DISSERTATION

CALLING AND MEANINGFUL WORK AMONG STUDENT MILITARY VETERANS: IMPACT ON WELL-BEING AND EXPERIENCES ON CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

CALLING AND MEANINGFUL WORK AMONG STUDENT MILITARY VETERANS: IMPACT ON WELL-BEING AND EXPERIENCES ON CAMPUS

The population of military veterans in the United States is now greater than 23 million people, and the number of veterans attending college is increasing as a result of the passing of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Very little research has examined the role of meaningful work in the experiences of student veterans who are transitioning from military service to civilian life and student life. The present study utilized a mixed-method design. Regression analyses examined the role that meaningful work and calling play in the levels of well-being reported by military veterans in college. This study also examined the role of social support in student veterans' well-being, and utilized qualitative research methods to gather data about student veterans' college experiences. Results indicated that calling, meaningful work and social support are significantly associated with the components of well-being. Social support was found to moderate the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect. Qualitative data revealed themes of frustration with college administrative procedures, positive regard for military service and its impact on college performance, and social relationships that are significantly impacted by veteran status.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The population of military veterans in the United States is now greater than 23 million people, and is growing (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2007a). In particular, the number of veterans attending college is increasing, and is expected to continue to increase, as a result of the passing of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. This bill significantly increases financial access to college for over 2 million military veterans; the extent of benefits depends on length of military service (Cook & Kim, 2009). In response to the growing number of veterans on college campuses and increasing awareness of the needs of student veterans, services specifically targeting student veterans also are increasing (Mangan, 2009; Cook & Kim, 2009). However, more research is needed to better understand the needs of student veterans.

A specific area of inquiry that has not been examined is the impact of having a sense of meaning and purpose in one's work for student military veterans. Although research has directly and indirectly demonstrated that perceiving work as meaningful is associated with better coping with deployment stress and deriving benefits from deployment (Britt, Dickinson, Moore, Castro, & Adler, 2007; Britt, Adler & Bartone, 2001), no research thus far has examined the role of meaningful work in the experiences of student veterans who are transitioning from military service to civilian life and student life. Closely related to meaningful work is the notion that work is a calling, defined as a transcendent summons to approach one's career in a way that aligns with a sense of purpose in life, toward prosocial ends (Dik & Duffy, 2009). The topics of meaningful work and calling are important to investigate because previous research has yielded evidence that veterans identify a loss of purpose in their work as a significant transition issue, and that some veterans pursue higher education in an attempt to re-establish a sense of self after separation from the military (Brenner, Gutierrez, Cornette, Betthauser, Bahraini, & Staves,

2008). The present study examined the role that meaningful work, along with the presence of, and search for, a calling, play in the levels of well-being reported by military veterans in college.

The Veteran Population

It is estimated that over 23 million veterans are living in the United States as of 2007 (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2007a). Much of the veteran population is comprised of older adults who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam era (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Because of the large numbers of military veterans who served during these time periods and their demographic characteristics, veterans are more likely than non-veterans to be male, white, and older (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008).

However, significant numbers of working age veterans from more recent military conflicts also comprise a growing facet of the veteran population. For example, 2.9 million veterans served during the Gulf War Era I, which describes the time from 1990 to August 2001. Additionally, 1.7 million people have served during the Gulf War II era, which describes the time period between September 2001 and the present (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Nearly two-thirds of people becoming veterans since 2001 are under the age of 35 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Since the Persian Gulf War in 1990, over 4.4 million people have separated from the military and joined the veteran population, and 83.6 percent of these are working full time (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007).

The military servicemembers who have served in more recent years constitute a different demographic than the veterans of previous eras (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). For example, 18% of armed service members who have served since September of 2001 are women; before 1990, the figure was 4 % (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Within the Army, the number of female soldiers increased from 9.8% in 1983 to 15.2% in 2003 (Maxfield, 2004). Significant

changes in racial and ethnic demographics are also occurring in the United States Military. For example, in the United States Army, the number of active duty soldiers who identify as Hispanic has increased from 3.8% in 1983 to 9.9% in 2003, while the number of black officers and warrant officers also has increased significantly. This increase is especially marked in the case of black warrant officers, whose numbers have increased from 6.0% in 1983 to 16.2% in 2003. Additionally, the number of white active duty soldiers has decreased from 64.0% in 1983 to 59.3% in 2003 (Maxfield, 2004). The demographic makeup of military veterans, therefore, can be expected to change in future years since increasing numbers of women and ethnic minorities are joining the Armed Forces (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). These demographic shifts are just beginning to emerge in the veteran population (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2001).

The number of military veterans in the United States is increasing as a result of Gulf War Era II conflicts (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Between 2000 and 2008, over 2,236,000 people separated from the military (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2007a). This is an average of 248,000 people separating from the military each year. In 2009, over 280,000 people have been projected to separate from the military (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2007a). It is evident from demographic data and changing trends in military demographics that the veteran population in the United States is and will continue to be a large, and growing, group.

Veterans in transition: Military service to civilian life. Virtually all servicemembers who are separating from the military experience a major life transition (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007). The challenges facing military veterans as they transition from military service to civilian life are numerous and significant (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007). In resources for clinicians, this transition is sometimes conceptualized as a cultural transition (Westwood, Black, Kammuber, & McFarlane, 2008). The challenges of separating

from the military include transitioning from a structured environment to a non-structured environment (Mares & Rosencheck, 2004), problems with family relationships (Dekel, Goldblatt, & Keidar, 2005), and identity issues related to separating from military service (Clewell, 1987, as summarized in Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007).

A significant transition issue for military veterans is the loss of friendship and camaraderie with fellow servicemembers (Grieger, Cozza, Ursano, Hoge, Martinez, Engel, & Wain, 2006). The bonds among servicemembers, especially those who serve in combat together, are characterized by intense loyalty and an interdependence that includes a willingness to risk one's life to save another servicemember (Grieger, Cozza, Ursano, Hoge, Martinez, Engel, & Wain, 2006). As soldiers transition to civilian life, they often are involved in relationships that are of a very different nature than those they experienced in the military. They often feel isolated and misunderstood in the midst of civilian culture (Grieger, Cozza, Ursano, Hoge, Martinez, Engel, & Wain, 2006). Family can sometimes add to the stress of the transition to civilian life because of their lack of awareness of differences between military and civilian culture (Westwood, Black, Kammuber, & McFarlane, 2008). Additionally, during their time in the military, servicemembers are taught that they are different from civilians (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007). This can cause problems with both connecting to people who have not served in the military and being reluctant to seek help from people who have not served in the military, whom veterans often perceive as being unable to understand the characteristics and challenges of veterans (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007). Collectively, these challenges are related to the process of transitioning from military service to civilian life, and are common to most veterans. They do not include additional challenges, such as physical, psychological, and neurological injuries and disorders (Sandberg, Bush, & Martin, 2009; Westwood, Black, & McLean, 2002),

illnesses and health problems (Spaulding, Eddy, & Chandras, 1997), and financial problems (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007).

Military veterans attempt to cope with the stressors of transition in a variety of ways. In a study by Brenner, Gutierrez, Cornette, Betthauser, Bahraini, and Staves (2008), some veterans described engaging in proactive methods of reestablishing a sense of self; these included returning to school, getting help, reconnecting to family members, and taking on new hobbies. This study supported the assertion by Joiner (2005) that people who were at the greatest risk for suicide exhibited three characteristics: (1) They had developed the ability for suicide (through exposure to violence, familiarity with weapons, and habituation to pain); (2) They perceived themselves as burdensome; and (3) They perceived themselves as being different than, or isolated from, their peers and family (a status known as failed belonging). While specialized services such as vocational rehabilitation for injured veterans are available and commonly known, accessible and attractive forms of general support for understanding and addressing the issues accompanying transition to civilian life are commonly perceived by veterans as not being readily available (Westwood, Black, Kammuber, & McFarlane, 2008).

In the study conducted by Brenner et al. (2008), one aspect of "burdensomeness" that emerged through interviews with veterans was a perceived loss of purpose and meaning in their work. Importantly, veterans often perceived their civilian work activities as having less value and importance than their military activities (Brenner et al., 2008). As the authors summarize,

> In response to questions about burdensomeness, the veterans interviewed consistently spoke about a loss of sense of self post-discharge…Often the loss of self was related to a decrease in status or purpose upon return to civilian life. Despite ambivalence about some of the activities in which they had engaged,

> veterans reported feeling a sense of importance about their mission overseas relative to their civilian avocational and occupational activities (p. 218).

These findings suggest that loss of a sense of purpose is related to adjustment problems for veterans, but more research in this area is needed.

Mental health concerns in the veteran population. A significant number of Gulf War Era II veterans are experiencing mental health symptoms (Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health, 2007). The Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health, for example, found that 24% of returning veterans report problems with alcohol abuse, 27% report symptoms of depression, and 43% report problems with anger (Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health, 2007). Additionally, Grieger et al. (2006) found that 12.0% of the veterans in their study met criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) seven months after separation from the military, while 9.3% meet criteria for Major Depression. In another study, Hoge, Terhakopian, Castro, Messer, and Engel (2007) found that 16.6% of their sample met screening criteria for PTSD.

PTSD is an important factor to consider when examining transition issues among military veterans because of its high prevalence rates (Hoge, et al., 2007; Grieger, et al., 2006). PTSD has a significant impact on both military veterans and their communities; research has demonstrated an association between PTSD symptoms and increased work absenteeism (Hoge, et al., 2007) and poor work performance (Hoge, et al., 2007).

In examining PTSD and its impact on veterans' personal and professional lives, it is important to assess symptom severity after separation from the military, because mental health problems frequently manifest themselves months after separation has occurred. In one study, Grieger et al. (2006) examined the onset of psychological problems among battle-injured

soldiers. The majority of soldiers (78.8%) with PTSD or depression at 7 months did not meet criteria for either PTSD or depression at 1 month after the incident. While the authors associated much of the development of PTSD or depression to the severity of battle injury, they also noted stressors that may play a role in these trends, such as returning home and anticipating starting work in the civilian world. This result has relevance in examining the manifestations of psychological symptoms among all veterans who are transitioning to civilian life, whether or not they are injured.

Despite the high rates of mental health problems, returning veterans often are reluctant to seek mental health care (Burnam, Meredith, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2009). Concerns include fear that admitting a mental health problem is a sign of weakness, concern that utilization of mental health services will have negative career repercussions (this is especially true of active duty military, who are required to disclose mental health treatment), skepticism about the effectiveness of treatment, and concerns about the side effects of medications (Burnam, Meredith, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2009). Hoge et al. (2004) surveyed Army and Marine Corps members about mental health problems and their perceptions of seeking mental health treatment and found concerns paralleling the ones described above. In the study, significant concerns and barriers were identified, including concern about how seeking mental health treatment may harm their career (50% of respondents who met criteria for PTSD, generalized anxiety, or depression). Other concerns included being seen as weak (65%), being blamed for the problem by leadership (51%), being treated differently by superiors (63%), and unit members having less confidence in them (59%). Although this study examined active duty military servicemembers, it is likely that these types of concerns also would be salient to recently separated servicemembers.

Several authors have suggested that interventions related to employment may be an effective way of indirectly improving the mental health problems among veterans. For example, Brenner et al. (2008) recommended vocational programs and employment-related educational programs as possible interventions related to burdensomeness. Educational programs also hold the potential benefit of being less stigmatizing than mental health services, which veterans are wary of seeking (Burnam, Meredith, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2009). A potentially rich arena for providing employment services to veterans in a way that will impact overall well-being is on the campuses of institutions of higher education.

Veterans, Employment, and Meaningful Work

Veterans and employment. Since the start of the conflicts in the Persian Gulf in 1990, over 3.6 million people have separated from the military and joined the working population as military veterans (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007). Employment is a central concern of recently separated servicemembers, over one third of whom began their job search before separation from the military (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007). Veterans comprise a significant sector of the working population, and bring advanced skills and experiences with high responsibility tasks to the American workforce (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007).

However, despite the emphasis that veterans place on working as a goal and the skills that veterans bring to the workforce, veterans still struggle to find work in the first few years after separating from the military (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007; National Center for PTSD & Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 2004). The Employment Histories Survey conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates (2007) utilized surveys and interviews with 1,941 recently separated servicemembers. "Recently

separated servicemembers" (RSS) refers to people who have separated from the military within one to three years of completing the survey (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007). The results indicated that unemployment is a significant problem for RSS, who experienced an average unemployment rate of 9.5 percent, in contrast to an unemployment rate of 4.3 percent for a matched comparison group (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007).

Issues relating to veteran employment are important because employment can hold a number of psychological benefits for military veterans. Steady employment is a good predictor of long term adjustment and functioning for veterans in the civilian world, partially because employment provides meaningful activity, eases financial stress, and creates occasions for the development of friendships and supportive relationships (National Center for PTSD & Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 2004). Work can bring many psychological benefits to the employed, including enhancement of social interactions, self-esteem enhancement, and financial stability and independence. On the other hand, work stress and poor work performance can play a role in the development of psychopathology, or can exacerbate existing symptoms (Karney, Ramchand, Osilla, Caldarone, & Burns, 2008). Therefore, finding ways to encourage positive and productive employment experiences for military veterans is an important facet of transition support services.

In an effort to address these employment challenges for RSS the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor provide employment services, but these services are not widely utilized. All RSS have access to educational and career counseling services for six months after separation (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007). Since 1990, approximately 28% of servicemembers utilized the Department of Labor's Transition

Assistance Program for Veterans. This program offers career-finding assistance (connections with employers, resume assistance, etc.) and career decision making services (assistance in identifying potentially stimulating career paths) to RSS (U.S. Department of Labor, 2009). However, the employment challenges that veterans face are multifaceted.

An examination of the literature relating to veterans' perceptions of how their military service impacts employability paints a complex picture. Veterans identify military experience as helpful in preparing them for the world of civilian work, but they also perceive that they have few concrete, transferrable job skills. Kelley (1972), who interviewed 100 Vietnam era veterans, found that a significant number of them regarded their military experience as "greatly helpful" in developing "more maturity" (63%), "Taking responsibility on the job" (53%), and helping them to develop "more self-confidence" (47%). Interestingly, 53% of the sample, when asked about how their military experience "provided job skills," stated that their military experience was "not [helpful] at all" in this realm. Therefore, it seems that military service was regarded by veterans in this study as helpful in personal development that could improve work performance, but not directly helpful with employability.

In addition to problems with direct transferrable skills, veterans also identify interpersonal issues, psychological problems, and transition issues as playing a role in their struggles to find work. Veterans often attribute their employment problems to problems with authority, anger and irritability, psychological and physical problems, and substance abuse (National Center for PTSD & Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 2004).

Veterans and education. One way that veterans work to find meaning and purpose in their work, and to re-establish a sense of self, is to pursue higher education (Brenner et al., 2008). Education is highly valued by veterans. Focus groups with veterans have shown a consistent high

regard for education and the view that education is a priority (Cook & Kim, 2009). In fact, many servicemembers identify the opportunity to earn educational benefits as a primary motivation to join the military (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009). Approximately 27% of servicemembers have utilized their educational benefit since 1990 (Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates, 2007). With the passing of new legislation increasing educational benefits for veterans, this number is expected to increase (Cook & Kim, 2009).

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (also known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill) provides extensive educational assistance to over two million veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This Bill is expected to create a significant increase in the number of veterans attending college in the coming years (Cook & Kim, 2009). In fact, more than 100,000 military veterans are expected to begin college in 2010 using their benefits from the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (also known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill); this number of students is a 30 percent increase from the previous year, and continued increases are expected (Brown, 2009). The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides extensive financial assistance to veterans who go to college, including covering up to 100% of tuition, providing a monthly housing stipend, and providing up to $1,000 each year for books and materials; the level of benefits that veterans are eligible for depends on the length of military service. For example, people who serve for 36 months or more receive 100% of available benefits; people who serve for 12 months are eligible for 60% of total benefits (Cook & Kim, 2009). Of the veterans that are using educational or training benefits provided by the VA for college or university study, two-thirds described their benefits as "very or extremely important in helping their educational or career goals" (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2001, p. 3). The combination of increased financial support and a high regard for education will lead to significant increases in the number

of student veterans on college campuses in the coming years. With this increase, a corresponding increase in the need for veteran services will occur.

Traditionally, institutions of higher education have not been particularly responsive to the needs of student veterans (Cook & Kim, 2009). Veterans constitute an "invisible minority" on college campuses (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007) because they are often non-traditional students and first generation college students. The needs of student veterans have not begun to be exhaustively investigated until recent years (Mangan, 2009; Cook & Kim, 2009). In response to the growing student veteran population and increasing awareness of the challenges facing student veterans, institutions of higher education are working to develop more "veteran-friendly" campuses and administrative procedures and to better understand and respond to the diverse needs of student veterans (Mangan, 2009; Cook & Kim, 2009). This campaign for improvement is still in progress. Currently only 22% of postsecondary institutions that have veteran services programs are providing transition assistance to veterans (Cook & Kim, 2009). Currently, 49% of postsecondary institutions are providing employment assistance to veterans (Cook & Kim, 2009). Among public institutions, 54% of two year institutions and 58% of four year institutions are providing employment assistance to veterans (Cook & Kim, 2009). While services to veterans are becoming more accessible, especially among public institutions, improvements in both provision of services and knowledge of student veterans' challenges are needed.

Meaning and purpose in military service. One aspect of employment that has not been sufficiently examined is the role of a sense of meaning and purpose in veterans' work lives. Research has pointed to the importance of meaning and purpose in active military service (e.g., Brenner, et al., 2008), but more research is needed to examine the role of meaningful work for military veterans, and how meaningful work may impact veterans' transition to civilian life.

A variety of studies have directly or indirectly demonstrated the importance of meaning and purpose in military service. For many servicemembers, motivation to join the military is impacted by a combination of factors, some of which related to a desire to "serve one's country" (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009; Westwood, Black, Kammuber, & McFarlane, 2008), which indicates a desire to be of service to one's community. In another study, Britt, Dickinson, Moore, Castro, and Adler (2007) examined the relationship between morale and being engaged in meaningful work among U.S. soldiers involved in a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. The authors operationalized morale as conceptually related to emotional well-being, yet distinct in that morale also was characterized by "motivation and enthusiasm to perform well within a specified context" (p. 35). The authors found that servicemembers who perceived themselves as being engaged in meaningful and important work while in Kosovo experienced higher levels of morale (well-being and motivation) than those who did not. In a similar study, Thomas, Kammuber, and Layes (1997) found that soldiers who were able to extract meaning from their deployment adjusted more effectively to the rigors of deployment than those who viewed their deployment as a financial windfall or an opportunity to escape home (as cited in Westwood, Black, Kammuber, & McFarlane, 2008).

Research also has demonstrated that perceiving oneself as engaged in meaningful activity while deployed can yield benefits after the deployment is over. Britt, Adler and Bartone (2001) found that for military service members, involvement in meaningful work during the deployment period was strongly associated with deriving benefits from the deployment after the end of the deployment period. This study also showed that the perception of having been involved in enriching experiences while deployed were associated with deriving benefits from the deployment. While this study focused specifically on deriving benefits from stressful events

(deployment), it has relevance to the subject of meaningful work for military personnel and military veterans because it demonstrates that for military personnel, perceiving oneself as being engaged in meaningful and important activities can contribute to effective stress management, well-being, and motivation.

Calling and Meaningful Work

The importance of meaning and purpose in work has been discussed for centuries. Work has been conceptualized in several different ways. It was viewed by the Greeks as a curse, and as an impediment to living a full life. Medieval European society espoused a similar view, regarding work as an obstacle to, and distraction from, a life in contemplation of God. The Renaissance saw a significant change in this thinking, emphasizing that people can become more like God, the "Supreme Maker" and "Mightiest Architect" through productive work (Hardy, 1990). Serow (1994) described how Martin Luther expanded the idea of calling as being pertinent not just for religious vocations, but as potentially relating to an honest area of work. Serow also asserted that the original concept of calling was closely tied to a sense of duty, and that in 16th century society value was placed on unconditionally accepting one's calling.

Empirical research regarding work as calling has increased in recent years, but the development of knowledge regarding calling has been impeded by disparate working definitions of calling. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) emphasized importance of developing calling and vocation, conceptualizing three potential perspectives on one's work: a job, a career, or a calling. People who regard their work as a job approach their work primarily as a means to an end, and emphasize the job's utility in fulfilling desires outside of work. People who consider their work to be a career place importance on measures of work success, such as promotion, and exhibit more personal involvement in their work than people who regard their

work as a job. With regard to calling, Bellah et al. described people with callings as also strongly emphasizing their work; furthermore, their motivation to engage in their work relates to the social contribution that they perceive their work as making and to the fulfillment that work brings. For people with a calling, less emphasis is placed on work a means to acquiring material goods or professional advancement (Bellah et al., 1985).

In an attempt to gather empirical data related to Bellah et al.'s (1985) three work orientations, Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997) measured the constructs of work as a job, career, or calling with a sample of employees (n = 196) from a variety of work roles at two job sites. The authors found that differences in the perception of work as one of these three orientations did not reduce to differences in other variables, such as demographics or job type. Even within one job type (administrative assistants), the distribution of perceptions of work as a job, career, or calling was relatively even. They also found that people who perceived their job as a calling missed fewer days of work than those with other work orientations. Research also has demonstrated that people can actively craft the work that they already engage in for the sake of deriving more meaning from their work or increasing the perceived social benefit of the work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). These authors asserted that even people who hold low prestige jobs, such as hospital cleaners, can approach their work in ways that facilitate meaningfulness.

In response to the problems created by a lack of a widely accepted definition of calling, Dik and Duffy (2009) presented multidimensional working definitions of calling and vocation that took into account previous conceptualizations. The authors characterized calling and vocation as involving "an ongoing process of evaluating the purpose and meaningfulness of activities within a job and their contribution to the common good or the welfare of others" (Dik

& Duffy, 2009, p. 429). They also asserted that these constructs relate to one's approach to and perspective on work rather than to the type of work. Formally, they defined calling as "a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation." (p. 427) This definition consists of three components: (1) a transcendent summons, (2) a sense in which work aligns with a broader sense of purpose or meaning in life, and (3) other-oriented, prosocial values as motivation. In addition to this working definition of calling, the authors defined vocation as "an approach to a particular life role that is oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that hold other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation (p. 428). Some overlap between the constructs of calling and vocation exist, but they are distinct constructs in that calling involves a perception that the impetus to approach the work role originates outside of the self; vocation is not characterized by this transcendent summons. Dik and Duffy (2009) assert that while calling and vocation are often associated with work tasks, the constructs can be applicable to a variety of life roles outside of the traditional work setting, such as parenthood.

In addition to proposing these definitions, Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy (in press) operationalized Dik and Duffy's (2009) definitions with an instrument, the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ). The CVQ is an assessment tool that includes subscales designed to measure each of the three dimensions of calling proposed by Dik and Duffy (2009). The instrument also yields subscales related to both the presence of and search for calling. Therefore, each of the three dimensions of the definition is comprised of two parts: presence and search. The CVQ, therefore, assesses six different scales: Transcendent Summons (Presence);

Transcendent Summons (Search); Purpose/Meaning in Work (Presence); Purpose/Meaning in Work (Search); Prosocial Orientation (Presence); and Prosocial Orientation (Search). Both the Presence and Search subscale scores can be summed to form CVQ-Presence and CVQ-Search total scores.

This analysis did not demonstrate that presence and search dimensions are orthogonal; this may indicate that both presence of and search for calling may involve a common value trait, such as a prosocial orientation, which did not yield distinct presence and search dimensions (Eldridge, 2007). This also supports Dik and Duffy's (2009) assertion that calling involves an ongoing process. Therefore, one may experience a presence of calling while at the same time being open to further calling experiences, thereby endorsing items relating to both presence of and search for calling. Additionally, a person who has a calling may endorse items related to search for calling because of a continual search for ways to maintain her or his calling.

In a parallel realm of inquiry, the construct of meaningfulness also has been examined with specific regard to work. The Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI), developed by Steger, Dik & Duffy (under review), assesses five dimensions of meaningful work: Work Comprehension, Greater Good Motivations, Meaningful Work Salience, Work Purpose, and Meaningful Work Search. It is evident from these descriptions that some overlap with the constructs of calling and vocation exist, though the WAMI does not assess for the presence of a transcendent summons.

Research using the WAMI has yielded interesting findings. Steger, Dik and Duffy (under review) demonstrated that meaningful work is positively correlated with presence of meaning in life, life satisfaction, and job satisfaction, and is negatively correlated with anxiety, hostility, and depression. Other research has demonstrated that meaningfulness (in a general sense) is

negatively correlated with fear, shame, and depression, and correlates positively with a variety of indices of healthy psychological functioning such as life satisfaction and joy (Steger, Frasier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Therefore, finding meaning in one's work can be expected to contribute to one's overall sense of well-being.

While research into career choice and development is robust, this realm of psychology is often compartmentalized and not heeded in other areas of psychological research (Blustein, 2008). In a review of the literature relating to the role of work in psychological well-being, Blustein (2008) asserted that work factors play an important role in the development and maintenance of psychological well-being, and calls for more recognition of work factors in understanding people's levels of well-being. Discussion of these issues, however, requires a more thorough discussion of the concept of well-being.

Well-Being

Well-being has been discussed in relation to work factors (Blustein, 2008), but well-being itself is a complex subject of research. Well-being is a concept that relates to optimal experience and functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Psychological inquiry into well-being is, in part, a reaction to the field's historical emphasis on pathology and maladaptive functioning. Myers and Diener (1995) found that psychological articles focusing on negative states and functioning outnumber articles examining positive states and healthy functioning by a ratio of 17 to 1 (as quoted in Diener, Su, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Ryff and Singer (1998) asserted that health must be conceptualized as "more than the absence of illness," and work to develop a concept of positive human health that takes into account both psychological and physical factors. Their model includes leading a life characterized by purpose and having a quality connection to other people. The authors note that relatively little research has been conducted to investigate the

dimensions of positive human health. Clearly, research examining the dimensions of positive human functioning is needed.

Recent literature has focused on two primary approaches to conceptualizing well-being. The first is hedonic well-being, which involves pleasure and positive affect. The second is eudaimonic well-being, which involves the fulfillment of human potential and the derivation of meaning and purpose from life pursuits (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Subjective well-being, which is one area of research in the domain of well-being, has been described as being comprised of "emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction" (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999, p. 277). This means of framing subjective well-being takes into account both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being, and provides a template for empirical examination of the dimensions of well-being. The authors suggest examining the components of subjective well-being separately. Examining these dimensions, along with positive relationships, can provide a well-rounded and theoretically grounded way to examine a person's level of well-being. This assertion is supported by Samman's (2007) proposal that well-being can be examined by measuring four concepts that tap into both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being: meaning in life, relatedness, life satisfaction, and happiness. The present study will examine all four of these domains in an effort to ascertain a global determination of participants' levels of well-being.

Theoretical Considerations

Of the theoretical models that have been proposed to guide research on military personnel and the process of meaning making, two are particularly relevant for the present study. First, Life-Course Theory, developed by Elder (1991) and endorsed by Gade (1991) as a theory helpful to research related to military personnel, provides a rich template for understanding the

challenges and experiences of veterans. Second, Helen Ebaugh's (1977, 1988) Role-Exit Theory provides a descriptive and empirically supported model for understanding the psychological and social aspects of leaving a central life role.

Life course theory. Gade (1991) argued for the development of a model for understanding the life decisions, experiences, and development of military personnel. He criticized the lack of theoretical conceptualizations in the military personnel literature, stating that this lack of theoretical guidance has led to an identification of trends and relationships among variables (for example, a positive correlation between the national unemployment rate and military enlistment rates) without an adequate framework for understanding these relationships or the mechanisms at work that are guiding these trends. The author proposed the Life-Course model to fill this gap.

Life-Course theory asserts that significant experiences can affect one's life on the levels of both long-term trajectories and short-term paths. It emphasizes that one's experiences occur in the context events that hold historical and cultural significance, and that these broader contexts are important to understanding a person's personal experiences. Two terms are of particular importance in life-course theory: trajectories and transitions. Trajectories are "the dynamic paths that major aspects of a person's life follow. Careers and marriages are examples of trajectories that have relevance for military personnel research" (Gade, 1991, p. 191). Transitions are shifts and changes that occur within trajectories; examples relevant to the military population include joining the military, being deployed, separating from the military, and sometimes transitioning to college.

The life-course model provides a dynamic and effective paradigm for understanding military service's impact on the lives of veterans. This model takes into account three major

factors as influencing the individual: family influences, historical influences, and developmental timing of military service. These factors exert an ongoing and dynamic influence on an individual. This model also asserts that these influences provide the context for individual development. Individual development is conceptualized in the following way: individual pre-disposing conditions influence individual in-services experiences, which in turn influence life-course outcomes.

This model is helpful in accounting for a wide variety of factors that may influence the experiences of military personnel and military veterans. For example, this model would take into account the impact of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on military personnel's perspectives on military service. It may also call researchers to examine the role of economic factors on the employment experiences of recently separated servicemembers. This model is therefore valuable in that it calls researchers to capture the totality of factors that may influence military personnel's and veterans' experiences and decision making.

However, the Life-Course model is broad-based and complex, and is a difficult model to test among specific subsets of the veteran population. It does not imply directional hypotheses, and may be more useful for post-hoc analyses than for the development of predictive theoretical models. A review of the literature related to life-course theory and military personnel by MacLean and Elder (2007) showed that while some questions have been answered by utilizing this model, its use has yielded a very complex picture. To quote the authors:

> If there is one thing that the past decade and a half of research shows, it is that there is no one answer to the question "what is the effect of military service?" nor even to the question "what is the association between military service and the life course?" The answers to these questions depend on the outcome under consideration and the era and

> timing of service in people's lives. They depend on whether or not veterans saw combat, utilized benefits, or served as officers. They also depend on the personal and family resources that veterans brought to their service, and on the family and friends to whom these veterans returned (p. 188).

The authors pose a large number of unanswered research questions, and then assert that the data available to examine these important issues are limited. This model provides an effective overarching template for understanding the experiences of military personnel and veterans, and can provide a theoretical basis for comparison of different cohorts of military personnel, but is difficult to directly apply to the psychological processes of student veterans.

Nonetheless, this model is relevant to the present study in several ways. The life-course model asserts that a variety of factors can affect transition outcomes, including family/social support and educational factors. This study attempts to examine several different types of influences on military veterans, including social support and the presence of meaning and purpose, which has been shown to be important to veterans' transition experiences (Brenner et al., 2008).

Another possibility that MacLean and Elder (2007) introduce is that "social relations may mediate or moderate the effects of combat on health… the effects of traumatic exposure at least partly depend on the social networks to which veterans return" (p. 182). The role of social support in the well-being and transition experiences of military veterans is very important, as veterans who feel socially isolated or who perceive themselves as a burden experience greater levels of psychological distress (Brenner et al., 2008). The possibility that social support moderates the relationship between work factors and well-being is examined in the present study.

Role-exit theory. Helen Ebaugh was a Catholic Nun who left the cloister in 1973 (Ebaugh, 1977). She encountered a lack of research related to exiting a significant life role, and endeavored to develop a theory that would describe "what it means to exit a major role and learn to deal with a past identity" (Ebaugh, 1988; as quoted in Drahota, 1996, p. 40). This theory has been used to examine the experiences of several population groups, including professional athletes (Drahota, 1996), nuns (Ebaugh, 1977), and the marriage problems of military personnel following extended deployment (Gambardella, 2008).

Ebaugh (1988) defines "role exit" as "the process of disengagement from a role that is central to one's self-identity and the reestablishment of an identity in a new role that takes into account one's ex-role" (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 1). Ebaugh's model of the role-exit process is comprised of four major stages.

The first stage is described as "First Doubts" in which an individual begins to question his or her commitment to existing roles. This can be influenced by a variety of interpersonal and intrapersonal factors such as burnout, feelings of isolation, the influence of others, and significant changes within the organization of which they are a part.

The second stage, "Seeking Alternatives," involves an examination of viable alternatives to continuing in the present role. Factors that can influence this stage include the costs and benefits of exiting the role, level of discontent with the current role, an awareness of the ability to exit the role, a shifting of social identification and social reference groups, and the influence of friends, family, and society as a whole. This stage is, in part, characterized by experimenting with the idea of a major role change and gauging one's own reactions and the reactions of others to the possibility of this change.

The third stage, "The Turning Point," is the point at which the current role is effectively exited. Various factors can encourage this occurrence, including financial and logistical changes, a "last straw" event, time related factors such as aging, the identification of justifications or excuses for leaving the role, or the identification of significant losses associated with remaining in the role in question (such as the loss of one's life, one's health, or damage to significant relationships).

The fourth stage of the Role-Exit, "Creating the Ex-Role," is a process of shifting one's identity from being primarily comprised of the central role to this central role (which has been exited) being only a facet of one's identity. Ebaugh (1988) emphasized two major points related to this stage. First, one cannot completely disengage from the expectations, norms, and identity associated with the role one is leaving. A tension occurs between one's past self, present identity, and future plans. Second, and related to the first point, the process of creating an ex-role is not a psychological so much as a social process. Friends, family members, and society are likely to relate to the person in a way that reflects expectations or beliefs related to their former role. One's former role is not only a part of a person in a psychological sense, but also in a social sense that affects one's relationships and the way one is perceived by society. These two points are summed up in what Ebaugh calls a role residual or "hangover identity" (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 149).

The stage of creating an "Ex-Role" is comprised of six major challenges. The first is presenting oneself in a way that is reflective of one's new identity. The second and third challenges are managing the social reactions of others and managing intimate relationships (this can be especially challenging for some types of role exit, such as ex-nuns entering sexual relationships or transgendered persons entering intimate relationships). The fourth and fifth

challenges, respectively, are shifting friendship networks and relating to others who have exited a similar role or are currently in one's previous role. The final challenge is managing the effects of one's role residual; Ebaugh found that this was especially salient for people exiting highly visible roles (Ebaugh, 1988).

Ebaugh (1988) included several ex-military personnel in her sample, so this theory was developed, in part, with the experiences of military personnel in mind. Thus, it is reasonable to utilize role exit theory to better understand the experiences of military veterans transitioning to civilian life. In a qualitative study with military personnel who had recently returned from deployment, Gambardella (2008) utilized a role exit theory framework to work with couples who were experiencing marital discord. The author specifically drew from Ebaugh's constructs of disengagement, de-identification, and re-socialization to develop intervention strategies with couples. This was done by developing interview questions, worksheets, and journal entry prompts that were informed by Ebaugh's (1988) Role-Exit theory stages. These interventions were designed to assess the nature of post-deployment role conflicts and to educate the couples about how role conflicts could lead to relationship problems. Gambardella (2008) found the reports of relationship among the couples "encouraging" (p. 172); six out of the ten couples reported improvement in the marital relationship. This study indicates that role exit theory is a useful framework for understanding the experiences of military personnel returning from deployment and reintegrating into their families. By extension, role exit theory can be useful for understanding the experiences of military veterans who are transitioning into civilian life and reintegrating into their families and communities. It is important to note that Ebaugh's (1988) Role-Exit conceptualization was designed to describe the process of voluntary exit from a role; for veterans who separate from the military involuntarily, some aspects of this theory may not be

applicable. However, Ebaugh (1988) asserts that the voluntariness of role exit is not a dichotomous variable but rather a continuous variable, influenced by a wide variety of factors. Role exit theory was used to guide the development of the questions and the analysis template for the qualitative component of this study, and was used as a framework for interpreting the results of both the qualitative and quantitative components of the present study.

The Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study is to understand the role of calling and meaningful work in the reported levels of well-being of veteran college students, and to better understand the transition experiences of veteran college students. This study included a qualitative component and a quantitative component.

This qualitative component sought to examine the social, academic, and financial experiences of military veterans who are enrolled in college. The questions asked were informed by Ebaugh's (1988) Role-Exit Theory, and were designed to elicit data about veteran's subjective experiences of the academic, social, and financial realms of college, and the impact of their military experiences on their college experiences.

The quantitative component of the present study sought to examine the role of calling, meaningful work, and social support in the well-being of military veterans. The role of calling and meaningful work in the well-being of military veterans is a vital topic to investigate because prior investigations have yielded evidence that veterans identify a loss of purpose in their work as a significant transition issue (Brenner et al., 2008). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that some veterans pursue higher education in an attempt to re-establish a sense of self after separation from the military (Brenner et al., 2008). Therefore, this study examined the hypotheses that both calling and meaningful work are significant predictors of the components of

well-being, which include positive relationships, meaning in life, positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction.

The present study measured presence of, and search for, calling among military veterans, and examined three of the five dimensions of meaningful work proposed by Steger, Dik and Duffy (under review). These variables were examined in relation to the criterion variables of life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life; these criterion variables have been found to be important components of well-being (Samman, 2007; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Furthermore, post-deployment support was assessed to gain a sense of the level of support that student veterans perceive, and to examine how this perceived support may relate to the criterion variables described above. It was hypothesized that social support would predict life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life.

The present study also sought to investigate the possibility proposed by MacLean and Elder (2007) that social interaction may moderate the effect of combat on health. MacLean and Elder asserted that social support may moderate the relationship between the effects of combat and mental health variables such as PTSD, and research has supported this claim (Johnson et al., 1997; as cited in MacLean and Elder, 2007). In effect, this research demonstrates that social support plays an important role in the mental health of military veterans. The authors noted that "For the most part, the prevailing explanation for the observed association posits that extensive social support exerts a protective effect against negative health outcomes" (p. 190). The authors then assert that the causal relationship may be in the opposite direction- that people who have fewer psychological problems may effectively elicit more social support.

In either case, the role of social support cannot be overlooked in examining the relationship between calling, or meaningful work, and well-being. As described above, social support has been shown to play an role in the examination of well-being, and it is likely that someone with a high sense of calling would report power levels of well-being if they perceive themselves as having low levels of social support. Therefore, social support was examined as a moderator between calling, and meaningful work, and the components of well-being.

The moderation models were developed using guidelines proposed by Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004). The present study examined whether post-deployment social support moderates the relationship between calling or meaningful work and the criterion variables of life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, meaning in life, and positive relationships. It was hypothesized that a high level of perceived social support increases the strength of the relationships between both calling and meaningful work and the criterion variables of positive affect, meaning in life, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. It also was hypothesized that a high level of social support would decrease the strength of the expected negative relationships between calling and meaningful work and the criterion variable of negative affect. This moderation hypothesis is depicted in Figure 1.

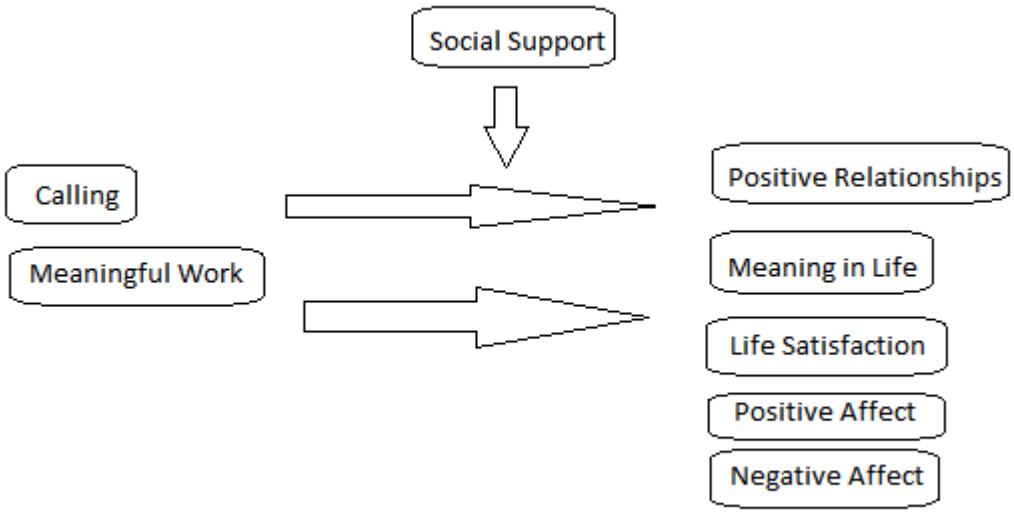

Figure 1. Moderation hypotheses tested.

Chapter 2: Method

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of military veterans who are college students. To be eligible for the study, a respondent was required to be a veteran of one of the branches of the United States military, and to be enrolled as a student at an institution of higher education. This sample was accessed through the Veterans Services liaisons at a variety of higher education institutions, who oversee e-mail listservs specifically for student veterans. Over 20 institutions with Veterans Services offices were contacted to participate in this survey; these institutions represented a variety of geographic areas, including the west coast, the western mountains, the northeast, the southeast, the Midwest, and the southwest. Approximately 12 institutions agreed to disseminate the survey to their veteran listserv. The number of schools that disseminated the survey is not precisely known because some schools may have disseminated the survey to student veterans without explicitly informing the author that they were doing so. As the survey was anonymous, data about specific school enrollment was not collected.

Descriptive statistics. Data were collected from approximately 12 universities nationally through the Veterans' Listerv coordinators at those universities. Respondents were asked to list their home state when they joined the military, and 31 states are represented in the sample with one respondent having served in the armed forces of another country. Surveys were submitted by 208 respondents, 127 (61%) of which participated in the raffle for a gift card. Of the 208 respondents, 70 (34%) did not fill out the survey; their surveys were submitted blank, presumably to enter the raffle without taking the time to answer the survey questions. Of the 137 that responded, all but one (99.3%) were students at four year universities, and 82 (60%) were

transfer students. The mean age of respondents was 31.5 (*SD* = 8.035), and the median age was 29. Additional demographic characteristics of the sample are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	Value	*N*	Percentage
Sex	Male	111	79.3
	Female	29	20.7
	Other	0	0
Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino	12	9.2
	Non-Hispanic/Nonlatino	118	90.8
Race	Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2.2
	Biracial or Multiracial	4	2.9
	Black/African American	3	2.2
	Native American	2	1.4
	White	126	91.3
Marital Status	Single	57	41.0
	Married	54	38.8
	Partnered	6	4.3
	Divorced	18	12.9
	Separated	4	2.9
	Widowed	0	0
Family status	Children	29	20.9
	No Children	110	79.1

Characteristics of sample regarding college enrollment. Of respondents who provided information about their college enrollment, 107 (77.0%) reported being undergraduate students and 28 (20.1%) reported being graduate students. Of the 107 undergraduate students, 38 (35.5%) were in their first or second year of school, 56 (52.3% were in their third or fourth years, and 13 (12.1%) of the undergraduate students reported being fifth-year students. With regard to area of study, 36 different subject areas were described by the undergraduate and graduate students in the sample, including programs of study in the fields of accounting, agriculture, business, architecture, arts, business, natural sciences, social sciences, education, computer sciences, construction, engineering, law, natural resources, and nursing. Sixty-eight (48.9%) respondents reported being a first generation college student, and 90 (66.7%) respondents reported that they experienced a break in enrollment and have now returned to school.

Characteristics of military service. All five branches of the United States Military were represented in the sample. Of those who provided information about the component in which they served, 33 of the total respondents (25%) reported that they are currently serving in the military, with 8 of those (6.2%) currently on active duty and the remainder currently active in the Reserves or National Guard. Of the respondents that reported being veterans, 68 (52.3% of the total respondents, 70% of those who reported veteran status) identified as veterans of active duty service, with the remainder (29, 16.9% of the total respondents and 29.9% of veterans) reporting being veterans of the National Guard, the Reserves, or being Inactive Ready Reserves. The distribution of respondents by branch of military service is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of Military Service by Branch

Demographic Characteristic	*N*	Percentage
Army	45	31.9
Navy	38	27.0
Air Force	26	18.4
Marine Corps	28	19.9
Coast Guard	2	1.4
Served in 2 Branches	2	1.4

Both respondents who reported having served in two military branches reported having served in the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Data regarding veterans' rank when they separated from the military were also collected. The ranking system in the United States military is comprised of two primary types of ranks-enlisted ranks, which are non-commissioned, and commissioned officers. Enlisted ranks range from E1 to E9, and officer ranks range from O1 to O10. Another type of rank, warrant officer, ranges from W1 to W5 and is typically reserved for enlisted personnel who receive highly specialized training, such as piloting helicopters. With regard to commission status, 122 of the respondents (87.8%) reported having been enlisted members of the military, with 91 of those (74.6% of enlisted service members) having ended their military service at the rank of E-4 or E-5, and all ranks except for E-8 being represented. Of the 17 commissioned officers in the sample, none were above the rank of O-5. No Warrant Officers were represented in the sample.

The average length of military service was 5.3 years (median = 4.0 yrs, *SD* = 6.4 yrs). For veterans, the average length of time between separation from the military and completing the survey was 4.3 years (median = 3.25 yrs, *SD* = 4.17 yrs). A history of deployment was reported by 104 (77.6%) of the respondents, and the modal number of deployments was 3. Of those respondents who deployed, 22.1% deployed four or more times. Further data about respondents' deployments are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Data Related to Deployments

		N	Percentage
Deployed as:	Combat Arms	25	26.6
	Combat Support	44	45.3
	Combat Service Support	8	8.5
	A combination of above (multiple deployments)	17	18.1
Deployed to:	Combat zone	68	70.1
	Peacekeeping Mission	8	8.2
	Both (multiple deployments)	21	21.6

Data related to specific deployment locations were collected using text data, and are difficult to aggregate due to respondents' variability in deployment experiences. Some servicemembers were deployed multiple times to the same place, and others traveled to various locales during a single deployment, and the method of data collection did not allow for precise recording of

deployment location data. Additionally, several respondents reported that they could not disclose where they were deployed. Respondents reported approximately 75 total deployments to the Middle East, which in this context refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and deployments described as "Persian Gulf" in a text response. Ten deployments to Afghanistan and four deployments to Bosnia/Kosovo were reported. Deployments on a ship or submarine were reported by 8 respondents. Twenty respondents (14.3%) reported that future deployments are expected, and 16 (11.4%) reported that they are unsure if future deployments are expected.

Procedure

The instruments used in this study were administered to participants through an online survey. An incentive of the chance to win a gift card was used to encourage participation. E-mail addresses of those who elected to participate in the raffle were collected in a separate survey to preserve anonymity. Five $40 Visa gift cards were sent to five randomly selected survey participants; they were selected using a random number generator whose output was matched to participants' ID number in the e-mail address collection output file. A mixed method design was utilized for this study. First, as little is known within these areas of inquiry, qualitative methods were used.

Qualitative analyses. The qualitative inquiry sought to examine the role of college enrollment in the career aspirations, sense of purpose, and transition experiences of military veterans. It also was designed to gather information about the academic and social experiences of student veterans. Open ended questions were posed and participants were invited to type their responses.

The questions posed in the present study, and the initial template developed, were informed by Role-Exit Theory (Ebaugh, 1988). Specifically, the questions posed to research

participants were designed to examine the social experience of transitioning to student life as a military veteran, the challenges faced in the college environment in the new roles of military veteran, civilian, and college student. This analysis also sought to examine how veterans cope with the "role residual" of having been military personnel (Ebaugh, 1988).

The following questions were posed, with a text box for respondents to answer:

1. How has your military service experience affected your college experience?
2. How has your military service changed your view of your life purpose and career goals?
3. How has your status as a military veteran affected your interactions with others on your college campus?

The specific qualitative method utilized in designing and analyzing the text responses to these questions was Template Analysis (TA). TA is a qualitative method designed to assess for themes in textual responses or interview transcripts (King, 2007). The process of TA consists of creating questions to pose to research participants, and then developing a tentative coding "template" for use in coding responses. This tentative template was developed based on expected responses to questions. The codes developed are hierarchical in nature, starting with general themes and moving towards more specific themes. After data were collected, the template was modified to accommodate themes that became evident during the coding process (King, 2007).

Several important aspects of TA bear mentioning. First, it is recommended that the initial template be minimally developed to avoid the researchers being inclined to force themes into inaccurate coding themes that were developed a priori, and to allow room for the development of a template that accurately captures textual themes. Second, the template used to code data is

continually revamped to include emerging themes in responses; this process of template revision can continue through the entire coding and analysis of data (King, 2007).

The following figure depicts the initial template developed to analyze responses to these questions:

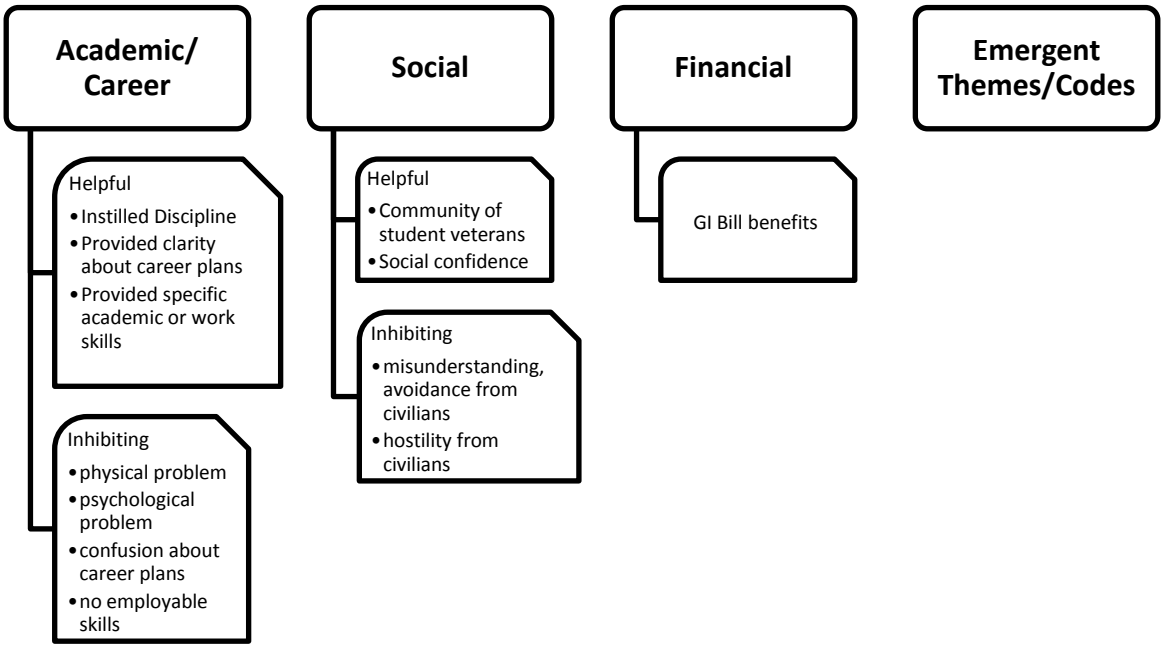

Figure 2. Initial template used for analysis of text responses.

This initial template was developed based on expected responses from college student military veterans. Previous qualitative research has demonstrated that student military veterans view their transition to college and their transition to civilian life as one "interwoven" experience; they do not view these transitions as distinct (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 440). Therefore, the template was developed to capture the experiences of transition to college with the assumption that veterans would regard this transition as part and parcel of their transition to civilian life.

Furthermore, Byman (2007), in an opinion piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, suggested that veterans on college campuses would help non-veteran students, staff and faculty to overcome their stereotypes of military personnel. Helen Ebaugh (1988) asserted that one

cannot completely disengage from the expectations, norms, and identity associated with the role one is leaving. Ebaugh also emphasized the impact of one's "hangover identity" when transitioning out of a significant role (1988, p. 149). It was therefore expected that veterans would express themes of their military identity affecting their interactions with students, faculty, and staff. More specifically, Ebaugh also outlined a tendency among those exiting a significant role to socialize and relate with others who have exited a similar role or are currently in one's previous role. Therefore, the template was designed to include themes related to the importance of a community of student veterans for respondents.

Additionally, as GI Bill benefits were expanded for veterans who began their military service after September 11th, 2001 (Cook & Kim, 2009), it was expected that veterans would discuss issues of financing higher education, and use of GI Bill benefits, when asked about how their military service has affected their college experience. As little research has identified themes of the college experiences of military veterans, other aspects of the template were developed as a result of clinical experiences with student veterans and conversations with a Veteran Services Coordinator and Veterans Affairs employees.

Quantitative Analyses. The quantitative component of this study utilized regression models. For the regression models, predictor constructs were calling, meaningful work, and post-deployment social support. The criterion construct of well-being included the following variables: life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life.

Instruments. The following instruments were used to measure the variables relevant to this study:

*Calling and vocation***.** The levels of presence of and search for calling and vocation were measured using the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ; Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, in press). The CVQ consists of 24 items that assess six different scales: Transcendent Summons (Presence); Transcendent Summons (Search); Purpose/Meaning in Work (Presence); Purpose/Meaning in Work (Search); Prosocial Orientation (Presence); and Prosocial Orientation (Search). These scales demonstrated internal consistency coefficients (α) of .85 to .92 (Dik, Eldridge & Steger, 2008). They found that presence of and search for calling correlated in expected directions with the constructs of career decidedness (r = .36 and r = -.37, respectively), career decision self-efficacy (r = .30 and r = -.28), life satisfaction (r = .23 and r = -.22), and presence of meaning in life (r = .42 and r = -.20; Eldridge, 2007).

Meaningful work. Meaningful work also was examined as a predictor variable in this study. This construct was measured using the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI), developed by Steger, Dik, and Duffy (under review). The WAMI is a 17 item measure that assesses five dimensions of meaningful work (alpha coefficients are provided): Work Comprehension (.82), Greater Good Motivations (.83), Meaningful Work Salience (.83), Work Purpose (.84), and Meaningful Work Search (.88). While examination of this measure is in its early stages, research has shown validity and reliability of this measure's scores to be acceptable. For example, Work Purpose and Meaningful Work search were related to job satisfaction in expected ways (β = .36 and -.11, respectively) Additionally, Work comprehension and Work purpose were negatively associated with withdrawal intentions (β = -.33 and -.29, respectively).

Post deployment support. Post deployment support was measured as a predictor variable in this analysis. This construct was measured using a section of the Deployment Risk and Resilience Inventory (DRRI; King, King, & Vogt, 2003). The DRRI is an instrument developed

to assess risk and resilience factors commonly associated with military deployment. This instrument includes 14 different scales designed to assess risk and resilience factors from the pre-deployment time period, the deployment period, and the post-deployment period. It was designed so that individual scales can be used separately. The Post-Deployment Social Support scale is a 15 item measure designed to assess the extent to which "family, friends, coworkers, employers, and community provide…the individual with understanding, companionship, a sense of belonging, and positive self-regard" (King, King, & Vogt, 2003, p. 6). Its scores have been validated with several veteran samples, including French Canadian veterans and United States Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (Fikretoglu, Brunet, Poundja, Guay, & Pedlar, 2006; Vogt, Proctor, King, King, & Vasterling, 2008). In the initial psychometric investigations, the post-deployment support scale was found to be positively correlated with Satisfaction with Life (r = .56), and negatively correlated with depression and anxiety (r = -.47 and -.39, respectively; King, King, & Vogt, 2003).

Life satisfaction. Life Satisfaction was measured as a criterion variable in this analysis. Life Satisfaction is considered to be an important component of well-being (Samman, 2007; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). This construct was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) to capture subjects' global life satisfaction without assessing related constructs such as loneliness and positive affect. Scores on the measure demonstrated internal consistency and reliability across time, and has demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability. For example, self-report of satisfaction with life was significantly positively correlated with peer reports of life satisfaction (r = .54, p <.01), with daily satisfaction

(r = .65, p <.01), and with a widely used morale scale known as the Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale (r = .65, p <.01; Pavot, Diener, Colvin, & Sandvik, 1991).

Meaning in life. Meaning in Life was measured as a criterion variable in this study; Meaning in Life is considered an important component of well-being (Samman, 1007) and was measured using the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Steger, Frasier, Oishi, & Kaler (2006). The MLQ is a 10-item questionnaire designed to measure two factors related to meaning in life: presence of meaning and search for meaning. MLQ scores have demonstrated acceptable levels of convergent validity. For example, presence of meaning in life and search for meaning in life were found to be significantly correlated with depression (-.48 and .36, respectively), fear (-.20 and .25, respectively), shame (-.20 and .19, respectively) and sadness (-.35 and .26, respectively) in expected directions. Additionally, scores on both scales have demonstrated good internal consistency reliability (αs = .86-.88; Steger, et al., 2006).

Positive and negative affect. Affect, which is conceptualized as comprised of moods and emotions, is considered an important component of well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Samman, 2007), and was measured as an criterion variable in the present study. Affect was measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). The PANAS is a 20-item scale designed to measure the separate constructs of positive and negative affect. This scale's scores have demonstrated evidence of test-retest reliability. For example, positive affect and negative affect both demonstrated acceptable alpha coefficients when subjects were tested 8 weeks after the initial administration (.68 and .71, respectively, when subjects were asked about their affect "in general"). The PANAS had also demonstrated evidence of validity. For example, when subjects were instructed to report on their affect over the "past few weeks," their scores correlated with Beck Depression

Inventory (BDI) scores in expected directions; positive affect negatively correlated with BDI scores (r = -.36), and negative affect correlated positively with BDI scores (r = .58; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988).

Positive relationships. Having positive, high quality relationships with others has been conceptualized as an important component of well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Samman, 2007). In the present study, positive relationships were measured using the Positive Relations scale of the Theoretically Grounded Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff, & Keyes, 1995), also known as the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being. The Positive Relations scale consists of nine items that assess the presence of positive relationships with others in the respondents' life. This scale has demonstrated acceptable validity evidence. For example, positive relationships was found to be positively correlated with positive affect (p = .26) and life satisfaction (p =.43) and negatively correlated with depression (p = -.46; Ryff, & Keyes, 1995). Using this measure, a person with high scores "has warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships." A low scorer "has few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others" (Ryff & Keyes, 1995, p. 727).

Chapter 3: Analyses

Regression models were used to test the hypotheses developed for this study. Regression also was used to test the moderation hypothesis.

Multiple regression. The majority of the hypotheses were tested using multiple regression. Predictor constructs included calling, meaningful work, and social support. Criterion variables included the components of well-being: positive relationships, positive affect, negative affect, meaning in life, and life satisfaction.

Within the predictor construct of calling, two variables were tested: Presence of Calling Total Score and Search for Calling Total Score. Three variables related to the construct of meaningful work were tested: Greater Good, Work Purpose, and Work Comprehension. Social support was tested as a simple linear regression with post-deployment social support being the sole predictor variable.

Each predictor variable was tested to examine the unique variance that it explained for each of the criterion variables when the other significant predictors within that construct were held constant. All predictor variables were mean-centered to minimize the impact of multicollinearity. Using a table developed by Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, and Lang (2009), an appropriate sample size was calculated. In order to obtain significant results with a Power of .80 and an alpha level of .05, the a priori estimated was that this study needs approximately 129 participants to find significance with medium effect sizes. Therefore, the data collected from the sample of 137 respondents were considered sufficient.

*Tests of moderation***.** As depicted in Figure 1, a regression model was used to examine whether post-deployment support moderated the relationship between the other predictor constructs (calling and meaningful work) and the criterion variables that comprise well-being

(life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, meaning in life, and positive relationships). Each of these relationships was tested. These models were tested using multiple regression analyses. Each model included the predictor variables, the moderator variable, and the interaction terms.

Statistical Assumptions. This study utilized multiple linear regression to test hypotheses. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression makes four important assumptions about the population from which sample data are collected (Venter & Maxwell, 2000). First, OLS regression operates on the assumption that the sample was drawn randomly from the population. This assumption is made in all inferential statistical procedures. As is discussed in the Discussion section of this paper, the sample in the present investigation seems to be representative of the population of student veterans with regard to age, gender, and military experience. However, with regard to race and ethnicity, the sample is over-representative of white, non-Hispanic student veterans. Although previous research does not suggest that data in the present study would have been different if the sample was more representative with regard to race and ethnicity, this clearly is a limitation.

It is important to note that the method of data collection utilized in the study (an online survey distributed through veteran listservs) may have slightly biased the sample with regard to race and ethnicity, as several colleges that distributed the survey are comprised of higher percentages of white, non-Hispanic students than the population of military veterans. However, given that the present study is one of very few studies that have investigated this population, it is not clear that any bias present in the sample undermines the purpose of the study. As one of the first studies to address the role of calling and meaningful work among student military veterans, replication is warranted, and future studies may help to clarify the demographic characteristics of student military veterans. Though the generalizability of the present study is somewhat unclear,

the information generated by this sample provides an important starting point for investigations of calling and meaningful work among student military veterans, a population that has not been widely studied before. The possibility exists that racial and ethnic discrepancies exist between the veteran population at large and the veteran population that utilizes GI Bill benefits to attend college.

The second assumption of OLS regression is that the variables examined in the study are normally distributed. To assess normality of variables in the present investigation, frequency histograms were plotted against the normal curve overlay using SPSS and were examined to determine whether the distribution was skewed. It was found that the predictor variables calling, meaningful work, and the criterion variable life satisfaction were mildly negatively skewed. All other variables were approximately normally distributed. No transformations were performed because the skewedness of the variables was mild.

The third assumption of OLS regression (homoscedasticity) relates to variability, or spread in scores, of the variables. The assertion of the homoscedasticity assumption is that the variability in scores for a continuous variable is consistent over all values of another continuous variable. In other words, the dispersion of scores around the mean is consistent across different values of another variable. If this assumption is not met, the violation is referred to as heteroscedasticity. Heteroscedasticity can refer to several violations of the assumptions of OLS regression, including when one variable is not normally distributed, when measurement error for one variable fluctuates considerably across levels of that variable, or when the spread of scores on one variable change at some levels because of its relation to a third variable (Fidell & Tabachnick, 2003). The fourth assumption of OLS regression, the linearity assumption, relates to the relations between variables and holds that linear relationships exist between all pairs of

variables. The homoscedasticity and linearity assumptions both were assessed in the present investigation by examining bivariate scatter plots between pairs of variables included in the present analyses. These plots indicated homoscedasticity, or very mild heteroscasticity, for all variables. The assumption of linearity appeared to hold well for all pairs of variables.

Chapter 4: Results

Impact of Military Service

This project attempted to gather data regarding the impact of military service on servicemembers and veterans. The data collected focused on physical, mental health, career, and personal factors. With regard to physical impact, 35 respondents (25.4%) reported having suffered a permanent physical injury as a result of their military service. Forty-five (32.6%) reported carrying a VA disability rating for a physical or psychological condition. Additional mental health data is provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Data Regarding Mental Health Diagnoses and Treatment

Deployment Datum	Value	*N*	Percentage
Diagnosis:	None	83	67.5
	Prefer not to answer	5	4.1
	Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) only	0	0
	PTSD only	7	5.7
	Depression only	11	8.9
	Anxiety only	1	.8
	A combination of above (multiple diagnoses)	16	13.0
Treatment:	Counseling or psychotherapy	33	24.3
	Medication	16	11.6

Four respondents (3.3%) reported having a diagnosis of Traumatic Brain Injury, but all of these respondents also reported other psychiatric diagnoses. Furthermore, 13 of the 16 respondents who reported multiple psychiatric diagnoses reported PTSD as one of those diagnoses; this brought the total number of respondents who reported a PTSD diagnosis to 20, or 16.3% of the respondents who answered questions about psychiatric diagnoses. In a separate question, "Have you ever been diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) related to your military service?" 21 of the 139 respondents who answered the question, or 15.1%, answered "yes." This results in a diagnosis of PTSD in approximately 15.1-16.3% of the sample.

With regard to the impact of military service on physical health, the majority of respondents (74.1%) reported that they did not suffer a permanent physical injury while deployed in the military. Data regarding types of physical injury are provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Data from Permanently Injured Veterans by Type of Injury

Injury Type	*N*	Percentage
Traumatic Brain Injury	6	18.2
Internal Injury	1	3.0
Hearing Problems/Loss	28	84.8
Upper Respiratory Problems	5	15.2
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	1	3.0

No respondents endorsed amputation/loss of limb or vision problems/loss. With regard to other physical problems related to military service, 22 respondents checked "Other" and provided text responses. These response included epilepsy, psychological diagnoses such as panic attacks, PTSD and personality disorders, back problems, neurological conditions, and leg and foot problems. One respondent reported having contacted Leukemia as a result of military service. In total, 46 respondents (33.1%) reported having a VA disability rating for a physical or psychological disability.

Respondents also reported significant positive psychological and personal consequences of their military service. These data are presented in the section below.

Experience of Military Veterans on College Campuses

Data were gathered relating to veterans' experiences on college campuses. Some of these questions focused on the characteristics that veterans perceived as setting them apart from college peers. Respondents were asked, "What, if anything, do you think sets you apart from your college peers?" A checklist was provided. Data are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Factors that Veterans Regarded as Setting them Apart from College Peers

Characteristic	*N*	Percentage
Experience	133	94.3
Age	119	84.4
Maturity	124	87.9
Experience of Traumatic Events	71	50.4
Injury/Disability	25	17.7
Attitude/Bearing	112	79.4
Values	107	75.9
Discipline	112	79.4
No Difference	1	0.7

Data were also collected regarding the experiences and perceptions of military veterans on college campuses. Some of this data focused on the challenges that veterans faced transitioning to college. Information regarding the challenges that respondents reported facing is provided in Table 7.

Table 7

Challenges Faced by Student Veterans Transitioning from the Military to College Life

Challenge	*N*	Percentage
Getting into College	33	25.6
Housing	27	20.9
Transfer of Credits	45	34.9
Assimilating to Student Life	80	62.0
Relationship Issues	55	42.6
Financial Concerns	85	65.9
Stress	72	55.8
Potential Recall to Active Duty	24	18.6
Feeling Safe (Standing down from combat training)	27	20.9

Veterans also were asked to what extent they agree with the following statement: "Overall, I feel my fellow students, the faculty and staff respect my military service to the nation." Of the 140 respondents who answered this question, 30 (21.4%) strongly agreed and 63 (45.0%) agreed. Thirty-two of the respondents (22.9%) were neutral, 13 (9.3%) disagreed, and 2 (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative inquiry sought to examine the role of college enrollment in the career aspirations, sense of purpose, and transition experiences of military veterans. Open ended questions were posed and participants were asked to type their responses in a text box.

The questions posed in the present study included the following:

1. How has your military service experience affected your college experience?

2. How has your military service changed your view of your life purpose and career goals?

3. How has your status as a military veteran affected your interactions with others on your college campus?

The specific qualitative method utilized in analyzing the text responses to these questions was Template Analysis (TA). Figure 2, presented earlier, depicts the initial template developed to analyze responses to these questions. Throughout the categorization process, two procedures bear mentioning. First, responses were analyzed with regard to "meaning units," and the meaning unit was categorized under one of the themes developed in the initial template. If the meaning unit did not match the theme, a new theme was created. The second point that bears mentioning is that while each response was analyzed with regard to separate "meaning units," the response was kept intact in order to preserve the character of the response. Therefore, some responses are recorded in two different categories.

For example, one of the questions posed was, "How has your military service experience affected your college experience?" One response to this question was as follows: "The discipline and work ethic perfected in the military has been helpful in completing coursework in a timely and accurate manner. It has worked to extend my college requirements, thanks to lots of useless elective credits" (Respondent 73). This response was categorized in the emergent category of "Experience with Institutional Systems/Indication of Frustration with Institutional Systems," within the "Academic/Career- Inhibiting" theme hierarchy. This response also was coded in the "Hard Work/ Commitment/Discipline/Maturity" within the "Academic/Career- Helpful" hierarchy.

The original template was used to analyze the first question of the qualitative inquiry. The template developed when responses to question 1 were analyzed was then revised and expanded using the responses from question 2. In this way, the initial template gradually expanded to comprehensively and accurately capture the themes that emerged in student veterans' descriptions of their college experiences. Below, the template for each question is provided, with sample responses for several categories to illustrate emergent themes. Each participant who responded to at least one qualitative prompt was assigned a number, and the respondent number is provided after each quotation. The reader can thereby follow the process of template development and be aware of themes endorsed by specific participants in response to different questions. The aggregated master template presented on page 61 provides a comprehensive representation of the themes identified by respondents.

Question 1. The first question posed in the qualitative portion of this study was, "How has your military service experience affected your college experience?" The initial template was revised and expanded to reflect the themes that emerged in student veterans' responses. The revised template reflecting themes that emerged in Question 1 is provided in Figure 3.

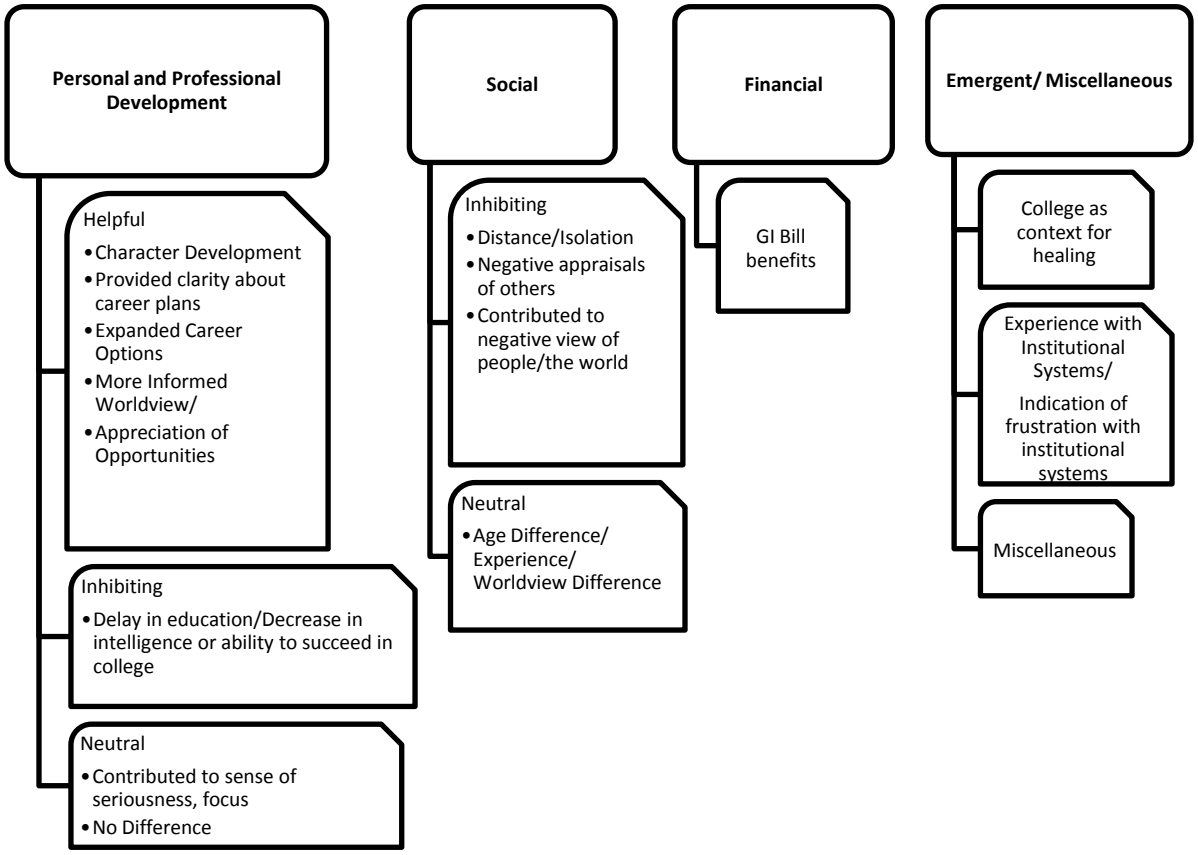

Figure 3. Template developed to reflect themes prevalent in Question 1, "How has your military service experience affected your college experience?"

Of note, the general theme of "Academic/Career Development" was changed to "Personal and Professional Development" to reflect that many responses discussed personal/character development in the context of their academic performance. For example, one veteran responded to the above question with the statement, "I am much more driven than I would have been had I attended college right after high school. I see the value, not only monetarily, but time and effort, in putting forth the necessary effort to excel at my studies" (Respondent 102).

Many veterans endorsed answers reflecting the influence that their military service had on character development, with particular emphasis on discipline, confidence, and an expression of the perceived importance of hard work. Another illustrative example is the following

response: “It has helped me because I am disciplined, punctual, and have focus" (Respondent 117). Therefore, a category entitled “Character Development” was added to the template. The number of responses that express the theme of character development was quite large.

Also notable was the absence of responses indicating social benefits of military service for college student veterans. A theme of “Distance/ Isolation/ Negative appraisals of others” was added to capture the frustration that veterans expressed concerning interactions with their peers. Some of the responses indicating isolation and/or disdain were tempered or expressed low intensity of emotion, such as the following response: “It is difficult to interact with and understand the other college students because I am still used to people acting like Marines, and these kids don’t" (Respondent 71). Other responses expressed a high level of disdain and/or frustration, such as this response:

> It makes me hate almost everybody in my classes. All these spoon-fed little punks are concerned with hitting on each other and what car their daddy is gonna buy them. They talk during class, their opinions are only as deep as what they can remember from the Fox news segment they watched, and they all act smart by puking up the words of their professors without an ounce of personal thought on the matter (Respondent 89).

Additionally, “Neutral” categories were added to the “Personal and Professional Development” and “Social” themes to capture response categories that contained less clear evaluative language. For example, one respondent stated, “It has not affected it. I do what needs to get done, just as I always have" (Respondent 108). The quantity of responses indicating that military experience did not affect college experience is considerable.

Question 2. The second question posed in the qualitative inquiry was, "How has your military service experience changed your life purpose and career goals?" The template developed with responses to Question 1 was revised and expanded to reflect the themes that emerged in student veterans' responses to Question 2. The revised template reflecting themes that emerged in Question 1 is provided in Figure 4.

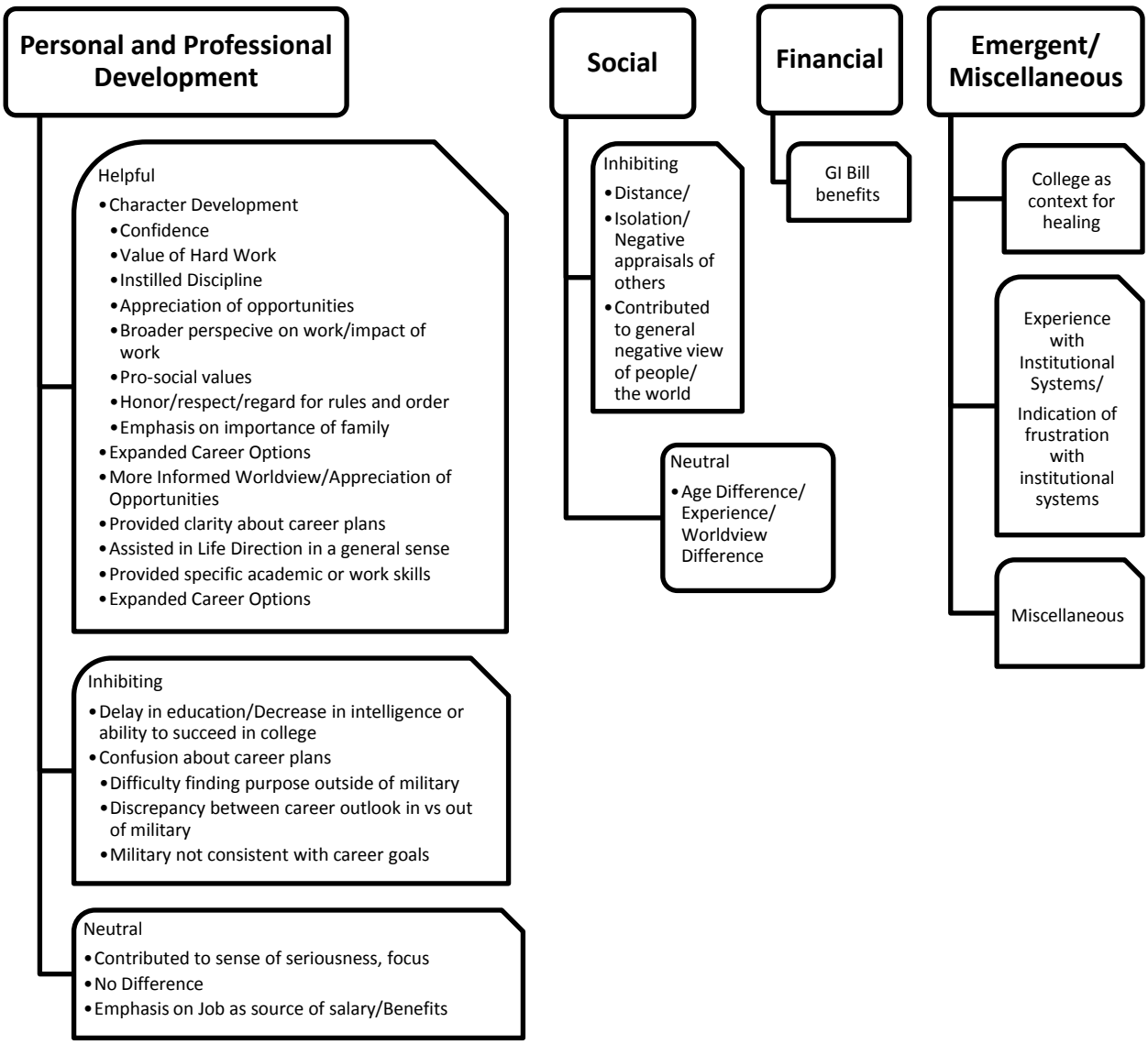

Figure 4. Template developed to reflect themes prevalent in Question 2, “How has your military service experience changed your life purpose and career goals?”

The theme of military service contributing to character development was quite prominent in responses to Question 2 as well as Question 1. This theme is exemplified in the response, “I now have core values and a strong moral fiber that dictates how I conduct myself day to day" (Respondent 105). When analyzing the responses to Question 1 and 2 conjointly, it became clear that specific subthemes were being articulated. Therefore, these subthemes were explicitly reported in the template. For example, the responses, “Yes, I am more apt to help others now" (Respondent 107) and “That helping people is the best thing I can do" (Respondent 117) were representative of a theme of military service instilling pro-social values. The response “It has definitely taught me how strong I really am and also given me a unique view on life" (Respondent 35) expressed the theme of military service instilling confidence.

Themes relating to military service providing clarity about a career path were also apparent. Illustrative examples are the responses, “I have more purpose in completing my college goals so I may return to the military lifestyle as a civilian" (Respondent 64), and “My job right now is to help aid and assist other veterans. That satisfaction that I’m able to help has guided me towards my desire to become a veteran lawyer" (Respondent 67).

The responses to question 2 also included the theme of military service making no difference in respondents’ life purpose and career goals. However, this theme was expressed in variant ways. For example, one respondent stated, “It hasn't. I believe in making your own purpose in life. While meeting my career goals is important to the overall quality and happiness of my life, it does not affect the overall purpose of my life. My career goals have been the same since I was eleven years old and did not change due to my military service" (Respondent 73).

This veteran seemed to regard military service as a component of an already solidified career path. This expression of military service not affecting life purpose is quite different than the following response:

> It has changed my views on life, but it seems that I am right back where I started. I am back where I grew up, and I feel like I did a full circle in my life and now I am back right where I started. I joined the Army to try and help me figure out what I wanted to do with my life and gain some direction. But now that I am out I am right back to where I started, in the same town with no life goals and no direction (Respondent 7).

This response indicates that the veteran fully expected the military to provide opportunities and clarity about career goals, but did not achieve this clarity as a result of military service.

Another prominent theme in the responses to question 2 was the financial benefit of military service. Multiple respondents emphasized the importance of GI Bill benefits to their college enrollment. An example of this type of response is, "I think so, I'm very grateful for all of the educational benefits I'm receiving as well as medical coverage" (Respondent 31).

Question 3. The third question posed in the qualitative inquiry was, "How has your status as a military veteran affected your interactions with others on your college campus?" The template developed with responses to Question 2 was revised and expanded to reflect the themes that emerged in student veterans' responses to Question 3. The revised template reflecting themes that emerged in Question 3 is provided in Figure 5.

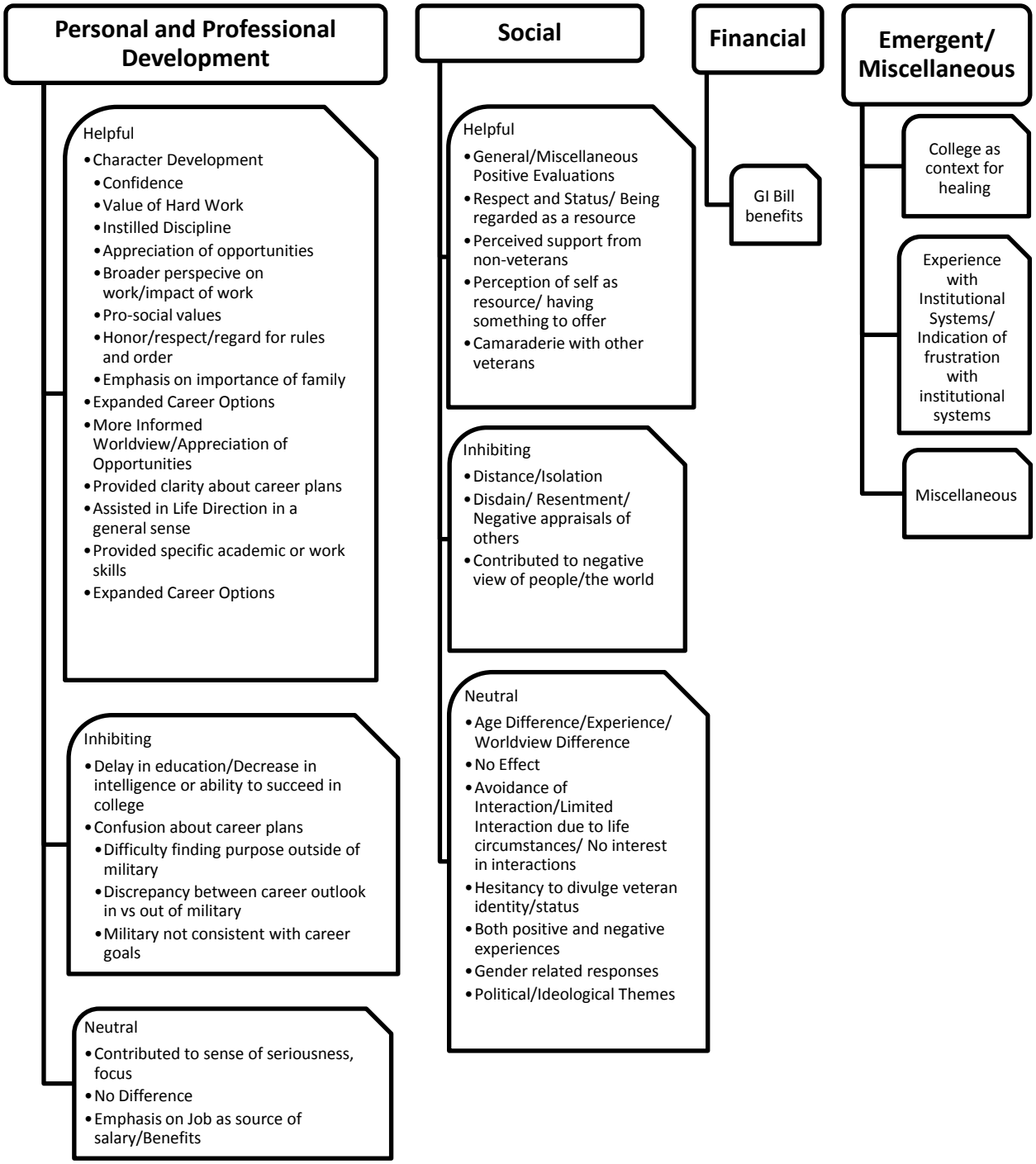

Figure 5. Template developed to reflect themes prevalent in Question 3, "How has your status as a military veteran affected your interactions with others on your college campus?"

The responses to question 3 provided rich data regarding the social experiences of college student veterans. Themes of avoiding interactions with other students and avoiding divulging one's veteran status were prominent. Among those who indicated that they do interact with others and divulge their veteran status, themes of regarded as a resource, being treated with respect, and perceiving oneself as a resource emerged as helpful social impacts of military service. More responses reflecting distance, isolation, and overt disdain for non-veteran students also emerged.

As with previous questions, a theme of military service not affecting veterans' college experiences was evident in the responses to question 3. Responses such as "No real connection in that sense" (Respondent 21) and "As of right now my interactions with others have not been affected at all by my military service" (Respondent 29) evidence this theme. One veteran responded, "It really hasn't come up to tell you the truth. There have been instances where I've been able to contribute more than one person or another because of my experiences, but I've not had too much one way or another" (Respondent 67).

A prominent theme that also developed in responses to question 3 related to veterans avoiding interaction with non-veteran students. Some responses, such as "Don't interact with the kids to much. The generation gap is too wide" (Respondent 17), indicates that avoidance of interaction may relate to age differences for some veterans. Other responses indicated general social isolation. The following response reflects this theme:

> I find myself segregation (sic) myself from most of the people in my classes. I am dating a girl that lives down the street from me, and she is really the only person that I hang out with. I don't really interact with others at the campus unless I have to (Respondent 7).

Some responses reflected a sense of bitterness or resentment related to avoidance of interaction, such as the following response: “The majority of students and teachers do not care that I am a veteran. I don't care that they don't care" (Respondent 111). Still other responses indicated that lack of interaction with college peers related to logistical factors, such as work and family demands.

A subset of responses did not reflect social isolation, or avoidance of interaction with non-veteran students, but did endorse a hesitancy to divulge veteran status. For example, one veteran responded, “I'm hesitant to voluntarily divulge I served. Sometimes I get a negative reaction, sometimes I get a positive reaction, but I'd prefer indifference over the negative so I don't bother until I feel it is 'safe' to do so" (Respondent 4). Another veteran expressed a similar sentiment but also referenced political/ideological themes:

> I typically keep it to myself. I've done enough to know my status as a veteran so I don't care to advertise it for sympathy. I also tend to stay defensive as most college students are prone to more heavy opinions in religion, politics, and world affairs (Respondent 34).

Among veterans whose responses indicated that they do divulge their veteran status, political and ideological themes also were expressed. One veteran stated, “On a liberal campus it can go either way. Some are grateful for my service and others think I eat babies, in a manner of speaking..." (Respondent 46) It should be noted that responses reflected a variety of political views. For example, while one veteran reported that his peers view him as a “Sarah Palin," (Respondent 49) another identified as an “anti-war veteran” who is “passionate about making change and pushing for peace" (Respondent 103).

Many veterans indicated that their veteran status has affected interactions with other students in both positive and negative ways. For example, one student veteran stated, “I mostly feel like they simply do not appreciate the opportunity that they have. It frustrates me when I see others making a mockery of this opportunity. Others seem to give me more respect for my service. It is simply a mixed bag" (Respondent 75).

Women veterans provided several gender-related responses expressing a theme of lack of awareness that women can be veterans. The responses, “Most people don't believe I'm a veteran, since I'm female. Go figure" (Respondent 52), and “I like to tell the young kids - they don't usually know any women veterans my age" (Respondent 36), expressed this theme.

A very prominent theme among veterans’ responses to question 3 was that military service led to veterans being treated with respect, and regarded as a resource, on college campuses. A response representative of this theme was, “People appreciate what I did. I have not had any negative reactions from anyone on campus. A lot of people are intrigued and ask questions" (Respondent 99). Similarly, one student veteran responded, “It has made me a leader among my peers and in some cases a mentor" (Respondent 105). Several responses indicated that while veterans perceived themselves as being treated with respect by the general student body, they did not necessarily feel connected to, or a part of, the student body. For example, one veteran responded, “People generally default respect towards veterans. However, they distance themselves as many times they seem intimidated by the experience" (Respondent 90).

Another theme prominent in the responses to question 3 was a sense of connection and camaraderie with other veterans. A response that typifies this theme was, “The military is the largest fraternity on campus- I can always find a frat brother or sister in each of my classes. So it has given me a sense of belonging" (Respondent 106).

Themes of disdain or frustration with non-student veterans also were prominent. For example, one veteran stated, “I don't like them, not in a mean way...I just have nothing in common with any of them. They have a self pride that they don't deserve- what have they done? Nothing" (Respondent 6). Another response that expressed the general theme of traditional students being immature and having limited life experience was the following:

> Of course, I look at the other students like little kids who haven't been out in the real world yet. Most of them at 19-23 years of age are still pretty immature. I mean when I was 22 I was working in a Air Evac unit, working with patients usually other people my age coming back from Iraq with shrapnel wounds and other various injuries from war. These kids spend their days on YouTube and have no clue what's going on. I laugh to myself when they try to act like they "understand what's going on" and they don't. Or when they complain about how their life is so "stressful" it makes me want to throw up (Respondent 31).

Comments/Feedback. In addition to the three qualitative inquiries, respondents were invited to provide feedback in response to two separate prompts. The first was, “Please provide any comments, feedback, or anything else you would like to add below.” This prompt was provided directly following the demographic questions posed in the survey. The second prompt was, “Please use the space below to provide any comments or feedback.” This prompt immediately followed the qualitative inquiry. The responses to these prompts were combined and analyzed. The template developed using the responses to Qualitative Question 3 was expanded and modified to reflect themes arising in the comments/ feedback sections. The revised

template reflecting themes that emerged in the questions/comment sections is provided in Figure 6.

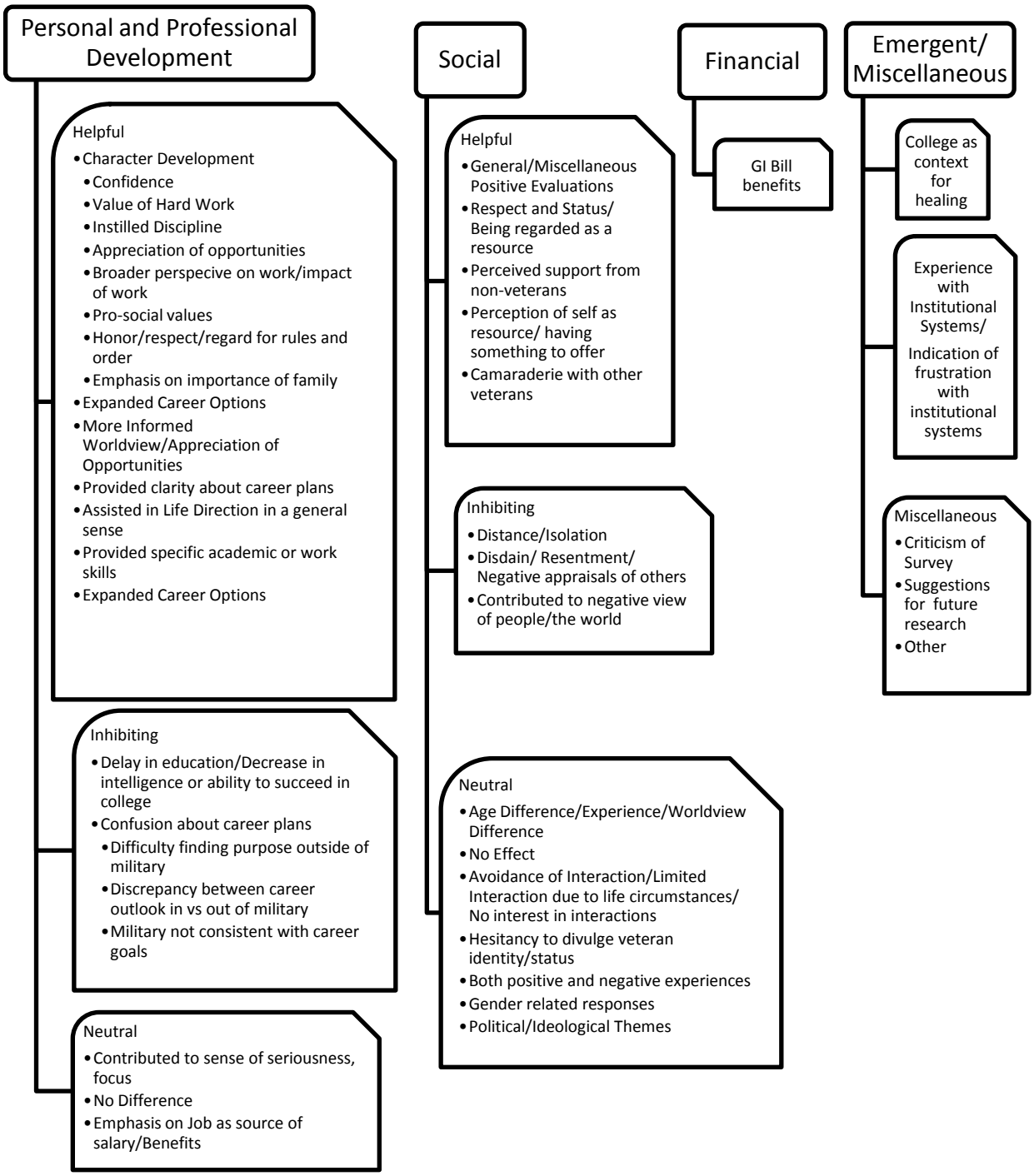

Figure 6. Template developed to reflect themes prevalent in the "Comments/Feedback" sections of the survey

The responses to the "Comments/Feedback" prompts were intentionally designed to be open-ended so that respondents would be more likely to identify their most salient experiences and opinions regarding their status as a college student military veteran. One of the most prominent themes that respondents expressed was frustration with administrative challenges, including financial aid, registration, and lack of understanding of veterans' unique needs with regard to college administration. Some of the frustration expressed was directed at professors. For example, one respondent stated,

> Having served in the military is a great advantage in college, but based on my experience, here are my two biggest gripes (more observations) when interacting with people on campus: 1) IN MY OPINION, students view veterans as sort of creepy older people who are all messed up in the head from being in a war. 2) More importantly than #1, professors / faculty have a bit of a limited understanding of what we do. My greatest concern is being an actively drilling reservist while being a full time student. This means having to take off several weeks at a time DURING the semester in order to complete mandatory training. There should be some sort of mandatory policy in place with the school to protect a student-soldier from being penalized for missing assignments, exams, etc. It is frustrating to have to "work something out with the professor" so I can satisfactorily complete my reserve obligations and complete school work in a timely fashion (Respondent 3).

While the above response reflected a theme of faculty not being knowledgeable about the demands navigated by veterans and reservists, another prominent theme related to administrative and financial aid problems:

> Individuals respect my service to my country, both in the sense of the sacrifice I made, and in the honor such service connotes. Systems, however, do not show such respect. They extend the bureaucratic quagmire beyond the military (as if that was not bad enough). Because of the systematic ineptitude of the financial aid department at my school, I have spent what amounts to a part-time job's worth of time dealing with financial aid issues. No wonder I am stressed beyond all limits. I am going to school, working part-time, and on top of it, I have to do someone else's job for them, because they cannot take the time to figure out my special situation. It is not as if this school is particularly horrible. It is the nature of a bureaucracy, of any system: if you don't fit into the prefabricated holes, good luck cutting your own in which to fit (Respondent 61).

Several responses identified specific problems or challenges that respondents had faced since becoming a college student. These challenges related to a variety of topics, and provide rich perspectives on the lived experiences of student veterans. For example, one respondent stated, “It’s been hard for me to sleep since my deployment" (Respondent 56). Another stated, “Was sexually assaulted while deployed - not a permanent physical injury but an emotional injury not listed on your survey" (Respondent 36). It is notable that several responses related to sexual assault during military service. Another response touches on both psychological and interpersonal themes:

> I had a young girl in class look at me and say "your eyes are old, you're tired." I had a full night's sleep that night and had to ask her what she meant. She said I have seen or done things that have tired my soul. Haha... the girl has no idea how tired it is... (Respondent 6)

A final prominent theme that arose in responses to the "Questions/Comments" sections of the survey was criticisms of the survey and/or suggestions for future research. For example, one respondent stated, "This survey seemed to have a lot of religious undertones with repeating your calling felt like I was being questioned to be a priest" (Respondent 41). Another provided a specific suggestion for future research on post-deployment adjustment:

> One thing that you should note... About one year after I got out, things got very stressful. Another Marine joined my school. He was about six months behind me. He had no problems until he hit that one year mark as well. I watched his meltdown then. It's pretty intense for several weeks. I am guessing there is some kind of pattern there... (Respondent 50)

Another respondent framed the military as a place in which one's job, whatever it may be, is approached with a sense of importance and meaning: "…some feel that the things that they are passionate, about or their studies, are their work. That's part of what the military does, is make one's task at hand, their work… (Respondent 103).

Summary of Qualitative Findings. Thus, the final template categorizing student veterans' college experiences, as reported by respondents of this survey, is provided in Figure 6. Several prominent themes arose in the qualitative portion of this survey. First, with regard to personal and professional development, many veterans emphasized the positive impact of military service on their character development, with particular emphasis on discipline,

confidence, a value of hard work, a sense of honor and morals, and a more developed worldview. One of the most prominently reported aspects of character development was that of prosocial values, such as wanting to help other people, improve one's community, and help fellow veterans.

With regard to social aspects of the impact of military service, both helpful and inhibiting themes emerged. Helpful themes included the perception of non-veterans as supportive, the perception of being seen as a resource on campus, and a prominent sense of camaraderie with other veterans. Inhibiting themes that arose included a general lack of interest in interacting with others, a hesitancy to divulge veteran status, and disdain for non-veteran students, faculty, and administration. The disdain that respondents reported feeling toward non-veteran students included the perception that non-veteran students did not appreciate their opportunities and privilege, were immature, and held strong opinions about subjects of which they knew little. Reports of frustration with faculty and administration primarily involved a sense of lack of regard for, or understanding of, the challenges facing veterans on college campuses. A few responses described a sense of antagonism from professors.

With regard to financial impact of military service, the sole theme that emerged related to GI Bill benefits providing an opportunity to attend college. While a small number of students reported experiencing some level of financial strain, the primary theme involved the opportunities afforded by GI Bill benefits.

Several themes emerged that were not included in the initial template that bear mentioning. First, a prominent theme that developed was a frustration with administrative procedures that are ill-suited to the needs of student veterans. Problems with financial aid, lack

of communication between veteran services offices and other administrative offices, and difficulty finding information were notable themes.

Quantitative Analyses

The quantitative data analyses conducted in this study sought to examine the relationships between the predictor constructs of calling, meaningful work, and social support, and the criterion construct of well-being. As is suggested in the well-being literature (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), the construct of well-being was investigated by separately examining the criterion variables of life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, meaning in life, and positive relationships. Also, as was suggested by the author of the WAMI, a meaningful work total score was calculated by summing the work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation scales. This meaningful work total score was used to conduct the tests of moderation (Steger, personal communication, March 1, 2011). Descriptive statistics for the 12 variables used in the quantitative analyses of the present study are provided in Table 8.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Predictor and Criterion Variables

	Variable	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
1.	Calling presence total Score	172	29.41	9.54	8.00	48.00
2.	Calling Search Total Score	172	30.84	9.07	10.00	48.00
3.	Work Comprehension	149	12.01	2.35	3.00	15.00
4.	Work Purpose	149	16.17	3.39	4.00	20.00
5.	Greater Good Motivation	149	7.74	1.86	2.00	10.00
6.	Meaningful Work Total Score	149	35.93	7.06	9.00	45.00
7.	Post Deployment Social Support	140	54.60	10.92	0.00	75.00
8.	Meaning in Life	145	21.79	7.40	0.00	34.00
9.	Positive Affect	143	33.35	8.88	0.00	50.00
10.	Negative Affect	143	20.36	7.32	0.00	50.00
11.	Positive Relationships	142	4.52	1.32	0.00	7.00
12.	Life Satisfaction	142	22.10	7.82	0.00	35.00

It is notable that work comprehension, work purpose, greater good motivation, and positive relationships all demonstrated some range restriction, which has the potential to weaken correlations associated with these variables and to reduce the level of power to detect significant interaction effects in hierarchical multiple regression (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). This range restriction is evidenced by their small standard deviations in comparison to their range.

An intercorrelation matrix for the 12 variables relevant to the quantitative portion of the present study is provided in Table 9. As has been demonstrated in previous research, calling

presence total score and calling search total score were significantly positively correlated (Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy (in press). It also is notable that the calling presence and search total scores were significantly positively correlated with the components of meaningful work. This may indicate that calling and meaningful work are in fact tapping into similar domains. As would be expected, the components of meaningful work (work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation) were very highly correlated with the meaningful work total score. As was expected, post-deployment social support was positively correlated with all of the components of well-being. It was also found, as would be expected, that negative affect was significantly negatively correlated with post-deployment social support, positive relationships, and life satisfaction.

Table 9.

Intercorrelation Matrix among Predictor Variables and Components of Well-Being.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Calling Presence Total	-											
2. Calling Search Total	.78**	-										
3. Work Comprehension	.55**	.31**	-									
4. Work Purpose	.62**	.38**	.82**	-								
5. Greater Good Motivation	.64**	.43**	.72**	.79**	-							
6. Meaningful work total	.65**	.40**	.92**	.96**	.88**	-						
7. Social Support	.26**	.09	.25**	.27**	.31**	.29**	-					
8. Meaning in Life	.66**	.42**	.63**	.65**	.61**	.68**	.42**	-				
9. Positive Affect	.48**	.28**	.35**	.46**	.42**	.45**	.48**	.62**	-			
10. Negative Affect	.00	.10	-.08	-.10	-.06	-.09	-.26**	-.13	.03	-		
11. Positive Relationships	.28**	.11	.16	.24**	.33**	.26**	.66**	.46**	.46**	-.28**	-	
12. Life Satisfaction	.27**	.07	.24**	.30**	.32**	.31**	.55**	.53**	.54**	-.23**	.70**	-

**Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

The hypotheses tested in this study were that both calling and meaningful work significantly predicted to the criterion variables of life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life. Additionally this study sought to test the hypothesis that calling and meaningful work were significantly negatively related to negative affect. For all regression analyses the significance level was set at $p = .05$.

Calling as a predictor of the components of well-being. The construct of calling was hypothesized to significantly predict the criterion variables life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life. More specifically, calling was predicted to be significantly positively correlated with the above mentioned components of well-being. This predictor construct also was hypothesized to be negatively correlated with the criterion variable of negative affect.

As detailed earlier (pp. 16-17), the construct of calling as measured by the CVQ (Dik, Eldridge, Steger, & Duffy, in press) includes a presence of calling and search for calling total score. As these two constructs have been shown to be correlated (Eldridge, 2007), these variables were mean-centered to minimize the effects of multicollinearity (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Separate regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses related to calling and well-being. For each regression analysis, presence of calling total score and search for calling total score were entered as predictor variables and one of the components of well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, meaning in life, and negative affect) was entered as the criterion variable. The results of the regression analysis examining calling as a predictor of meaning in life, as measured by the MLQ, are provided in Table 10.

Table 10

Calling as a Predictor of Meaning in Life

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	54.465	144	.434***				
Presence of Calling				.614	.076	.463, .765	.706***
Search for Calling				-.066	.081	-.227, .095	-.071

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 10, presence of calling was a significant predictor of a presence of meaning in life. Search for calling was not a significant predictor of a sense of meaning in life.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of calling was a significant predictor of positive affect, as measured in the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Presence of calling and search for calling were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

Calling as a Predictor of Positive Affect

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	22.032	142	.239***				
Presence of Calling				.585	.107	.374, .796	.561***
Search for Calling				-.125	.113	-.349, .099	-.113

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 11, presence of calling was a significant predictor of positive affect. Search for calling was not a significant predictor of positive affect.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of calling was a significant predictor of negative affect, as measured in the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Presence of calling and search for calling were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

Calling as a Predictor of Negative Affect

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	1.414	142	.020				
Presence of Calling				-.115	.100	-.313, .082	-.134
Search for Calling				.178	.106	-.031, .388	.195

Note. CI = confidence interval

As indicated in Table 12, the regression model including presence of calling and search for calling was not a significant predictor of negative affect.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of calling was a significant predictor positive relationships, as measured in the Positive Relationships scale of Ryff's scales of psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Presence of calling and search for calling were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 13.

Table 13

Calling as a Predictor of Positive Relationships

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	6.623	141	.087**				
Presence of Calling				.059	.017	.024, .093	.372**
Search for Calling				-.024	.019	-.060, .013	-.140

Note. CI = confidence interval

** $p < .01$.

As indicated in Table 13, presence of calling was a significant predictor of positive relationships. Search for calling was not a significant predictor of positive relationships.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of calling was a significant predictor of life satisfaction, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Presence of calling and search for calling were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 14.

Table 14

Calling as a Predictor of Life Satisfaction

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	7.793	141	.101**				
Presence of Calling				.394	.102	.192, .597	.423***
Search for Calling				-.218	.109	-.434, -.002	-.219*

Note. CI = confidence interval

* p < .05.

** p < .01.

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 14, presence of calling was a significant predictor of life satisfaction. Search for calling also was a significant predictor of life satisfaction.

In sum, five multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether calling was a significant predictor of the components of well-being. A model containing presence of calling and search for calling was a significant predictor of meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. Specifically, presence of calling was found to be a significant positive predictor of meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. Search for calling was found to be a significant negative predictor of life satisfaction.

Meaningful Work as a predictor of the components of well-being. The construct of meaningful work also was hypothesized to significantly predict the criterion variables life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life. More specifically, meaningful work was predicted to be significantly positively correlated with the above

mentioned components of well-being. This predictor construct also was hypothesized to be negatively correlated with the criterion variable of negative affect.

As detailed earlier (p. 17), the construct of meaningful work as measured by the WAMI (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, under review) includes five dimensions of meaningful work. The dimensions included in the present analysis were work comprehension, greater good motivations, and work purpose, as was suggested by the developer of the measure (Steger, personal communication, March 1, 2011). As these constructs have been shown to be correlated (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, under review), these variables were mean-centered to minimize the effects of multicollinearity (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Separate regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses related to meaningful work and well-being. For each regression analysis, greater good motivations, work comprehension, and work purpose were entered as predictor variables and one of the components of well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, meaning in life, and negative affect) was entered as the criterion variable. The results of the regression analysis examining meaningful work as a predictor of meaning in life, as measured by the MLQ, are provided in Table 15.

Table 15

Meaningful Work as a Predictor of Meaning in Life

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	41.291	141	.468***				
Work Comprehension				.686	.348	-.002, 1.374	.220
Work Purpose				.641	.268	.112, 1.170	.296*
Greater Good				.883	.402	.089, 1.667	.223*

Note. CI = confidence interval

* $p < .05$.

*** $p < .001$.

As indicated in Table 15, work purpose and greater good motivation were significant predictors of a presence of meaning in life. Work comprehension was not a significant predictor of a sense of meaning in life.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of meaningful work was a significant predictor of positive affect, as measured in the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 16.

Table 16

Meaningful Work as a Predictor of Positive Affect

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	13.429	142	.225***				
Work Comprehension				-.497	.509	-1.504, .510	-.133
Work Purpose				1.062	.392	.287, 1.837	.410**
Greater Good				.942	.582	-.210, 2.093	.199

Note. CI = confidence interval

** p < .01.

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 16, work purpose was a significant predictor of positive affect. Work comprehension and greater good motivation were not significant predictors of positive affect.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of meaningful work was a significant predictor of negative affect, as measured in the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 17.

Table 17

Meaningful Work as a Predictor of Negative Affect

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	.490	142	.010				
Work Comprehension				-.039	.474	-.977, .899	-.013
Work Purpose				-.260	.365	-.982, .461	-.122
Greater Good				.168	.542	-.904, .1.240	.043

Note. CI = confidence interval

* $p < .05$.

*** $p < .001$.

As indicated in Table 17, the regression model including work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation was not a significant predictor of negative affect.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of meaningful work was a significant predictor of positive relationships, as measured in the Positive Relationships scale of Ryff's scales of psychological well being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 18.

Table 18

Meaningful Work as a Predictor of Positive Relationships

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	β
Model	6.496	141	.124***				
Work Comprehension				-.117	.081	-.277, .042	-.210
Work Purpose				.039	.063	-.084, .163	.102
Greater Good				.289	.094	.102, .476	.403**

Note. CI = confidence interval

** p < .01.

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 18, greater good motivation was a significant predictor of positive relationships. Work purpose and work motivation were not significant predictors of positive relationships.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of meaningful work was a significant predictor of life satisfaction, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation were each entered as predictors for the model. The results are provided in Table 19.

Table 19

Meaningful Work as a Predictor of Life Satisfaction

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	5.686	141	.110**				
Work Comprehension				-.202	.481	-1.153, .749	-.061
Work Purpose				.350	.373	-.387, 1.086	.153
Greater Good				1.043	.562	-.068, 2.154	.246

Note. CI = confidence interval

** $p < .01$.

As indicated in Table 19, the regression model including work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation was a significant predictor of life satisfaction.

In sum, five multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether meaningful work was a significant predictor of the components of well-being. The full model was a significant predictor of meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. Specifically, greater good motivation was found to be a significant predictor of meaning in life and positive relationships. Work purpose was found to be a significant predictor of meaning in life and positive affect. A model containing work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation was found to be a positive predictor of life satisfaction.

Social Support as a predictor of the components of well-being. The variable social support was hypothesized to significantly predict the criterion variables life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, and meaning in life. More specifically, social support was predicted to be significantly positively correlated with the above mentioned components of well-

being. This predictor variable also was hypothesized to be negatively correlated with the criterion variable of negative affect.

As detailed in the Background section if this paper, the construct of social support was measured by the Deployment Social Support section of the DRRI (King, King, & Vogt, 2003). Separate regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses related to social support and well-being. For each regression analysis, social support was entered as a predictor variable and one of the components of well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect, positive relationships, meaning in life, and negative affect) was entered as the criterion variable. The results of the regression analysis examining social support as a predictor of meaning in life, as measured by the MLQ, are provided in Table 20.

Table 20

Social Support as a Predictor of Meaning in Life

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	28.255	139	.175***				
Social Support				.277	.051	.176, .379	.418***

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 20, social support was a significant predictor of a presence of meaning in life.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of social support was a significant predictor of positive affect, as measured in the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Social support was entered as a predictor for the model. The results are provided in Table 21.

Table 21

Social Support as a Predictor of Positive Affect

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	41.330	137	.233***				
Social Support				.377	.059	.261, .493	.482***

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 21, social support was a significant predictor of positive affect.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of social support was a significant predictor of negative affect, as measured in the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Social support was entered as a predictor for the model. The results are provided in Table 22.

Table 22

Social Support as a Predictor of Negative Affect

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	9.665	137	.066**				
Social Support				-.170	.055	-.278, -.062	-.258**

Note. CI = confidence interval

** p < .01.

As indicated in Table 22, social support was a significant negative predictor of negative affect.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of social support was a significant predictor positive relationships, as measured in the Positive

Relationships scale of Ryff's scales of psychological well being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Social support was entered as a predictor for the model. The results are provided in Table 23.

Table 23

Social Support as a Predictor of Positive Relationships

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	103.25	136	.433***				
Social Support				.076	.008	.061, .091	.658***

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 23, social support was a significant predictor of positive relationships.

A multiple regression analysis also was conducted to analyze whether the construct of social support was a significant predictor of life satisfaction, as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Social support was entered as a predictor for the model. The results are provided in Table 24.

Table 24

Social Support as a Predictor of Life Satisfaction

Analysis and Variables	*F*	df	R^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Model	58,957	136	.304***				
Social Support				.388	.051	.288, .488	.551***

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As indicated in Table 24, social support was a significant predictor of life satisfaction.

In sum, five multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether social support was a significant predictor of the components of well being. Social support was found to be a significant predictor of all 5 components of well-being: meaning in life, positive affect, negative affect (a negative relationship), positive relationships, and life satisfaction.

Tests of Moderation. Regression analyses were conducted to examine whether the relationships between the predictor constructs of calling and meaningful work and the criterion construct of well-being were moderated by social support. As is suggested in the well-being literature (e.g, Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), the construct of well-being was investigated by separately examining the criterion variables of life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, meaning in life, and positive relationships. Specifically, the hypotheses tested in this study were that social support would strengthen the positive relationships between both calling and meaningful work and the criterion variables meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. Additionally this study sought to test the hypothesis that social support weakened the negative relationship between calling and meaningful work and negative affect.

These hypotheses were tested using hierarchical linear regression. As search for calling was not a relevant variable for the moderation hypotheses, it was not included in the tests of moderation. With regard to meaningful work, a meaningful work total score was derived by adding the scores of work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation; this method was suggested by the author (Steger, personal communication, March 1, 2011). All predictor variables were mean centered to address the effects of multicollinearity (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004).

Social support as a moderator between calling and the components of well-being. To test the moderation effect of social support in the relationship between calling and well-being, hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted. In the first step of each of the five hierarchical linear regression analyses, presence of calling total score (centered) and post-deployment social support (centered) were entered as predictor variables. For the second step of the hierarchical linear regression models, the above variables were entered as predictor variables, and the interaction term ("calling*social support"), created from the centered versions of the predictor variables, was added to the model. Five analyses were conducted, one for each of the components of well-being. For all regression analyses the significance level was set at $p = .05$. The development of the hierarchical regression models to test moderation was in accordance with the recommendations of Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004).

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between calling and the criterion variable of meaning in life. In the first step of the analysis presence of calling total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between calling and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 25.

Table 25

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Calling and Meaning in Life

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.526***					
Calling			.516	.051	.415, .617	.614***
Social Support			.171	.040	.091, .251	.258***
Step 2	.528***	.002				
Calling			.514	.051	.413, .616	.612***
Social Support			.176	.041	.095, .257	.265***
Calling*Social Support			-.003	.005	-.012, .006	-.040

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 25, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of meaning in life ($F = 76.032$, df = 139). While the second order analysis also was significant ($F = 50.632$, df = 139), the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between calling and meaning in life.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between calling and the criterion variable of positive affect. In the first step of the analysis presence of calling total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between calling and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 26.

Table 26

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Calling and Positive Affect

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.617***					
Calling			.396	.070	.258, .534	.389***
Social Support			.294	.055	.185, .402	.376***
Step 2	.617***	.000				
Calling			.397	.070	.258, .536	.400***
Social Support			.291	.056	.180, .402	.373***
Calling*Social Support			-.001	.006	-.011, .014	.016

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 26, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of positive affect ($F = 41.473$, df = 137). While the second order analysis also was significant ($F = 27.474$, df = 137), the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between calling and positive affect.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between calling and the criterion variable of negative affect. In the first step of the analysis presence of calling total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between calling and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 27.

Table 27

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Calling and Negative Affect

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.071***					
Calling			.063	.072	-.082, .203	.072
Social Support			-.183	.057	-.295, -.070	-.277**
Step 2	.072***	.000				
Calling			-.061	.072	-.082, .205	.073
Social Support			-.185	.058	-.300, -.070	-.281**
Calling*Social Support			.001	.006	-.011, .014	.019

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 27, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of negative affect ($F = 5.174$, df = 137). While the second order analysis also was significant ($F = 3.412$, df = 137), the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between calling and negative affect.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between calling and the criterion variable of positive relationships. In the first step of the analysis presence of calling total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term

between calling and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 28.

Table 28

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Calling and Positive Relationships

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.442***					
Calling			.015	.010	-.005, .035	.099
Social Support			.073	.008	.058, .088	.630***
Step 2	.446***	.004				
Calling			.016	.010	-.004, .036	.106
Social Support			.071	.008	.056, .087	.617***
Calling*Social Support			.001	.001	-.001, .003	.061

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As presented in Table 28, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of positive relationships (F = 53.168, df = 136). The second order analysis also was significant (F = 35.694, df = 136), but the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between calling positive relationships.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between calling and the criterion variable of life satisfaction. In the first step of the analysis presence of calling total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction

terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between calling and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 29.

Table 29

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Calling and Life Satisfaction

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.319***					
Calling			.116	.068	-.018, .249	.129
Social Support			.363	.052	.259, .466	.515***
Step 2	.336***	.017				
Calling			.128	.067	-.005, .61	.141
Social Support			.342	.006	-.001, .022	.486***
Calling*Social Support			.011	.006	-.001, .022	.134

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** p < .001.

As presented in Table 29, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of life satisfaction (F = 31.363, df = 136). The second order analysis also was significant (F = 22.433, df = 136), but the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between calling and life satisfaction.

Social support as a moderator between meaningful work and the components of well-being. To test the moderation effect of social support in the relationship between meaningful work and well-being, hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted. In the first step of each of the five hierarchical linear regression analyses, meaningful work total score (centered) and post-deployment social support (centered) were entered as predictor variables. For the

second step of the hierarchical linear regression models, the above variables were entered as predictor variables, and the interaction term ("meaningful work*social support"), created from the centered versions of the predictor variables, was added to the model. Five analyses were conducted--one for each of the components of well-being. For all regression analyses the significance level was set at $p = .05$. The development of the hierarchical regression models to test moderation was in accordance with the recommendations of Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004).

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and the criterion variable of meaning in life. In the first step of the analysis meaningful work total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between meaningful work and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 30.

Table 30

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Meaningful Work and Meaning in Life

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.536***					
Meaningful Work			.632	.061	.511, .752	.629***
Social Support			.155	.040	.076, .235	.234***
Step 2	.537***	.002				
Meaningful Work			.634	.066	.503, .765	.631***
Social Support			.135	.041	.075, .235	.234***
Meaningful Work*Social Support			.000	.005	-.009, .010	.006

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 30, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of meaning in life ($F = 79.288$, df = 139). While the second order analysis also was significant ($F = 52.480$, df = 139), the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between meaningful work and meaning in life.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and the criterion variable of positive affect. In the first step of the analysis meaningful work total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between meaningful work and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 31.

Table 31

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Meaningful Work and Positive Affect

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.345***					
Meaningful Work			.415	.086	.245, .586	.351***
Social Support			.296	.057	.184, .409	.379***
Step 2	.347***	.002				
Meaningful Work			.392	.094	.207, .578	.332***
Social Support			.299	.057	.186, .412	.382***
Meaningful Work*Social Support			-.004	.007	-.017, .009	-.048

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 31, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of positive affect ($F = 35.607$, df = 137). While the second order analysis also was significant ($F = 23.764$, df = 137), the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between meaningful work and positive affect.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and the criterion variable of negative affect. In the first step of the analysis meaningful work total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between meaningful work and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 32.

Table 32

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Meaningful Work and Negative Affect

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.067**					
Meaningful Work			-.024	.087	-.195, .148	-.024
Social Support			-.165	.057	-.279, -.052	-.251**
Step 2	.097**	.030*				
Meaningful Work			-.100	.093	-.283, .084	-.100
Social Support			-.157	.057	-.270, -.045	-.238**
Meaningful Work*Social Support			-.014	.007	-.027, -.001	-.188*

Note. CI = confidence interval

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

As presented in Table 32, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of negative affect ($F = 4.837$, df = 137). The second order analysis also was significant ($F = 4.784$, df = 137), and the R^2 change was not significant. Additionally, the interaction between meaningful work and social support was significant. Therefore, social support was found to significantly moderate the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect.

To explore the form of the significant interaction effect between meaningful work and social support in the predication of negative affect, predicted values for the criterion variable (negative affect) were plotted for low (1 SD below the mean), average (equal to the mean) and high (1 SD above the mean) levels of meaningful work at low (1 SD below the mean), average

(equal to the mean) and high (1 SD above the mean) levels of social support (the moderator variable). Specifically, predicted values of negative affect were obtained for each group by multiplying the unstandardized regression coefficients for meaningful work and the moderating variable (social support) by the appropriate value (i.e., value for one SD below the mean, the mean, and 1 SD above the mean) for each variable in the regression equation. As Figure 7 displays, meaningful work was more closely and negatively associated with negative affect for participants who endorsed high levels of social support. For participants with low levels of social support, level of meaningful work had less of a relationship with negative affect.

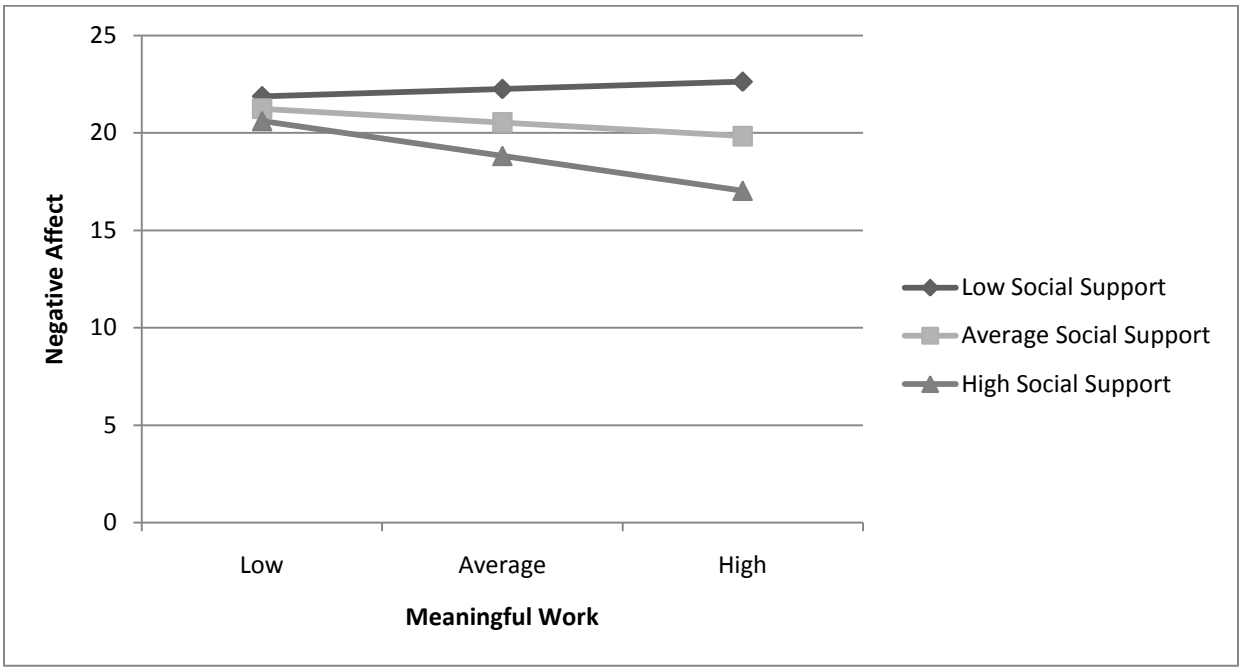

*Figure 7.*Relationship between meaningful work and negative affect for respondents with low, average, and high social support.

The significance of the interaction term suggests that the slopes for each level of social support were significantly different from each other. However, this does not indicate whether each slope differs from zero. Thus, post-hoc tests of the significance of simple slopes were conducted using procedures described in Aiken, West and Pitts (2003) to examine

whether the slope representing the relation between meaningful work and negative affect differed from zero at high (1 SD above the mean), average, and low (1 SD below the mean) levels of social support. These results revealed a significant negative slope for individuals with high social support (B = -.253, p < .05), but not for those with low social support (B = .-.1, p > .05) and average social support (B = .053, p > .05). This indicates that meaningful work was a significant negative predictor of meaningful work at high levels of social support, but at low and average levels the meaningful work-negative affect relationship did not differ from zero.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and the criterion variable of positive relationships. In the first step of the analysis meaningful work total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the interaction term between meaningful work and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 33.

Table 33

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Meaningful Work and Positive Relationships

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.440***					
Meaningful Work			.015	.012	-.008, .039	.085
Social Support			.073	.008	.058, .089	.632***
Step 2	.451***	.011				
Meaningful Work			.024	.013	-.002, .050	.137
Social Support			.072	.008	.057, .088	.622***
Meaningful Work*Social Support			.002	.001	.000, .003	.115

Note. CI = confidence interval

*** $p < .001$.

As presented in Table 33, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of positive relationships ($F = 52.714$, df = 136). The second order analysis also was significant ($F = 36.472$, df = 136), but the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between meaningful work and positive relationships.

A hierarchical regression analysis also was conducted to examine whether social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and the criterion variable of life satisfaction. In the first step of the analysis the meaningful work total score and social support were entered into the model. For each variable, the first-step effects presented are those obtained before the interaction terms were included in the respective equation. In the second step the

interaction term between meaningful work and social support was entered into the model. The results are provided in Table 34.

Table 34

Post-Deployment Social Support as a Moderator between Meaningful Work and Life Satisfaction

Analysis and Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	*B*	SE *B*	95% CI	B
Step 1	.326***					
Meaningful Work			.168	.080	.010, .325	.157*
Social Support			.355	.052	.251, .458	.503***
Step 2	.331***	.005				
Meaningful Work			.203	.087	-.031, .376	.190*
Social Support			.350	.053	.246, .454	.497***
Meaningful Work*Social Support			.006	.006	-.006, .018	.078

Note. CI = confidence interval

* p < .05.

*** p < .001.

As presented in Table 34, results indicated that the first order analysis was a significant predictor of life satisfaction (F = 32.442, df = 136). The second order analysis also was significant (F = 21.963, df = 136), but the R^2 change was not significant. Therefore, social support was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between meaningful work and life satisfaction.

Summary of Regression Analyses

The construct of calling was a strong predictor of the components of well-being. Presence of calling was found to significantly positively predict meaning in life, positive affect, positive

relationships, and life satisfaction. Search for calling was found to be a significant negative predictor of life satisfaction.

Meaningful work was found to be a moderate predictor of the components of well-being. Greater good motivation was found to be a significant positive predictor of meaning in life and positive relationships. Work purpose was found to be a significant positive predictor of meaning in life and positive affect. A model containing work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation was found to be a positive predictor of life satisfaction.

Social support was found to be a very strong predictor of the components of well-being. Social support was found to be a significant positive predictor of all meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. Social support was found to be a significant negative predictor of negative affect.

The tests of moderation revealed that social support does not moderate the relationships between calling and the components of well-being. Social support was found to moderate the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect. For respondents with low levels of social support, the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect was weaker. For respondents with high levels of social support, however, a stronger negative relationship between meaningful work and negative affect was found.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Several hypotheses were tested in the present study. Calling, meaningful work and social support all were hypothesized to be significantly positively associated with meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction, which are all components of well-being. All three of these predictor variables were hypothesized to be significantly negatively associated with negative affect, which also is a component of well-being.

The hypotheses related to calling were supported with regard to meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. Specifically, presence of calling was a significant positive predictor of these criterion variables in a model with presence of calling and search for calling entered as predictor variables. Search for calling also was a significant predictor of life satisfaction in the model that contained both calling predictors. It is important to note that previous research has shown that presence of calling and search for calling are not orthogonal (Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy, in press) suggesting that people who endorse presence of calling are also typically engaged in an ongoing search for calling. This may imply that maintaining a sense of calling is an ongoing process. The hypothesis that calling was significantly negatively associated with negative affect was not supported.

The hypotheses related to meaningful work were supported with regard to meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction. In the regression models developed for meaningful work, three specific domains of meaningful work were entered as predictors: work purpose, work comprehension, and greater good motivation. This model was a significant predictor of meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction, thereby supporting the hypotheses related to meaningful work with regard to these

criterion variables. Specifically, greater good motivation was found to be a significant predictor of meaning in life and positive relationships. Work purpose was found to be a significant predictor of meaning in life and positive affect. A model containing work comprehension, work purpose, and greater good motivation was found to be a positive predictor of life satisfaction. The hypothesis that meaningful work significantly negatively predicted negative affect was not supported.

The hypotheses related to social support all were supported in the present study, thereby making post-deployment social support an important variable to consider when examining well-being with veterans. This converges with a growing body of research highlighting the importance of social support among veterans (e.g., Brenner, et al., 2008). Another set of hypotheses in the present study was that social support would moderate the relationships between calling and the components of well-being, and between meaningful work and the components of well-being. These hypotheses were not supported in the present study, with the exception that social support was found to moderate the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect. The implications of this finding are discussed below. The lack of support for the bulk of the moderation hypotheses may be an issue of power; while the present study had sufficient power to effectively test the primary hypotheses, the data lacked sufficient power to adequately test moderation hypotheses.

Several other topics related to the present study warrant discussion. These include the representativeness of the sample, the themes elucidated by the qualitative inquiries and the potential policy implications of these responses, and the importance of the findings related to calling, meaningful work, and social support.

Representativeness of the Sample

Several factors must be considered when examining the representativeness of the sample in the present study. The degree to which the sample is representative of the national population of college student military veterans is impacted by demographic characteristics, characteristics of college enrollment, and characteristics of military service. Several facets of these topics also point to potential areas of future research.

Demographics. The demographic data collected included data regarding age, race, ethnicity, and gender. With regard to gender, the sample's distribution of 20.7% female veterans and 79.3% male veterans is comparable to the findings of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), who reported that 18% of armed service members were female. Regarding age, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) reported that nearly 2/3 of servicemembers separating from the military are under age 35. The sample's mean age of 31.5 and median age of 29 indicate that the sample is likely representative of those separating from the military with regard to age. A notable discrepancy between the demographic data of the sample and the demographic data of military servicemembers and veterans at large relates to race and ethnicity. The demographic characteristics of the sample include 91.5% of respondents identifying as white and 92.8% of respondents identifying as Non-Hispanic. This is notable because as of 2003 only 59.3% of active duty soldiers identified as white (Maxfield, 2004). It is not clear whether this discrepancy is due to sampling error or is reflective of a discrepancy between the demographic characteristics of veterans at large and the demographic characteristics of those who utilize GI Bill benefits to attend college. To summarize, a significant discrepancy exists between sample demographics and population demographics with regard to race and ethnicity, but the sample of respondents in

the present study is likely representative of the population of interest with respect to age and gender.

Characteristics of College Enrollment. The sample included a cross section of undergraduate and graduate students at various levels of progress with regard to earning a college degree, and from a wide variety of academic programs. It is notable that all but one respondent was from a four-year university. Thus, the extent to which results from the sample generalize to students at community colleges is unclear, given that community colleges may differ from four-year institutions with regard to availability and structure of veteran services. Additionally, as 60% of the sample were transfer students, it is likely that many veterans begin their college career at community colleges and then transfer to four year institutions. This may suggest that student veterans at community colleges often are more recently separated from military service than student veterans at four-year institutions, another potentially meaningful difference between these groups. Clearly, student veterans on community college campuses may be an important group to target in future research.

It also is important to note that fully two-thirds of the sample had experienced a significant break in college enrollment. The nature and impact of these breaks in enrollment may also be a rich area for future research. The high prevalence of transfer students and significant endorsement of breaks in enrollment underscore the ways in which the experiences of student veterans are different than the experiences of traditional students. These differences likely impact not only academic and administrative facets of the college experiences, but also social experiences and perceived connectedness with the campus community.

Characteristics of Military Service. All five branches of the military were represented, and a wide range of ranks were represented. Only ranks of E8 and O6 and higher (high ranking-

enlisted servicemembers and very high ranking officers) were not represented, indicating that enlisted servicemembers as well as officers were well represented. As commissioned ranks of O6 and above are rare and reflect very high rank in the military ("Colonel" in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, "Captain" in the Navy and Coast Guard, one rank below Admiral or General), the sample is likely representative of college student military veterans.

Veterans of both active duty and Reserve/National Guard service were represented. As the average length of time between separation from the military and filling out the survey was 4.3 years (median 3.25 years), the sample was not representative of the formal definition of "recently separated servicemembers"" created by the Department of Veterans Affairs and ABT Associates (2007), which uses the term to refer to people who have separated from the military within one to three years. Again, given the data regarding years since separation from service and the high number of transfer students, it is likely that many respondents studied at a community college before transferring to the four-year institution where they filled out the survey.

It is important to note that for respondents in the present study the modal number of deployments was three, and fully 20% respondents had deployed four or more times. The impact of multiple deployments is not well understood and may be a fruitful target of future research.

Discussion of Qualitative Data

Several important themes relating to veterans' experiences with college administration, faculty, and non-veteran students were prevalent in the qualitative portion of this analysis. Themes related to frustration with administrative services for military veterans on college campuses were notable and are interesting in light of recent research in this area. The social experiences of veterans also warrant discussion.

Cook and Kim (2009) reported that colleges and universities were, historically, not responsive to the needs of veterans but had recently begun developing programs to meet the needs of student veterans. The data from the present study indicated that programs are developed, or developing, at many universities but are not yet effective and integrated with other student services such as financial aid, admissions, and student diversity initiatives. Veterans did not express frustration about lack of programs, but about ineffective procedures in existing programs. Of course, it is important to note that the sample was collected through veteran listserv offices, so the respondents were all students at colleges that had at least a minimal level of support for veterans. The presence of a veteran listserv implies that a staff member is managing the veteran listserv and is therefore focused on veteran services. Therefore, it is possible that the lack of services that Cook and Kim (2009) discussed may still be the perception among veterans at colleges without a veteran listserv.

Indicative of the frustrations veterans expressed regarding services and programs available to them were their concerns with financial and administrative services on their campuses. This included the perception that student veteran services offices and financial aid offices were not communicating well; that veterans' non-traditional student status predisposed them to more administrative problems than traditional students; that certain types of military training (for example, medical training) should be considered deserving of transfer credits; and that students serving in Reserve units should have more flexibility in managing the conflicts between school demands and Reserve demands. Administrative changes that address these themes are likely to require system-wide coordination and, potentially, collaboration with the federal government's Department of Defense. Suggested changes and potential barriers are discussed below.

In addition to the themes that veterans endorsed, the data related to school enrollment shed light on the frustrations of veterans summarized above. It is notable that 60% of respondents reported being a transfer student. It is likely that veterans must facilitate communication not only between federal GI Bill officials and their current college, but also between their current college and previously attended colleges in order to facilitate the transfer of credits. Within the institution where they are enrolled, veterans are likely to be required to interact with admissions, registrar, financial aid, veterans' services, GI Bill benefits, and other service providers. These challenges, when viewed in light of the fact that 48.9% of the sample reported being first generation college students and therefore are unlikely to be familiar with the formal demands and cultural norms of college life, can be assumed to be considerable.

These results suggest that colleges and universities would be well served to focus on implementing efficient financial aid processing for veterans, developing streamlined processes for approving transfer credits, and including student veterans as a group of focus when working to improve the campus climate for minority students. Results also suggest that veteran services programs would likely be more effective at meeting the needs of student veterans if they worked to integrate with, and advocate for veterans in, other university services such as financial aid offices and admissions offices. Obstacles to this type of transition, both in the past and in the recent future, may include lack of awareness of the problems caused by lack of collaboration and little administrative support for cross-program collaboration.

The specific changes that universities can make to better accommodate veterans, either in the explicitly stated opinions of survey respondents or in the opinion of the author, are the following: First, financial aid staff need to be trained in processing GI Bill benefits efficiently. Obstacles to changing this, both in the past and in the recent future, may include the confusing

and periodically shifting methods for accessing federal GI Bill benefits, a lack of training and expertise in processing GI Bill benefits, and a low priority in improving GI Bill benefits administration due to the low base rate of student veterans. Second, the Veteran Services office needs to have a close working relationship with financial aid and school administration so veterans' concerns can be addressed fluidly. Obstacles to these changes, both in the past and in the recent future, may include problems with effective collaborative system development, physical or administrative separation between veteran services programs and financial aid offices, and lack of awareness of the impact of this lack of collaboration. Third, faculty should be provided with information about the demands of Reserve military service, and colleges should develop recommendations for faculty about how to address the needs of student Reservists. Results from the present study suggest that obstacles to improving faculty awareness and effectiveness may include low levels of exposure to and awareness of student veteran issues, personal or political disdain for military service, and lack of administrative methods for developing effective student veteran programs and policies.

Important themes related to the social experiences of student veterans also emerged in the data from the present study. A highly prominent theme was that veterans regarded their military service positively and expressed the feeling that military service had both benefitted them personally and benefitted their country. Veterans discussed how their military service positively shaped their character development, impacting domains such as work ethic, discipline, worldview, and a desire to help others. Veterans also described military service as greatly expanding their life experiences. Research into how military service impacts self-efficacy, a pro-social orientation, and meaning-making would provide more information about the process by which these changes take place.

Cook and Kim (2009) conducted focus groups and found that education is a priority for veterans. Results from the present study suggest that many veterans greatly appreciate the opportunities afforded them by GI Bill benefits and the ability to attend college. Results also suggest that many veterans perceive a significant difference between their own approach to, and regard for, education and that of their non-veteran peers. Veterans perceived that many traditional-aged college students took the opportunities that college affords for granted and did not take their studies seriously.

These differences perceived by veterans regarding appreciation of educational opportunities were not the only ways in which veterans perceived themselves as different from their non-veteran college peers. The social and interpersonal experiences of veterans on college campuses were characterized by a sense of being different than, or disconnected from, the non-veteran population. Some veterans characterized these differences in a positive way, and endorsed themes of being treated with respect and being regarded by their peers as a resource and mentor. Others described being treated with respect (such as being regarded as a resource or being treated with gratitude for having served in the military), but being kept at a distance from their non-veteran peers. This distance was perceived by respondents as resulting from several factors. These factors included non-veterans having described non-veterans as not understanding veterans, as being intimidated by veterans, as assuming political and ideological differences from veterans, and as regarding veterans as "unstable" or mentally ill. Such results highlight a potential need for non-veteran students to receive education about student veterans' experiences and perspectives. Results from the present study suggest that with regard to life experience, values, age, worldviews, frequent disruption in enrollment, and high prevalence of transferring

schools, the characterization of veterans as an “invisible minority” on college campuses (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2009) is not without merit.

As well as describing a sense of being different than their non-veteran counterparts, veterans endorsed feeling a strong sense of camaraderie with other veterans. Black, Westwood, and Sorsdal (2007) stated that military servicemembers are taught that they are different than civilians, and the data from this study indicated that veterans perceived many differences between themselves and civilians with regard to worldview, life experiences, witnessing of traumatic events, and appreciation of educational opportunities. It is not surprising, therefore, that veterans seek support and connection with each other. While colleges and universities may better serve veterans by providing opportunities for veterans to have positive interactions with non-veterans, another essential service is providing opportunities for veterans to support, mentor, and enjoy camaraderie with each other. The benefits of 3rd-, 4th-, and 5th-year students mentoring newer students in navigating the challenges of financial aid issues, social transition, and academic work are likely to be considerable. Several Universities, such as the University of Michigan and Rutgers University, have implemented "veteran-to-veteran" programs to facilitate this type of mentorship. Additionally, a national organization, Student Veterans of America, provides opportunities for veterans to both provide and receive mentoring and support from other student veterans.

Role- Exit Theory is a helpful lens through which the themes endorsed by veterans can be viewed. Ebaugh's (1988) assertion that role-exit is primarily a social process was borne out in the responses of student veterans, who emphasized the social and contextual facets of their transition. Ebaugh's description of a "hangover identity" that one can never completely leave behind is a theme that was evident in veterans' expressed desires to connect with and help other

veterans as well as their descriptions of how military service has changed their perspectives and values. Veterans' valuing camaraderie with other veterans echoes the theme described by Ebaugh (1988) in which role exit involves identification with others in one's previous role and identification with others who have also transitioned out of one's previous role. Ebaugh's themes of shifting friendship networks and managing the social reactions of others also were evident in veterans' description of interactions with non-veteran college students.

The qualitative data yielded little information about the financial concerns of veterans. The only themes related to financial topics was that GI Bill benefits were vital in veterans' pursuit of a college degree, and that financial aid offices were difficult to work with in processing GI Bill benefits. It is notable that 65.9% of respondents identified financial concerns as a challenge that they have experienced in pursuing a college degree, and unfortunate that themes elucidating these concerns did not emerge. Likely components of these concerns are supporting families (38.8% of the sample was married and 20.9% had children) and navigating the processes related to utilizing financial aid benefits. A more thorough examination of the financial concerns of veterans is a potentially fruitful area for future research.

Calling and Meaningful Work

The relationships between calling and meaningful work and well-being among college student military veterans are consistent with those found in other populations. For example, Eldridge (2007) found that presence of calling was significantly positively correlated with meaning in life and life satisfaction. The present study also found that presence of calling is a significant positive predictor of meaning in life and life satisfaction.

Previous research on calling had found that orientation to work (regarding work as a job, a career, or a calling) was not strongly related to job type and job status (Wrzesniewski,

McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) emphasized that people in low prestige jobs can approach their work as a calling in the same way as people with higher prestige jobs. Results from the present study suggested that many respondents derived meaning from their military service and regarded their military work as serving prosocial and greater-good aims. This perspective is interesting in that many jobs in the military are specialized, logistically-focused endeavors, and military servicemembers are likely to view their work as important and as serving a higher purpose. For example, a servicemember's military occupational specialty may be repairing trucks, and he or she may regard this work as vitally important to the success of the mission of their unit. The same servicemember may do similar work in a civilian setting after separating from the military, but may not regard this work as important or as a source of meaning. This perspective was articulately stated by one respondent: "…some feel that the things that they are passionate, about or their studies, are their work. That's part of what the military does, is make one's task at hand, their work…" This perspective indicated that something inherent in military service, or a theme of acculturation to military service, is that one's work, whatever it may be, is vitally important to the success of the military endeavor as a whole. Results from the present study therefore contribute to the body of knowledge regarding calling and meaningful work by suggesting that one's sense of work as a calling, or one's sense of work as meaningful, may be highly impacted by training and orientation content that clarifies the importance of a given role to the health and success of the larger mission of the workplace.

The ways in which vocational rehabilitation services and career counseling services can help veterans develop a sense of meaning and purpose in their post-service endeavors is a rich arena for future research. Effective intervention with veterans in this domain could impact not

only work variables such as employment status and income, but psychological factors related to well-being. Loss of a sense of purpose and importance in one's work has been shown to be related to a sense of burdensomeness and suicidal ideation among military veterans (Brenner et al., 2008). Brenner et al. (2008) recommended vocational rehabilitation programs and employment related educational programs as possible interventions to relieve burdensomeness. Educational programs also hold the potential benefit of being less stigmatizing than mental health services, which veterans are wary of seeking (Burnham, Meredith, Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2009).

Military veterans may respond positively to career interventions that emphasize the contributions that their work of choice can make to a greater purpose. Dik, Duffy, and Eldridge (2009) provided suggestions for incorporating calling and work meaning interventions into counseling psychology. For example, the authors recommended assessing a client's work orientation, assisting clients in transitioning from passive to active discernment of meaningful work, and encouraging "meaning-making behaviors" such as capitalizing on strengths and developing realistic and thoughtful parameters for extracting meaning from work. In working with student veterans, additional interventions may also be helpful. For example, assessing veterans' sense of meaning and purpose related to military service, and juxtaposing this with the meaning they are deriving from school and/or work, may help veterans to understand and articulate their transition experiences and challenges more clearly. Assisting veterans in examining how their civilian work can contribute to the betterment of their community, as well as how they can approach their work in a way that maximizes community benefit and meaning extraction, may help veterans to derive meaning and purpose. Veterans with disabilities may benefit from discussion focused on how their disability could be viewed as both a challenge and

an opportunity for contributing meaningfully to the community (for example, mentoring other veterans with disabilities). A vocational focus on purpose and meaning may positively impact veterans' transition experiences and overall sense of well-being, and may contribute to decreasing suicide risk among veterans (Brenner et al., 2008).

Social support

The present study found that post deployment social support is a significant positive predictor of meaning in life, positive affect, positive relationships, and life satisfaction and a significant negative predictor of negative affect. Similarly, pervious research has shown that post-deployment social support is significantly positively correlated with life satisfaction and significantly negatively correlated with depression and anxiety (King, King, & Vogt, 2003).

As discussed earlier, all but one of the moderation hypotheses were not supported in the present study; this may well be due to insufficient power. The lone exception was that social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect. This finding showed that for people with low levels of social support a sense of meaningful work was not associated with level of negative affect reported. However, for people with high levels of social support, negative affect decreased as a sense of meaningful work increased. This result suggests that social support is an important resource for veterans and the development of a social support network of both fellow veterans and non-veterans is important in the transition experiences of veterans. This also suggests that when a social support network has been established, focusing on helping a veteran find a sense of meaning and purpose in work may significantly help in reduction of distress.

Regarding this interaction, an important point of discussion is why social support moderated the relationship between meaningful work and negative affect, and not calling and

negative affect, because calling and meaningful work are closely related constructs. It is interesting to note that while the moderation of social support between calling and well-being was not significant, it was generally trending in the opposite direction from the interaction related to meaningful work. This discrepancy may be an issue of power. Additionally, meaningful work differs from calling in that it does not include a transcendent summons component, and includes work comprehension as a component. It is possible that when a person's sense of work meaning has a less spiritual or religious character, the social context of their sense of work meaning is more important than that of people with a spiritual or religious approach to their work. It is also possible that when people have a clearer, more specific understanding of the purpose of their work, they are more attuned to the social support, or lack thereof, that they are receiving in their endeavors to approach work meaningfully. If future studies find a similar interaction, examination of the factors influencing this interaction would be a fruitful area of study.

A result that can easily be overlooked in this data analysis was that, when asked how their military experience had impacted various domains of their lives, a large number of veterans answered “no difference,” or a variation thereof, in response to virtually all of the prompt questions. This study’s design encouraged respondents to reflect on differences between themselves and more traditional students, so these reported differences are prominent in the data gathered. However, student veterans’ perception that they are, in many important ways, similar to their non-veteran counterparts cannot be overlooked.

Limitations and areas of future research

Earlier data on a sense of calling and meaningful work from these participants collected while they were in the military would have contributed to the interpretation of data collected in

the present study by providing a method of comparing work orientation, sense of calling, and sense of work meaning in relation to military service vs. civilian work endeavors. The cross-sectional design of this study makes it unclear whether a change in sense of calling is a significant factor in the transition experiences of veterans. It also is important to note that the problem of insufficient power may have impacted the moderation findings of the present study. Additionally, the high correlation between presence of calling and search for calling created problems with respect to multicollinearity. While the predictor variables were mean-centered to address issues of multicollinearity, the unusually high correlation between the presence of calling and search for calling constructs (higher than in previous research) created issues of multicollinearity that were not fully addressed by mean-centering these predictor variables.

This study encouraged veterans to reflect on what sets them apart from their college peers, but did not ask in what ways veterans are similar to their college peers. An examination into student veterans' perceived connections with, or similarities to, non-veteran students could be an area of future study and would provide a balanced view of student veterans' perceptions of themselves and their peers. Also relating to bias in the data collection and interpretation process is the problem of selection bias in the sample. As all participants were recruited through veteran listservs, the experiences of veterans at colleges without listservs (and therefore likely lacking veteran services) were not represented in the sample. Finally, bias likely impacted the interpretation of qualitative data, as all researchers approach data with their own biases and perspectives. For example, in the present study some of the statements made by respondents about their disdain for nonveteran students were impactful to the author, so this theme may have been overemphasized in data interpretation. It should be noted that consistent effort to be clear

and objective was made, but qualitative research cannot be considered bias-free (Creswell, 1988).

The information gathered about challenges that military veterans faced with their transition to college provides a way to prioritize services for student veterans. However, one must not assume that these challenges are unique to veterans, as data from non-veteran college students were not collected.

Regarding financial concerns of veterans, the present study revealed that veterans experience significant financial stress but did not provide specific information about the nature of this stress. Future research should specifically examine this topic.

It is important to note that the results of this study only apply to military veterans at four-year institutions, and not to community college student veterans. The data suggested that many veterans may attend community colleges before four-year institutions, and that the data collected may therefore reflect a second step in veterans' college endeavors, but this topic will require further research to determine. Similarly, representativeness was limited by the race and ethnicity characteristics of the sample.

In addition to areas of research mentioned above, the present study suggested two other areas of future research. The first is examining the psychological and social benefits of vocational programs for student veterans. The present study and previous research (e.g., Brenner, et al., 2008) has pointed toward the potential benefit of vocational programs for veterans. Specifically, examination of model programs and their impact on vocational and psychosocial functioning will be a rich arena to examine. For example, examining the structure and impact of Student Veterans of America programs, or veteran-to-veteran programs on college

campuses, would provide clearer information on the psychosocial and vocational benefits of these programs.

Another potentially fruitful area of focus is the manner in which the military promotes a sense of meaning and purpose in the work of servicemembers. Veterans overwhelmingly regarded their military service as important and meaningful, and previous qualitative research has found similar themes (e.g., Brenner, et al., 2008). Examining how the military instills a sense of meaningful work, and making attempts to use similar themes in vocational rehabilitation and career counseling services for veterans, may have a substantial impact on the transition experiences of student military veterans. Previous research has demonstrated the benefits of perceiving one's work as meaningful for active duty servicemembers (e.g., Britt et al., 2007; Thomas, Kammuber, and Layes,1997, as cited in Westwood, Black, Kammuber, & McFarlane, 2008); studies examining how framing civilian work in order to emphasize meaning for veterans is likely to be fruitful. For example, research that examines the training experiences and work orientations of people in jobs that exist both in and out of the military (for example, truck maintenance workers, mental health service providers, laundry workers, medical staff, etc.) would help provide a clearer sense of how training and work orientation differs between military servicemembers and civilian workers. This research may also provide important information about how career interventions can increase veterans' ability to derive meaning from their civilian work.

As was discussed in detail in the “Theoretical Considerations” portion of this paper, Life-Course Theory (Gade, 1991) asserts that there are complex factors influencing the transition experiences of military veterans. MacLean and Elder (2007) emphasized that there is no one answer to the question, “What is the effect of military service?” or to the question, “What is the

association between military service and the life course?" The data from the present study indicated that veterans overwhelmingly regarded their military service as having taught them valuable lessons in the development of discipline, personal character, confidence, and commitment to hard work. If colleges and universities can better support veterans in their transition experiences and educational endeavors, and if veterans are provided with opportunities to provide mentoring and support to each other, veterans will not only experience more career success and a greater sense of well-being, they also will be better poised to act on their desires to work hard, help others, and contribute to the betterment of their community and their country.

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