Agents of Change: Influence of Service Learning and Volunteerism on Career Choice among Military Personnel

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Agents of Change: Influence of Volunteerism on Career Choice among Military Personnel
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Introduction
Students Affairs now knows more about how to support military students & staff who transition to civilian colleges. About 1.2% of the nation’s population complete the contract for military services, yet often face higher numbers of unemployment rates. Engaging them in volunteerism often influences career choices, increases completion rates, and strengthens the community. This study explored the perspectives of military-affiliated students and staff whose career choices were influenced by volunteerism.

Research Question
What are the perspectives of military-affiliated students and staff who engaged in volunteerism or service learning and how do they describe its influence on their career choices?

Sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Volunteering</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations
- Be cognizant & sensitive
- Allow Vet orientations, clubs & groups in own area
- Develop Vet mentoring group
- Allow nonprofits to advertise on campus
- Career service workshops for Military only
- Strengthen service learning and counseling departments

Select References

Methods
Qualitative Narrative
- Snowball
- Fixed criteria
- IRB approval protocol
Interview
- Audio recorded confidential interviews, 30-40 minutes
- Consistent guided open-ended inquiries
Reflection
- Open written reflection on service validation
Coding
- Theme Inquiry
- Stripped/blocked data items
Thematic Analysis
- Used photos, documents, or electronic artifacts
- Participant’s reflections.
Building Trustworthiness
- Member Checking
- Reflective Journaling
Outcomes
- Cultural intersections between military and domestic service

Volunteer work & Career
- Half found volunteering helped career
- Half chose school or different careers

Sense of Purpose
- Look for a same purpose
- Feeling “lost” & want to go back if they could

Mission First
- Look for mission (meaning)
- Task Driven, organized.
- Gravitate to higher purpose

Missing Culture
- Miss comradery
- Look for team in job
- Gravitate toward Vet groups with Signs of affinity

Outcomes
- Cultural intersections between military and domestic service