find a job. Many veterans were not received well in their employment efforts by employers, who were unsure how to handle them.

Kilbourne et al. (2007) argued that social support is vital for individuals with mental illness. Misunderstandings spur bias in hiring practices regarding veterans and civilian employment. The social outcomes from the Vietnam War, in which Vietnam veterans dealt with high levels of negativity, public scrutiny, anti-war protests, and violence, are recalled by many current service members (McAdam & Su, 2002). According to Kleykamp (2013), many veterans today

continue to suffer from military transition to the civilian sector due to the symptoms associated with PTSD. Sayer et al. (2011) stated, "These veterans face the interrelated challenges of processing their combat experiences and reentering community life. Although psychiatric disturbance in individuals formerly deployed to OEF/OIF has received considerable attention" (p. 661).

Glantz (2010) also suggested that veterans' benefits had been compromised expressed concerns related to the mistreatment of veterans. Congressional Representative Jeff Miller's (2011) hearing on finding jobs for veterans entailed continued issues and problems veterans face when attempting to reenter the workforce after their military service. The information from this hearing provided a congressional level discussion on veterans' issues and emphasized the importance and difficulties veterans face. Congressman Miller argued that military veterans who suffer a lengthy unemployment time go through great difficulties and strain. Such difficulties consist of unpaid bills, exhausted savings accounts, and unmet family needs. Unemployed veterans face more vital health issues and even homelessness due to their inability to find suitable employment (Miller, 2011).

In general, most Americans admire the military and its service members. Numerous politicians have declared their help for military veterans and their families. Funding and help for veterans are increasing as the current wars slowly come to an end.

Perspectives and Legal Protections

Discrimination against individuals is prohibited based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Title I of the ADA provides explicit legal

protections for employees and those with disabilities seeking jobs. Veterans often contribute to the nonenforcement of ADA protections through their unwillingness to disclose their disabilities. Goldberg et al. (2005) argued that people still endured difficulties whether they disclosed or did not disclose their disabilities. Those who did disclose were generally able to obtain ADA accommodations—but did not enjoy the full spirit and intent of the law intended by authors.

Military veterans who are disabled could benefit from government assistance. If they do not voluntarily disclose their condition, however, they may find themselves ineligible or not able to access such services legally (Holloway, 2010). Clemens and Milsom (2008) also argued that veterans were hesitant to seek professional assistance due to their fear of the impact of past and future employment outcomes. The ADA forbids discrimination against persons with disabilities. This prohibition extends to employment, transportation, public places, communications, and programs and services provided by state and local governments.

Cook (2006) explained that the ADA provides legal protection of "qualified" individuals. Also, individuals must meet the skill, education, experience, and perform the functions of a job with or without reasonable accommodations. Disability describes when a person "substantially limits one or more major life activities. As such, this broad definition of disability can now include any condition that ‘materially restricts’ (rather than ‘substantially limits’) a major activity" (Ruh et al., 2009, p. 68). Cook (2006) also argued that protections afforded under the ADA had become more delineated for people with

mental and other illnesses. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that protections under the ADA did not extend to employees with conditions that are controlled by medication. Goldberg et al. (2005) agreed that many disabled persons were poorly educated about ADA rights and how to locate employment that incorporated their skills, abilities, and education. Additionally, Cook (2006) found that in some instances, the ADA failed to protect individuals with psychiatric issues.

Military Employment Assistance Programs

The U.S. government has chartered several organizations to assist military veterans find employment after their military service. The Department of Labor initiated Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), which is a subsidiary agency within the Department of Labor. The VETS program provides help for veterans who are transitioning from working in the military to civilian employment and the employment agencies themselves. VETS also assist veterans by offering training services utilizing cooperative employment scheduling and grants funding in staffing maintenance. Such grants support the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER).

The Department of Defense created the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I) to prepare wounded, sick, and injured military veterans to find employment and career opportunities in their recovery. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program were initiated by the Department of Veterans Affairs and assists by offering veterans opportunities for education, training, and counseling. VR&E program provides a subsistence

allowance and monthly payments to eligible veterans. This program also offers medical evaluations, job placement services, resume writing, and psychological treatment.

Operation Warfighter (OWF) was enacted by the Department of Defense and offered to match eligible veterans with nonfunded federal internships. Such internships were designed to help veterans gain work experience while rehabilitating from their injuries and integrate back into society. OWF also provides federal employers with training to understand how military veterans' training can help their organization.

The Warriors to Workforce Program (W2W) affords military veterans transition opportunities into federal employment. W2W programs include building cohorts made up of veteran military personnel. The cohorts are given integrated support systems like a military environment that support teams, esprit de corps, and comradeship.

The Veterans Opportunity to Work and Hire Heroes Act of 2011 mandates active duty service members separating from service attend TAP classes. TAP is a cooperative between the Department of Veterans Affairs and VETS. The program is designed to help veterans in employment matters when they were discharging from military service. The TAP assists veterans and their spouses engage with members within 180 days of separation. The program offers workshops and employment services to help service members and their spouses with relocation assistance, employment searches, resume writing, and military separation counseling. The TAP also provides veterans with assistance in learning how to interview, make decisions, and evaluate job markets.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology of this study is described. The researcher describes the rationale for the selection of the specific methodology and design, as well as the purpose of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived employment barriers faced by Marines with PTSD upon discharge. The personal lives of 11 U.S. Marines, all of whom had been participants in OEF, OIF, or OND and diagnosed with PTSD, were examined. All participant Marines either received or were about to receive an honorable discharge from the Marine Corps. These participants reported their experiences when seeking civilian employment during their discharge. Further, the researcher examined how to help military personnel separate from military service with PTSD and ways to continue research on this topic.

This study incorporated a phenomenological approach. This qualitative research methodology was used to investigate the lived experiences of U.S. Marines diagnosed with PTSD in their attempts to find employment after their military service had ended. This methodology was selected due to its ability to capture veterans' experiences and perspectives who have suffered war, illness, and readjustment problems.

Phenomenological Based Interviewing

Edmund Husserl (2012), the founder of phenomenology, argued that its purpose is to capture human experiences using a basic architecture. Ultimately, phenomenological research is designed to attain an in-depth understanding of

the lived experiences of participants (Chan et al., 2013). This approach was deemed appropriate because investigates the truths and perspectives from those who have experienced a phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) further explained phenomenology as a process in which one must "explicate my own intentional consciousness through transcendental processes before I can understand someone or something that is not my own, someone or something that is apprehended analogically" (p. 37). The current researcher relied on the selected Marines' subjective experiences, and their answers provided insight and helped answer the research question. Van Manen (1990) stated, "The role played by phenomenology in research is mainly theoretical, deepening the theory behind the method or the understanding of the mode of inquiry" (p. 28).

Husserl (2012) argued that perception is acknowledged as the primary driver of knowledge in phenomenology and must be trusted. The main advantage of using a phenomenological study is that the study itself is based on subjective experiences. Pivcevic (2013) added, "We do not have to make any a priori assumptions that require validation outside our field of inquiry" (p. 13). The current researcher respondents to describe their experiences, and the themes derived from their answers provided context to the research problem.

Husserl (2012) coined the term 'epoche' as the setting aside or avoidance of one's prejudices and biases, which creates a situation in which people and events to be viewed as if it were the first time. This is a crucial first step in a phenomenological study; it should allow the researcher's biases to flow freely (Zeech, 2012). The transcendental phenomenological method involves determining whether the actual research problem warrants the use of a

phenomenological study and whether the phenomenon is of interest or important enough to study. Third, the researcher should distinguish and understand the vast philosophical assumptions of a phenomenological study. Fourth, data should be retrieved from people who have lived the experiences of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2013) recommended that participants be presented with two broad questions: (a) What were the participant's experiences regarding the phenomenon? (b) What was the surrounding situation or context that impacted or influenced the participant's experiences about the phenomenon? Additional open-ended questions may be added, but these two are aimed at gathering data directed at gaining a textual and structural characterization of participant experiences (Creswell, 2013). Giorgi (1997) agreed that questions should be “generally broad and open-ended so that the subject has sufficient opportunity to express his or her viewpoint extensively" (p. 245).

The data were collected and analyzed by reducing it to significant issues and combining them into themes using a bracketing method (Carpenter, 2007). Themes were extracted from the data and developed into a textural description that described what the participating Marines had experienced. The researcher should attempt to locate a method of reducing participant statements concerning objects to statements regarding sense and contents (Pivcevic, 2013).

Finally, a structural description was created from the data describing how the Marines experienced the phenomenon in terms of the circumstances, situation, and background (Creswell, 2013). Polkinghorne (1989) recommended interviewing between five to 25 participants in a phenomenological study. This study involved of 11 interviews of Marines using the Zoom conferencing platform.

"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (Creswell, 2013, p. 43). This study incorporated the individual Marine, who was the observer, and magnified their interpretation of how their PTSD hindered their employment efforts. The researcher determined that the qualitative approach was most appropriate for uncovering the perspectives of this population and determining how society can assist them.

Participants and Site

Eleven U.S. Marines volunteered to participate in this study. All participants were stationed and eventually deployed from Camp Pendleton, California, at some point in their careers. Nine of the participants were retired, one was still on active duty, and one had been honorably discharged after 4 years. The participants' ages ranged from 27 to 53 years. All participants, except one who was still on active duty, had been honorably discharged. Six participants in this study were Caucasian males, four were African American males, and one was an African American female. The participants were selected based on their combat deployment to OIF, OEF, OND, and diagnosis of PTSD. They were also included based on their willingness to share their stories as their perceptions will help answer the research question. The participants all had different military occupational specialties ranging from infantry, artillery, logistics, and foodservice.

All participants had been formally diagnosed with PTSD by competent military physicians. The participant pool consisted of seven enlisted Marines, and four officers who were all recently retired or within 1 year of discharge. All

participants were honorably or pending honorable discharge from military service. Six participants possessed high school diplomas, three had bachelor's degrees, and two held master's degrees at the time of this study.

All participants were American citizens, none of whom had dual citizenship. All participants identified with their gender assigned at birth, with no deviations. The participants explained that they cooperated in this study because they believed it had a noble purpose and they wanted to help other Marines and service members. The Marines who participated showed firm resolve and were open to discussion and giving honest answers. The participants showed an eagerness to provide their life stories in efforts to raise awareness. The Marines who participated in this study received a Starbucks coffee gift card as thanks for their time and effort.

Materials

Participants were presented with nine open-ended questions in a verbal semistructured interview. Creswell (2013) recommended two fundamental questions: What were the participant's experiences regarding the phenomenon? and (b) What was the surrounding situation or context that influenced the participants' experiences about the phenomenon? The research questions were structured around these concepts. The following questions were presented to the participants as the basis of this study:

1. What is your age, and rank, and how many times did you deploy to war?
2. Can you tell me about how you searched for a job after you discharged from the Marine Corps?
3. How was the job search process and what would you do differently?

4. How did you feel the hiring managers felt about your background in the Marines and your deployments?
5. Can you tell me about a time you did not get the position you applied for?
6. Why do you think you did not get the position?
7. Do you feel your diagnosis of PTSD makes you less likely to find a job? If so, why?
8. How has the Marine Corps helped you prepare for civilian employment before your discharge?
9. Which transition training, if any, did you attend and find most and least helpful during your discharge and employment search? Please tell me why.

Procedure

Each Marine participant was interviewed individually using the Zoom video-conferencing platform. Each interview was recorded with permission by participants as interview questions were discussed before recording. Each interview session lasted for approximately 30 minutes as each participant was given ample time to answer each question and if they wanted to add to their statements at the end. The Rev transcription service was used to ensure accuracy and to memorialize the interviews. The transcripts of the interviews were returned in Microsoft Word and simple text formats. NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used to import the data from the Word documents generated from this study. The program assisted the researcher in identifying and organizing the emergent themes.

Data Collection

This research study used a phenomenological method by recording in-depth interviews and creating detailed memorandums to capture the lived experiences of 11 U.S. Marines. This study relied on the participants' personal experiences, perspectives, and feelings of being diagnosed and living with PTSD while pursuing civilian employment after their military service.

Follow-up emails were made to participants in efforts to allow them to state any after-action concerns or corrections they have had. Notes and recordings were stored and managed digitally on a password-protected laptop computer using McAfee File Lock. A backup copy was stored on a secure hard drive. Although the interview questions were scripted, they were primarily used as a guide to capture the essence of the interviewees' experiences.

The bracketing method outlined by Carpenter (2007) was used to identify the researcher's personal experiences of the phenomenon and "partly set them aside so that the researcher can focus on the experiences of the participants in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 78). Readers should be able to evaluate on their own whether the researcher inputted too much of his personal experiences as a U.S. Marine diagnosed with PTSD during the post-discharge civilian employment search. This researcher used detailed and accurate transcription documents provided by the Rev transcription service that were subsequently saved on a secure file on a laptop. The transcribed files were reexamined after all participant interviews were completed for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Hycner's (1985) method of analysis was used to analyze the phenomenological interview data. The steps of this method are as follows:

1. Transcription
2. Bracketing and the phenomenological reduction
3. Listening to the interview for a sense of the whole
4. Delineating units of general meaning
5. Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question
6. Training independent judges to verify the units of relevant meaning
7. Eliminate redundancies
8. Clustering units of relevant meaning
9. Determining themes from clusters of meaning
10. Writing a summary for each individual interview
11. Return to the participant with the summary and themes
12. Modifying themes and summary
13. Identifying general and unique themes for all interviews
14. Contextualization of themes
15. Composite summary

The transcripts were read several times to fully understand the data. The phenomenological method suggested by Hycner (1985) was followed to locate and extract relevant data. It was important to note nonverbal communication and inquire as supported verbal statements and led to further dialog. This form of communication was visible using the Zoom conferencing platform, as the video

feed was clear and revealing. A bracketing technique was used to find general meaning in the respondents' statements.

Credibility and Dependability

Credible research that ensures accurate participant participation is crucial (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This study is dependent on the data provided by participants and needs to be accurate. Participants were reminded to respond genuinely with their answers to the questions. Creswell and Miller (2000) argued,

> Qualitative researchers use a lens not based on scores, instruments, or research designs but a lens established using the views of people who conduct, participate in, or read and review a study. For example, one lens to determine the credibility of a study is the particular lens of the researcher. (p. 125)

The researcher is responsible for how long he or she remains in the field conducting research or if the data are saturated in the creation of themes and summaries. Credibility and dependability can be enhanced by the intensity, veracity, and input of the researcher. Researchers should continuously review their data, analyze emergent constructs, and update their interpretations (Patton, 1990).

Creswell and Miller (2000) also recommended that the researcher assess whether their interpretations were accurately portrayed, which is consistent with Step 11 in the data analysis procedure outlined above. Credibility can also be enhanced by using an external reviewer or individuals who are not affiliated with the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) agreed that qualitative research is dependent

on the credibility and dependability of the participants' perspectives. Each of the participants was given access to their interview transcripts and asked to review them for accuracy and precision and add additional information. "Dependability is the degree to which results are consistent with data and emphasizes the importance of the researcher to account for the ever-evolving context within which the research takes place" (Zeeck, 2012, p. 40). Painstaking efforts were taken to compare the data with the results. The researcher's role in this study was to reveal the experiences and perspectives of Marines who had been discharged from the military, diagnosed with PTSD, and engaged in the search for civilian employment.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived employment barriers faced by U.S. Marines with PTSD upon their discharge from military service. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the results of this phenomenological study. This section reveals information regarding participant demographics, perceived barriers, and other themes discovered in this study.

Overview of the Study

This chapter includes an examination of the data extrapolated from themes devised from the lived experiences of the participants involved. The participants were 11 U.S. Marines stationed at Camp Pendleton, California. The following research question guided this study: What are the perceived employment barriers faced by Marines with PTSD upon discharge from military service? Their given names for privacy reasons do not refer to participants. The analysis of findings in this chapter is organized by themes according to the design of the research question. Direct quotes from the participants' interviews are used to support these themes. Marines' perceptions were the critical component in the understanding of adverse civilian employment experiences. All participants were candid and open during the interviews.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Information

Participant	Age	Rank	Combat Zone Frequency	Ethnicity	Highest Education Level	Sex
P1	42	First Sergeant	2	W	High School Diploma	Male
P2	53	Chief Warrant Officer 5	3	W	Master of Science	Male
P3	50	Chief Warrant Officer 5	3	B	Bachelor of Science	Male
P4	49	Gunnery Sergeant	3	B	Bachelor of Arts	Female
P5	42	Gunnery Sergeant	2	W	High School Diploma	Male
P6	42	Gunnery Sergeant	1	W	High School Diploma	Male
P7	27	Sergeant	1	W	High School Diploma	Male
P8	42	Captain (LDO)	5	B	High School Diploma	Male
P9	45	Gunnery Sergeant	4	B	Bachelor of Arts	Male
P10	44	Gunnery Sergeant	3	W	High School Diploma	Male
P11	51	Major	2	B	Master of Science	Male

Participant Demography

This section includes succinct account of the 11 Marine participants' demographic information. Informational support is provided to help answer the research question. The participants' experiences revealed important background

information on how their perceptions developed and impacted their post-war employment efforts.

The average age of all participants was 44 years. Each participant was on par with the average age of Marine Corps personnel according to their grade. The participants' rank selection ranged from sergeant (E5) up to major (O4). Nine of the participants were retired, one was pending retirement, and one had been discharged due to an expired enlistment contract. All participants were granted or approved to receive an honorable discharge. Other types of military discharges such as "other than honorable," "bad conduct," "general," or "dishonorable" could negatively affect civilian efforts; therefore, service members discharged due to these reasons were not solicited to be participants. All participants had deployed to OEF, OIF, or OND on average 2.6 times and were assigned leadership roles.

Participant education levels varied from high school diplomas to graduate degrees. Relatedly, Chan (2016) argued that those with a college education were more apt to find jobs. Also, "87 percent of employers give hiring preference to college graduates" (Chan, 2016, p.2). Carnevale et al. (2014) agreed that 97 percent of jobs as early as 2010 were given to college graduates.
Regardless, however, most of the participants in this study still faced increased difficulty finding employment after their service. Based on the interview questions, most of the participants at all levels of education provided similar responses. The researcher determined that data saturation had been achieved after interviewing 11 participants.

Perceived Barrier Analysis

A word frequency analysis using the NVivo Qualitative Analysis Program was conducted to extract keywords and themes. This process helped create the clustering of units of relevant meaning and determine themes, as Hycner (1985) explained. The current researcher modified and contextualized the themes, while a composite summary was constructed and illustrated in the following categories: (a) civilian employers and understanding military personnel and stereotype them, (b) civilian employers consider Marines a liability, (c) PTSD effects on finding employment, (d) PTSD can be seen by others, and (e) civilians are intimidated by Marines.

Figure 1

Perceived Barriers

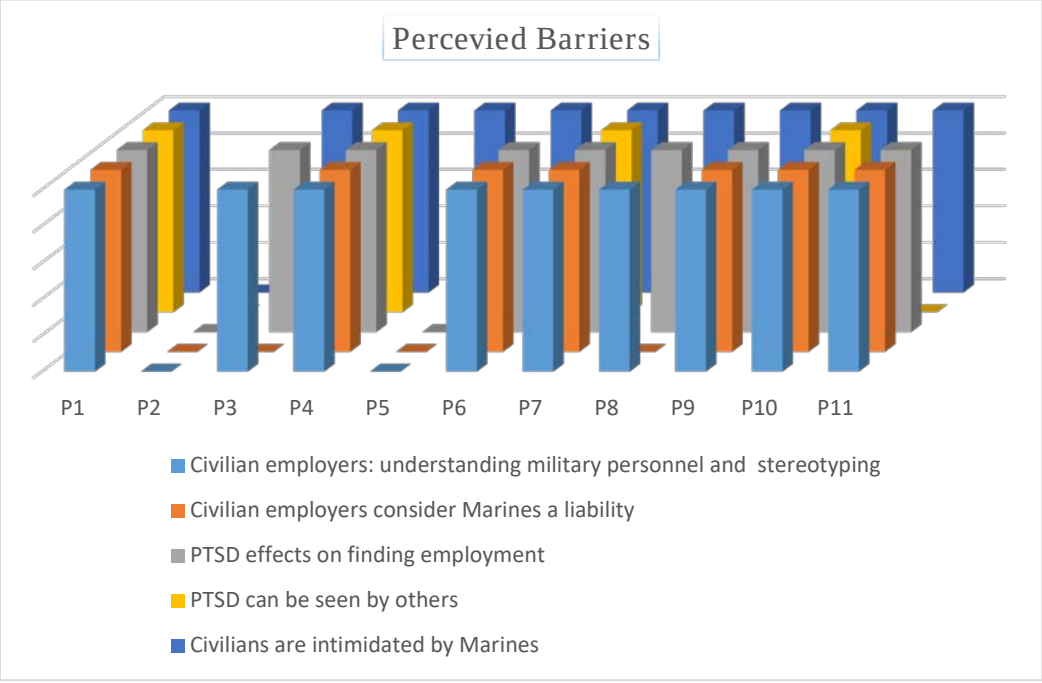

Figure 1 summarizes the perceptions constructed using Hycner's (1985) method of analysis. A summary, modification, and identification of unique themes produced five general perceptions based on the participants' experiences.

Civilian Employers: Understanding Military Personnel and Stereotyping

Nine of the 11 participants (82%) believed that civilian employers did not understand the professional value that they could bring to the organization. Participant perceptions were developed from their lived experiences where they admitted to feeling disconnected from civilian employers. Most of the Marines interviewed revealed they felt civilian hiring managers were simply not interested in them because they did not understand them, their culture, or what they could offer based on their military experience. Interestingly, participants admitted supporting the Marine stereotype in prospective employer interactions believing it would help during interviews, which it ultimately did not.

Specifically, when asked about their job search process, what they would do differently, and when they did not get the job they applied for, participants made the following statements in support of their perspective. P1 indicated,

> So, for me, I read into what they were trying to tell me. I strongly believe they were leading me on when I talked about my Marine Corps experience. I think they thought I was actually, was maybe just trying to boast about the Marine Corps, but I was not, what I was trying to do was articulate my experiences.

P3 provided similar supporting statements:

> I feel there was a lot of bias at times, especially when you applied for management positions.
>
> I went through six interviews and that's totally unheard of. I just knew I had the position. And then I sat down with the actual dock supervisor and this guy gave me a story and a reason as why, why he don't hire prior military.

P4 explained,

> I just was not able to do in the civilian world what I did in the Marine Corps, I have already been diagnosed with PTSD and established I had anxiety and depression as well. I just refuse to go through that again. They won't get it.
>
> And so, I felt it was just easier for me to just go the other route instead of, you know, trying to fight through the civilian world, finding a job and, you know, get a job and they probably didn't want me there anyway. That's that was my mindset.

P6 stated,

> "No, I honestly, I can't tell I'm at a conundrum at why not? Because I'm highly qualified. These guys don't seem to get it."

P7 revealed, "So, in the line of work that I was interviewing for, whereas, management experience was very vital, it was immaterial to them." He continued,

> Quite frankly, my Marine Corps experience, they didn't care about. And then he looked at me as, maybe you should probably go get a job in, in trucking, or maybe I should get a job in, in manufacturing or something.

P8 recalled the following experience: ““I interviewed with a guy that looked at my resume and said, ‘I don't know what the hell any of this is.’” P9 perceived, “They all think we are gun slingers and have to be retrained which will cost them a lot of money.” P10 provided the following supporting statement:

> You know, you more than qualified for a job, but you don't get it. You don't even get an interview. You know, that's what stinks about the whole process.

Lastly, P11 revealed,

> Well, it frustrates me to high level because I know what I have to offer. Just seems sometimes like they don’t want to take the time to check us vets out.

Civilian Employers Consider Marines a Liability

Seven of the 11 participants (64%) believed that civilian employers felt that hiring Marines was a potential liability. The interviewees revealed that some employers expressed fear of the stereotype surrounding military personnel who had been deployed to war. A preponderance of statements from participants indicated their perception that civilians feared war-exposed Marines.

When asked how hiring managers regarded their military background and deployments, participants responded with the following statements. P1 stated, “

> You know, in reality, after a while, you kinda feel like a piece of crap ‘cause you know they look down on us....I feel like I was, I feel like they look down on you, not as a Marine, but as a man who has been damaged.

P4 perceived,

> I felt that in the civilian world that I would not get a fair chance because you know, the stereotypes of not really understanding what happens with someone who has PTSD or, you know, how depression can be affected, or how anxiety can be affected.
>
> Civilians really don't understand PTSD.
>
> You know, she has PTSD and now I'm kind of, you know, ward it off because you got PTSD. You don't know if she's going to snap, don't talk to her.

P6 provided the following supporting statement:

> Even the, the people themselves don't understand the triggers, you know, so, you know, that's why we go through so much counseling because we really don't understand what triggers us.

P7 indicated,

> They certainly want to know about my deployments, but as it related to the job and the job experience, there was no impact. But I felt like in some cases, some of the managers actually kind of held it against me, that I had been in the Marine Corps for so long, and that I was a career Marine.

P9 similarly stated,

> People love to hear your war stories. I told some during an interview and wished I hadn't afterward. I probably scared them.
>
> I think some higher-level managers think you're a hero with some baggage. People would look at that and they would be afraid that they didn't know if this guy was going to snap one day, our, how, or how I, I would act so.

P10 stated, “I think companies look at us as a liability.” Lastly, P11 recalled,

> And so, I felt it was just easier for me to just go the other route instead of, you know, trying to fight through the civilian world of finding a job. They probably didn’t want me there anyway. That was my mindset.

PTSD Effects on Finding Employment

Nine of 11 participants (81%) believed their diagnosis of PTSD lessened their chances of finding employment and resulted in their being negatively viewed by employers. This theme was derived from most participants, who expressed that their symptoms resulting from PTSD as outlined in the DSM-5 rendered them incompatible with some civilian jobs. These participants believed that PTSD symptoms along with the use of psychotropic drugs would cause discrepant interactions with civilians. When asked if PTSD made their employment less likely, participants responded with the following statements. P1 reported, “I think it does. I have to keep my anger issues at bay and use my meds.” P3 indicated, “Yeah, because people don't, they don't understand it, and they think that it's a stigma.” P4 provided the following statement:

> Yes, I do. You know, a lot of the civilians don't really understand the PTSD. It is still fairly new, as far as, as far as getting an understanding of, you know, what PTSD really is, even though we've dealt with it since, you know, Vietnam and before that, I don't think a lot of civilians really understand it nor do they understand triggers.

P6 explained,

> Being around Marines and civilians are, are two different things. PTSD symptoms can make it harder to find a civilian job because they don't understand you.
>
> I think it's harder to find a civilian job, but not working as a civilian with other military folk.

P7 indicated,

> It's all in your preparation. They may not know you have PTSD if you keep your mouth shut anyway, but you know you have it and have to deal with it.

P8 stated,

> I think if I, if I let it get the best of me, absolutely...PTSD fresh out of a combat zone will most likely affect your getting a civilian job.

P9 revealed,

> Yes, I do. So that's why a lot of times, I'm hesitant about putting, you know, in those applications.

P10 stated,

> Absolutely, absolutely. Because some of the questions that an employer asks you are kind of questions in which he can get cues from. They are probing to see if you're a good fit, you know, if you're Rambo or someone. So yeah, I think so. It makes you less likely, if you let it.

Lastly, P11 mused,

> That's a tough question. I want to say yes and no. Yes, because I don't have the patience for BS. If you, if you're here to do a job, come to work, do your job, keep your personal feelings and attitudes out of the workplace.

> Yes. It would be difficult to get a job. Then know if, if your boss is prior military, I think they might understand.

One participant indicated that he was aware civilian employers could not legally inquire about his diagnosis of PTSD, but stated that he would have divulged the information if asked because he wanted the job. Another participant revealed that employers asked him indirectly about his military injuries to gauge his condition and compatibility with the job. All the participants indicated they were proud to have served their country; however, they did not know that it would be this difficult to find civilian employment.

Participants believed their decreased functionality (e.g., difficulty concentrating, poor apprehension of new tasks, ease of irritation, and some being startled by loud sounds) made them severely limited and a poor choice for most employers. Four participants deliberately sought jobs that would not require them to work near others, but had difficulty finding such work.

PTSD Can be Seen by Others

Four of the 11 participants (or 36%) believed that employers could tell they had PTSD, as reflected in their mannerisms and social engagements. This theme was derived from participants' statements concerning their inability to conceal their visible symptoms of PTSD. Participants believed that potential employers could easily detect their PTSD by just watching them. The following statements from participants resulted in the development of this theme. P1 described,

> Sometimes they know you have issues. We're already suspect to civilians. I think they kinda look for it when they know you're a Marine.

P4 reported,

> I felt that I had to survive out there. I think my PTSD would just cause me more issues, you know, mentally, socially, sometimes I, you know, I also feel as if my PTSD could be seen, like, it's like, it's on my clothes.
>
> I was still really insecure with the PTSD and kind of going out and feeling as if I got a big PTSD sign across my forehead, or, you know, anxiety written someplace.

P7 perceived that

> They would know as soon as I jumped from a loud boom or sound or something. I used to worry about that when I got out and went back to the real world.

Lastly, P10 provided the following supporting statements:

> Interviewing with civilians can be a trip, especially if you, you have been in the Corps as long as us. They can probably tell if your PTSD issues are acting up. It can be like the elephant in the room.
>
> You have to be on your best behavior when you are giving an interview because you don't want your PTSD to stop you from getting the job.

Civilians Are Intimidated by Marines

Ten of 11 participants (91%) believed that civilian employers were intimidated by Marines. Participants believed that the public sector employers viewed them as potential threats. This theme was derived from interviewee statements that supported a stereotyped that depicts Marines as war-stricken warriors who were threatening. Participants also indicated that people generally believed the stereotyped U.S. Marine as depicted by the Hollywood film

industry—that is, courageous in battle and eager to engage with an enemy. In support of this theme, P1 reported,

> My personal opinion is I think that most people will look at you as a Marine and think, oh man, here we go. It's a ticking bomb, ready to blow. They think we're a fuse, the short fuse, ready to blow up at any time. He may be one of them, a shooter or something.
>
> We don't know what's going on. He may be mad about everything from being out there in Iraq, you know?

P3 stated,

> They call it a stigma or something about us never being retired, especially if we have PTSD or any kind of combat background, they're scared.

P4 explained,

> You know, she has PTSD and now I'm kind of, you know, they ward you off because you have PTSD. They think, you don't know if she's going to snap, don't talk to her.

P5 reported,

> I think they probably thought, man, is this guy crazy? Cause, I mean, you, you know, sometimes certain things happen, and you know, you may raise your voice louder than what some people would think that it needed to be.

P6 discussed,

> Civilians don't know of your internal battles. They don't, they actually have no idea what you're going through and they usually want to avoid that.

P7 recalled,

> Sometimes they felt a little bit intimidated by my experiences. When you say I've been in the Marine Corps for 21 years, you know.

P8 considered,

> I know we can be scary. I need to fit in again. Can't look like the scary Marine and all you know? Yeah, I'm a war veteran but employers probably don't want you to be aggressive.

P9 described,

> Remember that movie Full Metal Jacket? Sometimes, I think they see us like that.

P10 contributed the following statements:

> You know, they, they look at it as if we're more or possibly a problem instead of there to work and earn a wage like everybody else.
>
> I think they perceive that maybe, you know, since I went to combat couple of times, so you might, you might have some PTSD going on.

Finally, P11 indicated,

> These guys don't really know your environment and what you come from and, and how you think and how you move and what your thoughts are. So, they have fear.

P2 and P5 did not feel that civilian employers misunderstood nor stereotyped Marines. P2 made the following statement regarding their interviews with employers and military experience:

> They absolutely loved it. You know, one of the things that they admire is the fact that, you know, it's always thank you for your service, thank you

for your service. They, they admire that, you know, because there's only 1% of us that decided to do that.

P5 mentioned they did not feel positively nor negatively in their engagements with civilian employers when they were discharged from the Marines. Four participants did not offer their opinions regarding whether civilian employers believed they were a liability, although P3 and P5 indicated that they felt anxious during employment engagements. P2 and P5 did not believe that PTSD made them less likely to find a job. Participants 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 did not indicate they feared employers being able to detect they had PTSD; however, they mentioned that the awareness of their illness caused apprehension and anxiety during job interviews and the job search itself. All participants except P2 believed that civilians were intimidated by Marines.

Figure 2

Agreement with Perceived Barriers

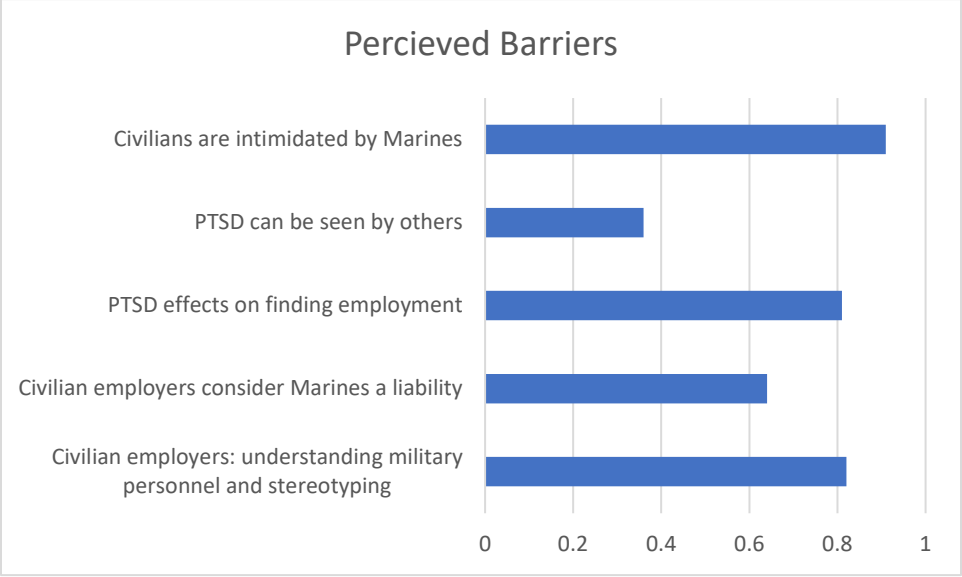

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of participants who agreed with each barrier. Participants reported that they searched for employment using various employment websites in which the most popular were: usajobs.com (an official federal government job site), monster.com, governmentjobs.com, clearancejobs.com, linkedin.com, and careerbuilder.com. Two of 11 participants (18%) reported that they specifically targeted federal civilian jobs as they believed these agencies preferred hiring former military members. Nine of 11 (82%) participants indicated that they attended military job fairs aboard Camp Pendleton and online, as five (46%) indicated that they engaged with the local state employment office. Four of 11 participants (36%) indicated that they sought out former military members who were themselves hiring managers because they felt safe and more assured of getting hired. One of 11 (10%) of participants admitted that they did not look for employment after discharging due to feelings of inadequacy because of the effects of their PTSD, along with other physical and psychological issues.

All participants reported that they attended the mandatory Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) before being discharged from the Marine Corps. All the participants participated in an official check-out that entailed documentation to be officially signed off by authorized individuals within the work sections in their units. Such documentation was required before Marines were allowed to discharge from the Marine Corps. TAP attendance was required in the discharge process and signed off by such a signature to be processed for discharge. The TAP provided training to participants on how to write a professional resume and create an online presence via LinkedIn. All participants also indicated that the

TAP was beneficial to their transition to the civilian sector. Generally, participants felt the Marine Corps helped them through TAP training prepare for civilian employment. Interestingly, participants made modest mention or use of the other programs listed to assist veterans' transition to civilian life. Due to mixed responses, further research should be conducted in order to identify the most and least effective transition programs.

Three of 11 (27%) participants revealed that they used Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services to further their education upon discharge. One participant indicated they used Goodwill Services, which provided them with a suit, tie, and shoes and set up mock interviews. Most participants revealed that they did not consider finding civilian employment until they were close to their discharge date. The work pace and training in their Marine Corps units deterred had their efforts. Most participants admitted their complacency due to engagement in their military careers.

Most of the participants believed that they were qualified to do the jobs in which they were applying. Also, most participants found that TAP was the most helpful tool aid them in their military to civilian transition; however, they were not aware of all the transition services available to them until after their departure from service. Participants did not have a less favorite discharge program or tool. A variety of such programs was available, but not adequately advertised.

Participants indicated they had difficulty translating their military occupational specialty into jobs in the civilian sector, in most cases, as an experience requirement. In addition, participants felt that their use of military

jargon in resumes and civilian interviews hurt their chances of securing employment. The previous bod of literature indicated that race and gender discrimination were highly plausible in adverse employment outcomes. This researcher thoroughly scanned the interview statements for—but did not detect—any inclination of race or gender issues from participants.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived employment barriers faced by U.S. Marines with PTSD following their discharge from military service. In this chapter, the researcher summarizes and discusses the key findings. Recommendations for any further research are also provided. Marines discharging from service faced complex challenges in their efforts to secure civilian employment. The DSM-5 defines PTSD as a mental condition contracted by people exposed to challenging traumatic experiences. Many Marines who participated in OEF, OIF, and OND were diagnosed with PTSD due to their combat engagement. In this study, the participating Marines diagnosed with PTSD who attempted to secure civilian employment reported that they faced barriers upon their departure from military service. Many of the issues the participants divulged consisted of internalized beliefs that caused adverse reactions. Some participants became passionate when answering interview questions; anger and aggression were detected in their responses when they recalled their engagement with civilian employers. Jakupcak et al. (2007) also addressed PTSD veterans' displays of trait anger and hostility.

The results included in the previous section suggested participants harbored perceptions that negatively affected their employment search before and after their discharge. The effects of PTSD enhanced participants' perceptions and influenced their actions (Bisson, 2007).

Five significant categories were produced from participant interviews (Hycner, 1985): (a) civilian employers and understanding military personnel, (b) civilian employers consider Marines a liability, (c) PTSD effects on finding

employment, (d) PTSD can be seen by others, and (e) civilians are intimidated by Marines. These themes are discussed in this chapter. The researcher also considers the study's limitations and provides recommendations for future investigations.

Researcher Self-Assessment

A phenomenological research method was selected to investigate and understand the perceptual barriers participants identified from their lived experiences. This researcher personally identified with the target population, making it essential to set aside bias or opinion. During this study, the researcher recognized that his inclinations and personal perspectives were comparable to the participants and was careful to separate his personal feelings, rather than affixing meaning to their responses. A clear understanding of this author's history and experiences surrounding the phenomenon was crucial in capturing the participant's experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Participants provided candid responses to the questions. The collected data revealed that participants all had similar experiences and perceptions. The participants' stories echoed their struggles and concerns in dealing with their PTSD and finding jobs after discharge. Their perceptions and beliefs created these barriers and affected their ability to find employment.

Perspective: Civilian Employers and Understanding Military Personnel

Nine participants indicated they believed that civilian employers did not understand nor appreciate the knowledge, skills, or abilities that they could offer.

The perception of an "us versus them" mindset often puts participants at odds from the beginning of their employment search.

P11 agreed, "Well, it frustrates me to a high level because I know what I have to offer. Just seems sometimes like they don't want to take the time to check us vets out." Military veterans all began their careers first as civilians. Military service organizations introduce and sustain their own culture to promote good order and discipline within the ranks. The current participants indicated that they displayed culture shock when they felt rejection from civilian employers. Counseling services in an early career stage could be beneficial in helping veterans cope with reverting to civilian culture.

In this case, participants' perceptions of being spurned due to PTSD attributed to their prolonged inability to find employment (Jakupcak et al., 2007). Such perceptions and beliefs are passed down from predecessors exiting military service. Rumors and tales from failed civilian employment searches can be transferred throughout the ranks, influence the reality of those who still serve, and serve as a catalyst for negative perceptions. Efforts to alleviate gossip and innuendo are problematic; these issues fall on military leadership to correct.

Translating Military Occupational Specialties

The translation of military knowledge, skills, and abilities to civilian employment resumes is critical (Minnis, 2014). Translating military occupational specialties was of significant value, as most civilian employers do not understand military terminology. Participants believed that employers had difficulty understanding their worth due to their military occupational specialties not being adequately translated or accepted. They also admitted a lack of proficiency in

converting military careers into a civilian perspective fashionably. Understanding what benefits veterans bring to organizations is essential in the hiring process as it affects competitiveness, candidate selection pools, and organizational performance.

Participants also believed that civilian employers were hesitant to hire them because they would not quickly adapt in a less controlled environment and would be challenging to train. Participants believed that employers typically use this type of stereotyping and behavior to rationalize not hiring them. Understandably, a career in the Marine Corps cultivates its members for a specific purpose, which may contrast from their civilian roles. Krulak (2013) asserted that Marines are known worldwide by their "physical endurance, for their high level of obedience, and for the fierce pride they take, as individuals, in the capacity for self-discipline" (p. 1). This Marine ethos may have influenced support for the Marine stereotype from employers. Participants perceived that any new employer would want them to conform to new organizational norms completely. Marine Corps training, day-to-day operations, and culture create distinct behaviors and attitudes that influence members' pursuit of civilian jobs. Such training may not be conducive to civilian employment.

Moore (2004) agreed that the Marine Corps uses minor violence in the form of controlled abuse perpetrated on the bodies and the psyches of civilian men and women. This violence transforms these men and women into the kinds of Marines who ultimately form different conceptions of pain than they had as civilians. Participants believed their time in the Marine Corps had influenced their attitudes and ability to be competitive with their civilian counterparts when

searching for jobs. Ricks (1994) agreed that this scenario significantly affected post-military employment with disabilities such as PTSD. It is essential to participate in mock interviews before engaging in civilian employment searches, as interviewing expectations are unpredictable.

The current participants admitted that they were cognizant of the stigma surrounding Marines and PTSD, but persisted because they needed to find jobs to support their families. One participant, who held a senior position and rank in the Marines, revealed that he had to "reduce himself" upon discharge due to his PTSD. He contemplated accepting a job as a stock person at a local grocery store because he believed that his being a Marine and having PTSD made him prone to hiring stigma. Participants occasionally act on stigmatization by internalizing and acting out in ways detrimental to their employment search (Corrigan et al., 2010). Although the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the ADA of 1990 made it illegal to inquire about an applicant's medical condition, some participants willfully divulged the information or fell prey to obscure and creative questioning by employers. Participants believe this line of questioning led to stigmatization, stereotyping, and ultimately dismissal.

Stigmatization and fear of the unknown necessitate a continual need to build trust and foundation between military personnel and civilians regarding employment. Distrust and avoidance of such issues from both sides tend to be embedded and need to be more thoroughly addressed. Based on participant responses, surface-level consideration is not sufficient; instead, a concentrated effort of study is recommended.

Perspective: Civilian Employers Consider Marines a Liability

Participants also believed that employers considered them a liability. They expressed concern that employers viewed them as unemployable due to their combat exposure and having PTSD. Most participants believed the general population respected Marines and were appreciative of their service. At the same time, however, the stigma surrounding being a Marine exposed to combat and the fact they had PTSD influenced most participants to suppress information about their participation in combat.

Participants also assumed that employers feared them being recalled to military service based on other veterans' conversations. Employers were worried that Marines could be recalled to active duty and were reluctant to take on risks. According to the Department of Defense Instruction 1352.01, military veterans discharged from active or reserve service could be recalled in times of war or other instances as defined by the U.S. Government if needed. These recall processes legally allow employees who are also members of the military reserve to be placed on leave from their civilian work organization and returned to service, which was an issue as U.S. troops are deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Employers are not allowed to terminate recalled reservists due to being called to active duty during a Congressionally declared war. Employers absorb any costs associated with overtime and training of recalled reservists. Associated federal and state laws regulating the mobilization of military personnel are published and enforceable. Reeducation of these laws should be included in regular training with all employers. Such reeducation should specifically include the prevention of stigmatization surrounding military personnel. The decisions on person-to-

organizational fit should remain with the organizations without over-reaching government intervention.

Marines should be exposed to their civilian counterparts in apprenticeships prior to them exiting the Marine Corps. Such programs could help alleviate stereotypes and employment issues. Early contact and communicative interactions would foster better understanding, compassion, and mutual knowledge.

Perspective: PTSD Effects on Finding Employment

Participants indicated that PTSD decreased their ability to concentrate, learn new tasks, suffer increased irritability, and be easily startled, limiting their employment choices. They feared this would be debilitative depending on the demands of the civilian job they attained. Participants believed this to be a barrier that affected their confidence and increased procrastination, causing delay, indecision, eventual financial harm, and increased stress. The participants also revealed they deliberately sought jobs that would isolate them from working in proximity with others because they felt unwanted, describing themselves as "damaged goods." Some participants believed PTSD altered their ability to hold everyday conversations, especially under stressful conditions like job interviews. Participants also felt that they could not consistently hold smooth and meaningful conversations since their diagnosis. Their perceived ill-ability to communicate due to PTSD caused pre-conceived concern that civilian employers would consider them a threat. Many employers do not want to interview or hire veterans who had just returned from the combat zone (Keeling et al., 2018). Marines should take advantage of the extensive medical treatment made

available to them. Many Marines do not take advantage of treatment for PTSD afforded by the federal government. VA facilities and private physicians are available for PTSD treatment. Moreover, departments can also compel their members to participate in such treatment. Military service options should include voluntary—and in extreme resistive cases, involuntary—participation in such medical treatment.

Perspective: PTSD Can be Seen by Others

One of the current participants felt that employers immediately noticed their PTSD by merely looking at them, which caused anxiety, stress, and a minimized desire to look for a job. Hensley (2006) also mentioned that public perception of mental illness contributed to job search apprehension. Stereotyping people with mental health issues are an essential concern as it deters those diagnosed with PTSD from seeking civilian jobs. Davis et al. (2018) argued that PTSD interfered with an individual's ability to find and maintain civilian employment. The current participants believed their PTSD rendered them vulnerable to being stereotyped and viewed negatively, even during interviews. Lee et al. (2001) argued that traumatic experiences could significantly impact self and social identity. Tangney (1995) agreed that traumatic experiences could propel self-consciousness into shame that influences specific behaviors. "External shame is associated with beliefs that others look down on the self and see the self as inferior, inadequate, disgusting, or weak in some way" (Lee et al., 2001, p. 452). The current participants felt that civilians would judge them based on their behavior as influenced by their PTSD.

Marines believing that others can see their PTSD should seek the advice of medical professionals, as additional medical issues in conjunction with PTSD could be present. As mentioned, Marines also should not volunteer information to prospective employers regarding their PTSD. Erratic or even subtle behavior precipitated by PTSD is likely to trigger a negative response by most people. Psychological screening for indicators that would deviate from the norm should be investigated. Additional training on job interviews would also be helpful.

Perspective: Civilians are Intimidated by Marines

Some participants believed that civilians were intimidated by combat-tested Marines and were concerned about mental breakdowns or violent outbreaks. In general, the American public supports and appreciates the work of veterans across the country. Some participants believed, however, that some hiring managers stereotyped them as "G.I. Joe's" or hardcore warmongers who were trained killers and may "snap" and cause harm to people in their organization. Some participants described themselves as being viewed as "ticking time bombs," "short-fused," "crazy," "shooter," "blow up at any time," and "suicidal" to describe how hiring managers viewed them. Military veterans who have returned from war and been diagnosed with PTSD often suffer from trust issues. Civilian employers are reluctant because many fear war-tested veterans with mental disabilities may harm people within the organization (Harrell & Berglass, 2012).

Many veterans are mentally compromised and feel apprehension when among civilians or others other than their military familiars. Social and adjustment issues often surface as concern for other people's motives affects

veterans who have PTSD. These issues can—and often do—ultimately result in disengagement, family problems, and unwillingness to leave one's personal comfort zone (Garcia, 2017). The current participants indicated they trusted their fellow Marines but harbored reservations about trusting civilian employers, mainly due to a perception that civilians did not understand military culture. Participants expressed concern about the civilian employment process but were equally anxious to find a job. Most participants believed that civilian managers who did not have military experience would be intimidated by them, which would result in them not being hired. Participants also felt that some employers viewed their lengthy military service as a negative attribute.

Many civilian employers gather information about veterans from television news networks and fictional movies. Civilian perspectives of military members who participated in the war, and acquired PTSD, are influenced by politically and socially motivated commentary (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015). The media also tends to frame issues regarding returning war veterans and mental illness problems. Framing highlights key points of an issue that draw connections and sponsor a particular perception, assessment, and solution (Entman, 2004). These stereotypes and miseducation about combat veterans must be addressed, as such biases hinder veterans' employment efforts. Education and training provisions to Marines and civilians are essential in breaking untruths and age-old beliefs. While it is true that some returning Marines with PTSD can be risky hires in some situations, any person could pose such a risk. Specific training regarding veterans' real value to organizations should be designed and disseminated to civilian employers using corporate training and social media.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to identify perceived employment barriers faced by U.S. Marines with PTSD following their discharge from military service. The themes extracted from participant interviews revealed their perceptions and impediments regarding civilian employment. The perceptual barriers revealed in this study were exacerbated because the participants had acquired PTSD in a combat zone. Participants perceived that civilian employers did not genuinely care for their military experiences, which caused consternation and avoidance, resulting in apprehension and confusion when searching, applying, and following up with these employers. Participants felt the need to over-embellish information on their resumes to increase their chances of acceptance. The translation of military job terminology to civilian contexts has continually been an issue among this population.

Previous scholars have indicated that African Americans and women are at higher risk for attaining PTSD. During this study, there were no suggestions of racial disparity attributable to perceived employer bias. Undertones regarding employment discrimination based on race were not addressed nor discussed. Participants were direct in their answers to the interview questions and did not venture into racial inequality. No racial themes were extrapolated from the interviews.

Positive attitudes are fundamental to successful employment outcomes (Fritz, 2008). The findings of this study revealed that in general, participants were not enthusiastic about—but not altogether deterred by—their job search; however, their desire to take care of their families after leaving military service

was their primary driver. Also, participants exhibited a fear of the unknown and spoke accordingly about returning to civilian employment with PTSD. Participants felt the need to be accepted and acknowledged aside from the cliched national sentiment of "we love our military." They expressed a need for assurances and understanding as promised by way of what they perceived as fairness in employment. Joint public and military education regarding specific information on how veteran contributions transition into the civilian sector would be helpful. Many existing military and civilian agencies should increase their efforts to provide technical training for military members approaching discharge. Although formal education opportunities are currently available, technical training specific to Marines with mental illness would be helpful. Such technical training should address certification, acknowledgment, and transferability to civilian organizations. Civilian training and education should also be used to inform firms of issues surrounding Marines and PTSD.

Military to civilian job translator programs are available but are generally believed to be inaccurate and outdated. Marine Corps TAP courses should include military occupational specialty translation as part of the overall program to alleviate these associated problems. The stigma associated with Marines with PTSD and their ability to adapt in the workplace is ongoing and requires further research. Marines with PTSD must understand the evolving nature of stereotypes and have access to resources after their discharge for help.

Participants believed that civilian employers viewed them as a liability. Marines diagnosed with PTSD are commonly stigmatized (Ghaffarzadegan et al., 2016); as a result, many civilians deem them as potential workplace threats.

Understandably, PTSD causes flashbacks of violent incidents, emotional distress, and physical reaction (APA, 2013). Employers worry that Marines with PTSD could have dangerous mental relapses that may cause harm to the organization's members. Participants believed that the culmination of being a Marine and the stigma of having combat inflicted PTSD may work in tandem to influence employers to avoid them. While these stigmas and rumors have been circulated for a long time, the delivery of accurate information and education to Marines and the public would be helpful. Although it is essential to protect both organizations and the Marines who have PTSD, the presence of such discriminatory practices should be researched, addressed, and resolved.

Participants also believed PTSD would affect their ability to find employment due to their symptoms, including irritability, being easily startled, feelings of a negatively impacted future, and recurrent and troubling recollection of events (APA, 2013). Participants felt their symptoms could be detected by employers, which could raise unwanted attention and the stereotypes about Marines who have been involved in the war. Veterans are provided with several medical options after their service, whether they retire or are discharged. PTSD treatment is available through government programs, facilities, and private organizations. Marines are encouraged to seek treatment and not dismiss their symptoms after discharge from service.

Participants felt many employers were intimidated by them because of Marines' stigma, aided by the film industry and folklore. Depictions of Marines have fought and won battles are present in television commercials, movies, history books, and other broadcasts. The American public is greatly influenced by

these publications, which consequently enhances the stigma. Military movies often portray violent exchanges and promote the glory of war, which contributes to the stereotype that Marines are risky to be around. The current participants believed that civilian employers used this belief to refrain from hiring them. Marines searching for civilian employment must establish trust in these situations, which is complicated with their PTSD.

Marine Corps exit training is highly reliant on the TAP program. None of the participants mentioned the other government programs and agencies listed in this study, such as VETS, LVER, DVOP, E2I, VR&E, OWF, and W2W. Other participants revealed that they had used Goodwill services. Efforts to advertise and make these resources available should be provided to the Marines. Participants mentioned that the current TAP program is helpful, but that it could do more. Additional research is necessary to establish the effects of PTSD and Marines regarding employment. The study of PTSD and its effects on veterans who return to society should be engaged, specifically regarding how it affects civilian employment outcomes.

Participants were asked what they would do differently. Ultimately, some of the current participants have found jobs—most with the federal government, and some work for themselves. They recommended that targeted counseling programs focused on psychological assessment, therapy, and application for affected servicemembers should be implemented. Such counseling programs would be most helpful early in Marines' careers, as the onset of their discharge commonly results in anxiety and fears.

Race and Gender

Previous researchers have reported adverse effects regarding race and gender disparities in employment outcomes. Employment discrimination is a common issue among African Americans (Pedulla, 2018). Notably, Dursa et al. (2014) cited that African Americans suffered higher rates of PTSD than Hispanic, White, or Asian Americans. Hall-Clark et al. (2017) added that socioeconomic factors, exposure to trauma, and psychiatric history contributed to acquiring and managing PTSD during and after military service for African Americans. Therefore, it is prudent to examine the impact of race and gender factors on the employment outcomes of veterans with PTSD. Krishna et al. (2021) found that the fight for gender equality, treatment, and equal pay for equal work persists in the workplace.

The average age of participants in this study was 44 years, and the average time in service was 24 years, indicating a modest separation from traditional civilian life. Elliott et al. (2011) argued that the effective transition of veterans from the military to civilian life is challenging, as the dissonance between the cultures can be formidable. Many veterans who have been detached from civilian life for unspecified times find it difficult to return. Coll et al. (2011) described that this results from “disorientation, change of status, and a search for identity and meaning” (p. 488). As noted in the literature, African Americans have high rates of PTSD (Dursa et al., 2014). No participant in this study mentioned the influence of race or gender bias as a factor in their job search. All responses were aligned with the interview questions, with no deviations. The participants were inclined

to separate their Marine Corps experiences from any speculation regarding race or gender issues affecting civilian employment.

Implications to Theory

Five key findings were identified regarding the perceptions of U.S. Marines on the employment barriers that they face following their discharge from military service. These findings are imperative to theory and future research. They should motivate policymakers and administrators to develop and enhance current programs and processes focused on treating PTSD, prevention, and employment. The findings will also influence military organizations to develop effective pathways and services to understand the perspectives of military service members and citizens and the future of their employment after a PTSD diagnosis. According to Bryant et al. (2015), millions of individuals—both civilians and military service members—are affected by traumatic injuries every year; of these, 23% developed PTSD in 12 months from the time of their injuries. These injuries affect the present and future of these individuals in terms of health and employment. Moreover, PTSD also affects various sectors of military personnel and a spectrum of diversity in the military. Secondly, the findings of this research are also essential for planning and assisting aid service members during the transition from military to civilian sectors.

Inconsistencies in communication, coupled with a misunderstanding between military and civilian personnel, can negatively affect employment outcomes. When unchecked, stereotypes of Marines can be harmful as rumors and speculation often misguide employment decisions. The unstated belief that Marines are a liability and threat to safety due to their military service creates

situations in which employers could miss hiring good workers who are dedicated and even cost-effective. Even when asked during job interviews, military personnel should refrain from telling war stories to their interview panel, especially if they have PTSD or other mental disorders. Veterans should also refrain from voluntarily disclosing their diagnosis of PTSD in job interviews. Veterans with PTSD should take their medication as prescribed by their physician and not deviate when they have job interviews.

The findings offer insightful explanations and recommendations regarding the perspectives of Marines diagnosed with PTSD and their outlook on the future of their employment to raise awareness of the difficulties confronted by Marines with PTSD. According to Stern (2017), over five million military personnel were projected to return to the civilian workforce by 2020. The navigation of this transition can be difficult and complicated. Vietnam War veterans experienced mass backlash and repudiation upon their return, while veterans of subsequent wars returned to a more welcoming and thankful citizenry. Chan (2016) indicated that it is prudent to promote post-service assistance and rewards for those who serve in the military willingly with an all-volunteer workforce. The United States enjoys much of its freedoms due to its well-organized military protecting it from foreign aggression.

Marines with PTSD often become demotivated and depressed when unsuccessfully searching for employment, which negatively influences their wellness and national unemployment rates. Although existing laws protect against veteran discrimination, undetected and unreported incidents often occur, maintaining the status quo. Coordinated education and training programs that

are specifically designed and updated for classrooms, social media, and communication platforms should be implemented. Government-sponsored incentives, along with coaching and counseling for civilian employment services, would greatly benefit veterans with PTSD attempting to reenter the workforce. Although the participants in this study did not mention any racial implications, related concepts have been discussed in previous literature.

Implications to Academe

This study was conducted to identify the perceived employment barriers faced by U.S. Marines with PTSD following their discharge from military service. The findings of this research identified gaps that future researchers should investigate. Even though several studies provided findings regarding veterans and their employment status, there was limited information regarding PTSD and service member perceptions on post-employment. This aspect implies that there is still more room to expand more research into PTSD and veterans' employment. Nonetheless, the limitations of this research should be considered by researchers seeking to investigate various aspects of this research title. These limitations demonstrated the research aspects that future researchers will be willing to improve, those that should be included, and those that should be handled critically so that bias and inaccurate information can be avoided in the future.

Current Marine Corps transition programs and strategies should be analyzed and revised to reflect environmental changes. Such changes should be targeted at both military members and civilians. The perceived communication disparity between Marines and civilian employers needs additional attention.

Such disparities will continue to degrade military to civilian employment outcomes if not addressed. Civilian decisions of precaution from hiring Marines, regardless of if they believe they have PTSD or other mental or physical disabilities, is not uncommon. Such practice does not necessarily make employers unpatriotic; however, protective of their organization. Person to organization fit is essential for everyone involved. Stereotypes of mentally ill people spur social fear that ultimately results in adverse employment outcomes (Norman et al., 2008). Stereotypes of disabled veterans cause unfair treatment regarding employment. Participants' perception that civilian employers could see their PTSD reflected their discontent and impatience with the job process. Civilian employers have an obligation to hire personnel based on the criteria of the position and the law. Government and civilian systems of employment alignment should be better organized in order to account for and hire military members with disabilities. The conclusions of this study indicated the need to revise current policy and practice to meet employment needs for veterans with disabilities. The completion of OIF, OEF, and OND will require the expediting of such changes as new veterans with PTSD begin to seek employment in the civilian system.

Areas for Future Study

The limitations outlined in this study made it possible to concentrate the research question on a select group of veterans. It is recommended that future research on other military organizations and their service members be conducted on the effect of PTSD and civilian employment. Members in different military organizations, although similar in mission, experience distinct organizational

training, culture, and perspectives, which could affect the outcomes of such a study. The specific geographic area chosen for this study encompasses cultural viewpoints employers exhibit that may differ between parts of the United States and the world.

The specific effects on employment caused by PTSD and women service members should be studied. The sole female participant in this study provided statements in support of negative perceptions. Women service members face different variables than their male counterparts in military service. Such differences should be investigated.

Military and civilian personnel from the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, and U.S. Coast Guard have also been involved in wars; they perform similar, but different, missions in comparison to the Marine Corps. The scope of this study was also limited to Marines stationed in a specific geographic area. Military personnel are stationed in different geographical areas to include cities, states, and even other countries. These installations have different levels and echelons of medical access, cultures, and general support for military members that may affect the diagnosis of mental disorders. Future investigations should include military personnel with PTSD at other installations for a broader survey of how it may affect employment. A study of veterans from the Vietnam Era, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Desert Shield could provide insight on both the causes of PTSD and employment issues.

Conclusion

The beliefs and perceptions identified in this research were derived from the real lives of military veterans who have PTSD and are searching for civilian

employment. The U.S. government, citizens, and some partnering countries thrive due to the protections provided by the U.S. military. Although their service is appreciated and respected, many veterans with PTSD are hindered because of their perceptions and inhibitions on leaving military service upon their discharge. Training and education are essential to bridge misunderstandings, discrimination, and biases, and current transition programs may need restructuring. It is essential that the U.S. military provides support and investigates shortfalls in current employment assistance programs intended to help veterans separate from the service. The current participants' perceptions that claim civilians fail to understand them are indicative of the insufficiencies in communication and training.

The current participants' perceptions of civilians viewing them as liabilities were attributable to a difference in cultures. Participants strongly believed that PTSD was a factor in their unsuccessful pursuit of civilian employment, as its effects can be detected when communicating with others. Participants believed that their years of military culture, fictional military movies, and rumors described many of them as killers and people who are vulnerable to a psychotic episode. There is a need to ask veterans about their perceptions regarding employment directly. Future studies on this researchable topic could inform the development of training for civilians and military personnel alike.

Appendix A

2201004

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY HSRC INITIAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE Page 6

Title: U.S. Marine Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars diagnosed with PTSD: Percieved employment barriers faced by Marines with PTSD upon discharge

Principal Researcher(s): Marlon G. Ware

Date application completed: July 30, 2019

(The researcher needs to complete the above information on this page)

COMMITTEE FINDING: For Committee Use Only

☑ (1) The proposed research makes adequate provision for safeguarding the health and dignity of the subjects and is therefore approved.

☐ (2) Due to the assessment of risk being questionable or being subject to change, the research must be periodically reviewed by the **HSRC** on a basis throughout the course of the research or until otherwise notified. This requires resubmission of this form, with updated information, for each periodic review.

☐ (3) The proposed research evidences some unnecessary risk to participants and therefore must be revised to remedy the following specific area(s) on non-compliance:

☐ (4) The proposed research contains serious and potentially damaging risks to subjects and is therefore not approved.

Chair or designated member

8/11/20

Date

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