Article Analysis: Military Students

Sonja Howell

Military Students

The purpose of the 2013 "When the Army Post is the Campus: Understanding the Social and Academic Integration of Soldiers Attending College" study was to add to previous college retainment versus drop out studies with data regarding social communities in a system during higher education in larger settings compared to universities within its own social community. Within the study military expectations for training, what has the military done for themselves as far as education, are these actions helping and if the Tinto's theory about social integration can help the military provide post-research information about the actions taken for active military educational changes (Wilson et al., 2013).

Tinto's (1987) social integration and academic, theoretical framework were used for the military study to document performance of integration informal ad informal communities. The focus of interaction was measured between peers, faculty, extracurricular activities and staff and the student. The question was to find if this interaction helped the student stay in college and complete the educational goals, a degree (Braxton, 2000).

The Tinto theory was selected so they could focus on social exchanges and integration of students and institutions. The military has unique similarities and differences with two and four year colleges. Student's variables are unique as far as responsibilities, but that does not differ from the societal interactions with others in the groups as far as using the theory. With this theory, the social integration on two levels could be reviewed, both the military and the higher level education. They were curious which of the two social groups would be stronger. They wondered if the military society or the educational society or goals would be strongest (Wilson et al., 2013).

Research shows the five major findings within the literature review are;

1. WWII veterans were more motivated with an increase of educational achievement (Thelin, 2004; Rudolph, 1991) by the Montgomery GI Bill's educational policies much more than the veterans during the Post–9/11 GI Bill, tuition assistance or the educational reenlistments (Ackerman et al., 2009).

2. The number of Vietnam veterans participating in educational goals did not compare

Greatly after their military responsibilities to the non-veterans possibly due to the fact that The arrangements were not as generous to them as for the WWII vets and did not achieve The same educational goals over time as expected or hoped compared to the non-vets (Teachman & Call, 2005); Teachman & Call, 1996).

3. The achievements of education and income levels varies between service types and are lower than non-veterans which may be suggested by the conflict between the military educational goals and the real outcomes (Teachman & Tedrow, 2004, 2007).

4. Public universities have more flexibilities with greater achievement rates that the military educational services for serviceman (Cook and Kim, 2009). Consortiums between both of these types of colleges faired better for the students (Corsica et al., 2002).

5. Even though more are enrolled, less have achieved their goals, but the ability for servicemen to manage online classes while deployed needs further study (Mcmurray, 2007).

They selected research method was data collection with interviews and surveys. They wanted to have qualitative views on social integration and academic integration. This way they could find what participants thought could be a solution including collecting data that needed to

be coded which would include more. (Kvale, 1996). This work also included personal variables such as income and if there were incentives to participate in education or completion of attainment of a degree in the data unlike some of the other studies (Wilson et al., 2013).

Wilson et al. (2013) shared the key findings were that some of the participants actually joined the service because of the choice to have their degree paid for, some participants received motivation from employment accolades if they went to college. Some of the personnel chose to begin schooling while in the military due to the promoting of educational achievements within the military.

The research viewed the uniqueness of persons in the military while taking courses. Military personnel spoke of the benefits of going to school during enlistment in the military instead of speaking about going to school and achieving a degree. The degree was not the goal, the benefits were with no stake in a traditional education in a college atmosphere (Wilson et al., 2013).

One limitation of the study was that even though the military base is large and has many people, not many could join due to their availability, tight schedules and deployment was rather quick not giving them enough time to schedule the interviews or attend educational classes or be on campus long enough to join in with social integrations of the internal infrastructure. The work suggested to compare the social integration between the military institution with the educational foundation within itself to see how college completion is being viewed compared to achievements of credits being achieved. The military may be hindering the degree completion rate (Wilson et al., 2013).

Empirical research is much more understood after analyzing Tinto's (1975) seminal work on college student persistence and two other of Tinto's articles (Tinto, 1993) as the modeled theory for studies (Wilson et al., 2013). It seems the path or pattern of when a researcher seeks and finds real life facts that fall in line with each other using multiple sources combined from one author or multiple authors, using theory in this case, the combination and documentation of these combined facts of their observations backing each other to fill a purpose for confirming further facts by building off each other is the process of completing empirical research. It's as if there are many ah ha moments combined and linked together by commonalities.

References

Ackerman, R., Diramio, D., & Mitchell, R. L. G. (2009). Transitions: Combat veterans as college

students. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2009*(126), 5–14.

https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.311

Braxton, J. (2000). *Reworking the student departure puzzle*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University

Press.

Cook, B., & Kim, Y. (2009). *From soldier to student: Easing the transition of service members*

on campus. American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED505982.

Corsica, J., Johnson, D., & Lancaster, W. (2002). *SUNY colleges in the north country: A*

successful partnership with the military.

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/he.91.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand

Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Mcmurray, A. (2007). College students, the GI Bill, and the proliferation of online learning: A

history of learning and contemporary challenges. *The Internet and Higher Education*,

10(2), 143–150. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2007.03.002

Rudolph, F. (1991). *The American college and university: A history*. Athens, GA: University of

Georgia Press.

Teachman, J. (2005). Military service in the Vietnam era and educational attainment. *Sociology*

of Education, 78(1), 50-68.

Teachman, J., & Call, V. (1996). The effect of military service on educational, occupational,

and income attainment. *Social Science Research*, *25*(1), 1–31.

https://doi.org/10.1006/ssre.1996.0001

Thelin, J. (2004). *A history of American higher education.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins

University Press.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* Chicago,

IL: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, K., Smith, N., Lee, A., & Stevenson, M. (2013). When the Army post is the campus:

Understanding the social and academic integration of soldiers attending college. *Journal*

of College Student Development, *54*(6), 628–642. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2013.0087