# CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

## Introduction

The study's purpose was to evaluate whether updated, transformational, and learner-centered career-based workshops benefit military veterans transitioning back to civilian life in the United States. This researcher used a mixed-methods approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative approach consisted interviews with veterans and the quantitative employed the use of the PHQ-9 (Maroufizadeh, Omani-Samani, Almasi-Hashiani, Amini, & Sepidarkish, 2019) and MBI-HSS (Survey Monkey, 2020). Data accrued from 10 participants were evaluated using a multivariate regression model and thematic analysis. The findings contribute to policymakers,’ educators,’ healthcare providers,’ and the Department of Veterans Affairs’ understanding of how to better facilitate veterans’ transitions to civilian life.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to measure the degree of prediction between the single independent variable and the multiple dependent variables through a mixed-methods pretest-posttest design of qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data. Data were analyzed using multivariate regression analysis and thematic analysis. The study’s quantitative independent variable was the additional workshops implemented upon the ACAP program’s completion once a veteran is honorably discharged from the military. The dependent variables included personal fulfillment, personal satisfaction, success in obtaining employment, and stability in their professional lives.

The data in this chapter are organized by the four following research questions:

RQ1. What opportunities and outcomes do career-based workshops offer

military veterans entering the civilian workforce?

RQ2. How do military veterans rate career-based programs on factors that

include personal fulfillment, personal satisfaction, success in obtaining

employment, and stability in their professional lives?

RQ3. What characteristics impact veterans’ perceptions of career-based

programs?

RQ4. What types of training programs do veterans perceive best serve their

needs?

## Survey Results

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed the survey and interview results, the thematic analysis performed on the interview data, and the impact of the multivariate analysis results on career workshops’ quantitative data. A total of 12 potential and qualified participants were asked to participate in the study. Eleven potential participants agreed; however, only 10 participants followed through with taking part in the workshop intervention, completing the surveys, and the interviews administered pre and posttest. Three of the participants were females between the ages of 23 and 35 and seven participants were males between the ages of 22 and 40. Table 2 presents the participants’ demographics.

Table 2  
*Participant Demographics*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Contributors | Gender | Age | Disability | Employment | Income |
| *Par1* | F | 23 | NONE | UNEMPLOYED | <20K\* |
| *Par2* | F | 35 | NONE | UNEMPLOYED | 20-45K\* |
| *Par3* | F | 27 | DISABLED | UNEMPLOYED | 20-45K\* |
| *Par4* | M | 25 | NONE | UNEMPLOYED | >30K |
| *Par5* | M | 27 | DISABLED | UNEMPLOYED | <20K |
| *Par6* | M | 30 | DISABLED | UNEMPLOYED | <20K |
| *Par7* | M | 22 | NONE | UNEMPLOYED | <20K |
| *Par8* | M | 40 | DISABLED | UNEMPLOYED | <20K |
| *Par9* | M | 28 | NONE | UNEMPLOYED | <20K |
| *Par10* | M | 24 | NOT IDENTIFI | UNEMPLOYED | 20-45K |

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed the survey results and the multivariate analysis findings and discuss the interview results and themes. The researcher uses the numeric pseudonyms *Par1* through *Par10* to identify participants.

## Pre-Test Scores

Participants completed the PHQ-9 before the career-based workshop intervention. The PHQ-9 consists of nine Likert-type scale items (scored 0–3) for a total possible score range of 0 to 27. Scores between 0 and 4 correspond to minimal depression and scores between 5 and 9 are indicative of mild depression symptoms. Scores between 10 and 14 are indicative of moderate depression. Scores between 15 and 19 indicate moderately severe depression and scores between 20 and 27 indicate severe depression (Stable Resource Toolkit, 2020). Table 3 presents the participants PHQ-9 pretest scores. The findings revealed a mean score of 8.4, or mild depression (range of 0–14), the median score of 9, the range of 14, and mode of 8 and 10; each appeared 2 times. Finally, the sample standard deviation was 4.427. These scores equate to two participants reporting minimal depression, three reporting mild depression, and five reporting moderate depression.

Table 3  
*Pretest PHQ-9 Total Scores*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Par1 | Par2 | Par3 | Par4 | Par5 | Par6 | Par7 | Par8 | Par9 | Par10 |
| 0 | 10 | 6 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 3 |

Participants completed the MBI-HSS before the career-based workshop intervention. The MBI-HSS uses 22 items rated on a 0 to 6 Likert-type style scale; 0 represents *never,* and 6 represents *every day.* The MBI-HSS measures three areas: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment; the MBI-HSS scores are indicative of either high, moderate, or low levels in each area. In the area of emotional exhaustion, a score equal to or above 27 is high, a score between 19 and 26 is moderate, and a score between 0 and 18 is low. Four participants fell in the low range, four fell in the moderate range, and two fell in the high range. The findings revealed an emotional exhaustion mean score of 18.8 (high end of low), an emotional exhaustion median score of 19.5, emotional exhaustion range score of 17, emotional exhaustion mode score of 12 and 27 (each appeared twice) and the emotional exhaustion sample standard deviation was 6.63. In the area of depersonalization, a score equal to or above 10 is high, a score between 6 and 9 is moderate, and a score between 0 and 5 is low. Three participants fell in the low range, five fell in the moderate range, and two fell in the high range. The depersonalization mean score was 7.2 (moderate), the depersonalization median score was 7, the depersonalization range score was 9, and the depersonalization mode score was 7, which appeared twice. The depersonalization sample standard deviation was 2.898. In the area of personal accomplishment, a score between 0 and 33 is high, a score between 34 and 39 is moderate, and a score equal to or above 40 is low. Two participants fell in the low range, three fell in the moderate range, and five fell in the high range. Finally, the personal accomplishment mean score was 34.4 (moderate), the personal accomplishment median score was 34, the personal accomplishment range score was 17, and the personal accomplishment mode score was 30 and 33, with each appearing twice. The depersonalization sample standard deviation was 5.254. Table 4 presents participants’ MBI-HSS pretest total scores.

Table 4  
*Pretest MBI-HSS Total Scores*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Par1 | Par2 | Par3 | Par4 | Par5 | Par6 | Par7 | Par8 | Par9 | Par10 |
| Emo. E. | 10 | 27 | 25 | 23 | 19 | 27 | 20 | 12 | 13 | 12 |
| Depers. | 4 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| Pers. A. | 30 | 33 | 39 | 35 | 37 | 40 | 42 | 33 | 30 | 25 |

## Intervention

Overall, the 10 participants who completed the study were actively engaged. The workshops were limited to 12 students per session due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the workshops remained focused on assisting the veterans with the specific training they desired. From the 10 participants, each contributor attended the workshops, which included career mentoring, professional attire, interview coaching, professional networking, job placement, resume writing, LinkedIn coaching, and technical training and certifications. The responses from the veterans who attended the workshops were mainly positive. Several participants expressed that the workshops were effective in improving their understanding of their specific job duties and responsibilities. Also, due to the engaging interactive activities, many veterans were able to practice the skills they learned by synthesizing both knowledge and skills that furthered their interpretation of their work profession.

## Posttest Scores

Following completion of the workshops, participants finished both survey instruments. Table 5 displays participants’ PHQ-9 scores after the career-based workshop intervention and participants’ mean scores. Data-collection procedures before and after the intervention (7 days before the intervention and 7 days after completion of the intervention) were completed.

Table 5  
*Posttest PHQ-9 Total Scores*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Par1 | Par2 | Par3 | Par4 | Par5 | Par6 | Par7 | Par8 | Par9 | Par10 |
| 0 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 0 |

Table 6 displays participants’ MBI-HSS scores after the career-based workshop intervention and participants’ mean scores.

Table 6  
*Posttest MBI-HSS Total Scores*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Par1 | Par2 | Par3 | Par4 | Par5 | Par6 | Par7 | Par8 | Par9 | Par10 |
| Emo. E. | 9 | 27 | 24 | 20 | 17 | 25 | 20 | 11 | 14 | 10 |
| Depers. | 5 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Pers. A. | 25 | 33 | 30 | 32 | 37 | 35 | 30 | 30 | 29 | 22 |

## Interview Questions 3–6 Responses

The researcher collected and converted the following pre and posttest interview responses into numeric representations. These numeric representations were used within the multivariate analysis; *0* refers to not disabled, *1* refers to the disabled, *U* refers to unemployed, and *E* refers to employed. Income represents the income each participant was receiving, if they obtained an income. Table 7 presents the pretest and posttest responses from Interview Questions 3–6 used in the multivariate analysis.

Table 7  
*Interview Questions 3-6 Responses Used in Multivariate Analysis, Pretest/Posttest*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pretest | | | Posttest | | | Disabled |
| Participants | Employment | Income | Self-Rated | Employment | Income | Self-Rated |
| *Par1* | U | <20K | High | U | <20K | Low |  |
| *Par2* | U | 20-45K | Moderate | E | >45K | Moderate |  |
| *Par3* | U | 20-45K | Moderate | U | >45K | Moderate | Yes |
| *Par4* | U | >45K | Low | U | >45K | Moderate |  |
| *Par5* | U | <20K | Low | E | 20-45K | Moderate | Yes |
| *Par6* | U | <20K | Low | U | <20K | Low | Yes |
| *Par7* | U | <20K | Low | E | 20-45K | Moderate |  |
| *Par8* | U | <20K | Moderate | E | 20-45K | Moderate | Yes |
| *Par9* | U | <20K | High | U | <20K | High |  |
| *Par10* | U | 20-45K | High | U | 20-45K | High |  |

## Quantitative Data Summary

Participants’ PHQ-9 scores revealed mild depression before the intervention, with a mean score of 8.4. The posttest mean score measured 6.1, which indicated mild depression; however, this scoring represented a 2.3 score point drop, which dropped 27% in the severity of depression after the intervention. It is also interesting to note that the percentage drop in PHQ-9 scores associated with drops in the severity of the three items measured using the MBI-HSS survey. For instance, the pretest mean score for emotional exhaustion was 18.8, which represented the high end of low severity. This mean score dropped by 1.1 points, measuring -5.8% in the posttest. Additionally, the pretest mean score for depersonalization was 7.2, representing moderate depression; however, after the test, the mean score dropped 19.4%, measuring low at 5.8. Finally, the pretest mean score for personal accomplishment was 34.4, which represented moderate severity. The pretest mean score dropped to 30.3 (a 3.1 score point change of 9.0%), which indicated high severity.)

The researcher evaluated the survey results by combining data from Interview Questions 3–10. The dependent variables measured current employment status, financial income, disability status, sense of satisfaction, fulfillment, and empowerment. The researcher examined these variables to determine the multivariate analysis results and measure the degree of prediction between career-based workshops.

## Summary

In this study, participants were interviewed about their experiences in the workshops they attended. These workshops included career mentoring, professional attire, interview coaching, professional networking, job placement, resume writing, LinkedIn coaching, and technical training and certifications. The researcher measured participants’ personal satisfaction self-ratings in addition to analyzing the scoring measured by the survey instruments. The changes in the interview question response tables demonstrated that four out of the 10 participants moved from unemployed to employed status after the career-based workshop. Additionally, three of the 10 participants raised their income bracket from below $20,000 annually to between $20,000 and $45,000 annually. One participant self-reported moving from disability to no disability status, and three self-reported moving from low levels of personal satisfaction to moderate levels of personal satisfaction.

The researcher converted the answers to Interview Questions 3–6 and the survey responses to numeric representations, which aided in measuring personal satisfaction and life fulfillment pre and posttest. These values were inserted as mean scores into the multivariate equation detailed in the next section, and the researcher performed an analysis on the pre and posttest data. The following sections and tables demonstrate the results of this analysis.

## Multivariate Analysis Results

The following equation was used to conduct the multivariate analysis: 𝑦1,𝑦2,...,𝑦𝑚=𝑓(𝑥1,𝑥2,...,𝑥𝑛)y1,y2,...,ym=f(x1,x2,...,xn).

Model parameters (β0 + β1 + +βρ and σ) were estimated from data, where β0 is equal to the intercept. Table 8 represents the results of the multivariate analysis that was performed using participants’ pre and posttest interview responses.

Table 8  
*Multivariate Analysis Results*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Pretest | |  | Posttest | |  |  |  |
| Type of change |  | Baseline | Exit |  | Baseline | Exit |  | *p*-value | *Change* |
| Employment status |  | 60.4 | 83.2 |  | 10 | 43.6 |  | <.001 | +33.6 |
| Income |  | 54.8 | 82 |  | 8.8 | 38 |  | <.001 | +30 |
| Personal satisfaction |  | 44.8 | 67.6 |  | 6.8 | 25.2 |  | <.001 | +18.4 |
| Disability status |  | 38 | 72 |  | 3.6 | 18.8 |  | <.001 | +15.2 |

The results of the analysis indicated that the career-based workshops predicted a statistically significant increase in employment status from unemployed to employed. Additionally, the analysis indicated that the career-based workshops predicted a statistically significant increase in personal satisfaction and fulfillment levels among participants. Finally, the career-based workshops predicted a statistically significant change in disability status.

## Summary of Quantitative Analysis

All other dependent variables (income, employment status, and personal characteristics) were significantly impacted and predicted due to the workshop. The researcher discusses the potential reasons for these findings and they are congruent are not congruent to the review of the related literature in Chapter 5.

## Interview Results

Ten participants completed the interviews and answered the questions noted in Appendix A. The seventh interview question asked participants to detail whether they enjoyed the career-based workshop and why or why not. Six out of 10 participants responded positively, noting that they did enjoy the workshop. In contrast, two participants responded indifferently, and two responded negatively, saying they did not enjoy the workshop. For example, Participant 3 said she felt “the workshop did a good job of focusing on teaching us skills that were specific to our chosen career paths.” Participants were asked to specify their preferred fields of study before beginning the workshop. The researcher then adapted the workshop to include coaching material specific to those fields.

Participant 5 noted, “I liked the way we all had the chance to collaborate. It made it more enjoyable to do activities with others.” Participant 8 stated, “I enjoyed the workshop. It helped me understand what I could maybe expected to do in the kinds of jobs I will be looking for.” Furthermore, Participant 7 noted, “Even though I originally was apprehensive about taking part, and certain parts were a little boring, I enjoyed the workshop overall. It helped me feel more focused on my goals.” Participant 9 commented on the activities, noting that he “enjoyed the interactive career-based activities,” and Participant 10 said he “especially enjoyed having the chance to talk with other veterans.” Participant 1 was indifferent and stated, “I do not know. It was ok.” Participant 4 was also indifferent and noted, “It was not bad, but I did not particularly enjoy it.” Participant 2 reported a negative experience, stating, “The workshop felt boring and irrelevant.” Participant 6 also reported a negative experience, stating, “I felt like it was pointless, honestly. I did not like sitting through it.”

Interview Question 8 asked participants if they felt the workshop offered positive outcomes regarding their civilian employment opportunities. Participants 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 all commented positively. For example, Participant 3 stated:

Yes, I feel much more prepared to enter the workforce. I also feel like the activities we did help me practice skills I will use in jobs in my fields, and because of this, employers may look at me better.

Similarly, Participant 7 stated, “I feel like I can present a better cover letter now, and that might help me get a job.” In contrast, Participants 1, 4, and 10 were indifferent. For instance, Participant 1 stated, “I do not think the workshop taught us anything that will make a difference.” Participants 2 and 6 reported negatively. Participant 6 kept his arms crossed during the interview, noting, “If anything, this pointless workshop only took away time I could have been looking for a job.”

Interview Question 9 asked participants if they felt a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction after partaking in the career-based workshop. Participants 1 and 4 remained indifferent, Participants 2 and 6 reported negatively, and the remaining participants reported positively. Participant 8 stated, “Yes, it felt good to have the chance to put energy into my future, learn and grow.” Similarly, Participant 10 stated, “I loved feeling like and being a part of something that’s being done to help this whole situation.” Participant 4 said, “I did not feel any differently.” Participant 6 said, “I felt stupid being a part of such a dumb group.”

Interview Question 10 asked participants to describe if they felt the workshop would help them gain meaningful employment. The responses to Question 10 matched the nature of participants’ prior answers. For example, Participants 2 and 6 continued to respond negatively. With arms crossed, Participant 6 mentioned, “I will be lucky if I ever find meaningful employment, let alone employment just to put food on the table.” In contrast, Participant 3 commented, “Yes, I feel more hopeful about my future outlook. Now I have a better understanding of how I might be able to find work that feels important to me and that I enjoy.” Participant 5 also described, “It is imperative for me to feel meaning in what I do. It has been hard not having meaning, and this workshop at least gave me some things to think about.” Finally, Participant 10 noted, “I felt inspired hearing everyone else’s experience in the workshop together. That alone helped me feel a sense of meaning and remember how I can connect with others at work.” Participant 1 remained indifferent, staring to the side while answering the question and merely stating, “I do not know.”

## Summary of Themes

The researcher discarded the outlying responses and themes when conducting a thematic analysis on participants’ interview responses to avoid skewing the analysis. The researcher analyzed the data in NVivo by (a) assigning reference codes to keywords and phrases and (b) grouping reference codes to develop categories and over-arching themes. The following predominant themes were uncovered.

Self-satisfaction/growth**.** Six out of 10 participants attested to feeling optimistic about the career-based workshop and enjoyed the workshop. Two out of 10 participants felt indifferent, and two out of 10 participants felt negative. Participants who reported positive outcomes discussed their positive experiences related to social connection, career preparedness, a sense of meaning, satisfaction, confidence-boosting, and participation in interactive activities.

Social connection**.** Six out of the 10 participants reported feeling an increased sense of social connection, which was personally helpful. Some participants even noted that this sense of connection was anticipated to be helpful with their emotional health and their career-based pursuits and aspirations. Social connection and a sense of support were noted as a positive outcome of the workshop.

Career-specific preparedness. Five out of the 10 participants felt the workshop offered them specific tips or skills they could apply to their future careers in the field of their choice. For instance, one participant noted that the workshop helped her boost the cover letter writing skills specific to her industry. Another participant noted that the workshop made him aware of information that he did not know he would have to learn for his chosen industry.

Increased confidence**.** Five out of the 10 participants described increased confidence after partaking in the workshop. For some, this confidence was related to their ability to interact personally without a sense of stigma or judgment from others or without worrying about such a stigma. For other participants, this confidence resulted from increased knowledge of their own career-specific skills and talents that they could contribute to the workforce.

Interactive activities**.** Four out of the 10 participants specifically noted that they enjoyed the activities. All four participants attested to enjoying the interaction and hands-on workshop activities in some way. Three participants said the activities helped them stay engaged in the workshop and understand or apply the learned material.

In summary, the thematic findings uncovered herein reveal that most participants felt positive about their experience. Participants reported that the workshop impacted their sense of satisfaction, mental and emotional well-being, and career-preparedness.

## Summary and Transition

Chapter 4 detailed the study results, including participants’ responses to the PHQ-9 survey and the MBI-HSS survey and the mean scores of all items. The researcher also reported the mean results of participants’ responses to interview questions and a thematic analysis of interview responses. Additionally, this chapter summarized the multivariate analysis results, which revealed that the career-based workshops predicted improved employment, income, and satisfaction to a statistically significant degree and did not predict disability status to a statistically significant degree. The primary findings from the interview revealed that most participants responded positively to the workshops.

Common themes uncovered included (a) increased sense of satisfaction and social connection, (b) increased career-specific preparedness, (c) increased confidence, and (d) enjoyment of interactive activities. Chapter 5 explores the implications of these findings within the context of existing literature and how the findings can impact future transition programs and influence future research.