

Introduction

- Military service members may experience differences in identification of life goals dependent on their gender and relationship status after they have reintegrated to civilian life.
- This study explored the association between relationship status and gender on current life goals of service members after reintegration into civilian life. Relationship status was defined as married, not married but in a committed relationship, or single. Goals of interest included: academic/occupational and intimate relationship goals.
- Using a free-response format, United States military service veterans reported their current life goals as well as their gender and relationship status.

Method

Participants

Recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk.
N = 225 United States Military Veterans (75% male)

Ethnicity:

- Asian-American: 4.4%
- African American: 8%
- European-American: 76.9%
- Latino-American: 6.7%
- Other: 4%

Age: Mean: 37.5 years old; SD: 11.7

Relationship Status:

- Single: 60 people (26.7%)
- Committed relationship (not married): 40 people (17.8%)
- Married: 125 (55.6%)

Measures

- Military veterans answered various questions pertaining to their demographic characteristics. They were also asked to list up to 10 current life goals using a free response format.
- Goals were coded into categories such as academic/occupational and intimate relationship goals, by independent judges using the taxonomy of Reisz, Boudreaux, and Ozer (2013).

Research Questions

1. Is gender related to self-reported academic/occupational and intimate relationship goals?
2. Is relationship status related to self-reported academic/occupational and intimate relationship goals?

Figure 1. Goal Proportion by Goal Type

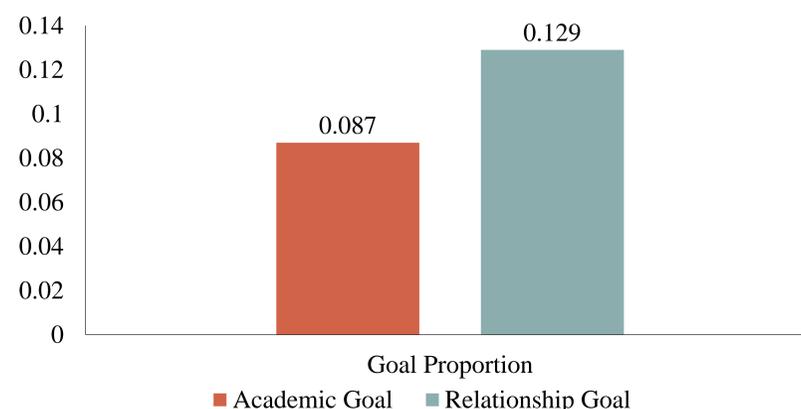


Figure 2. Intimate Relationship Goal Proportion by Relationship Status

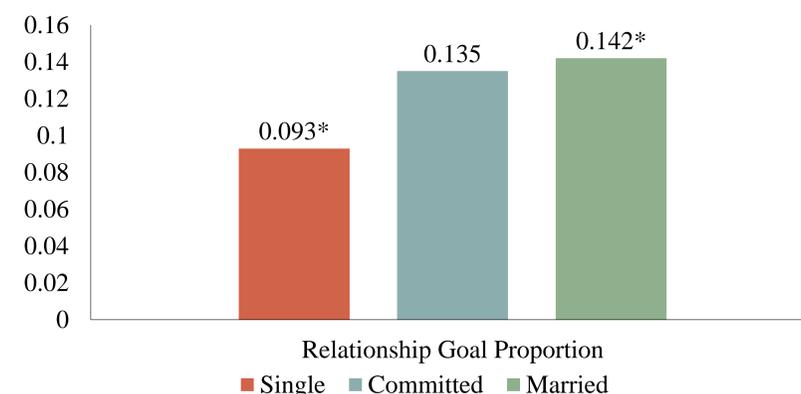
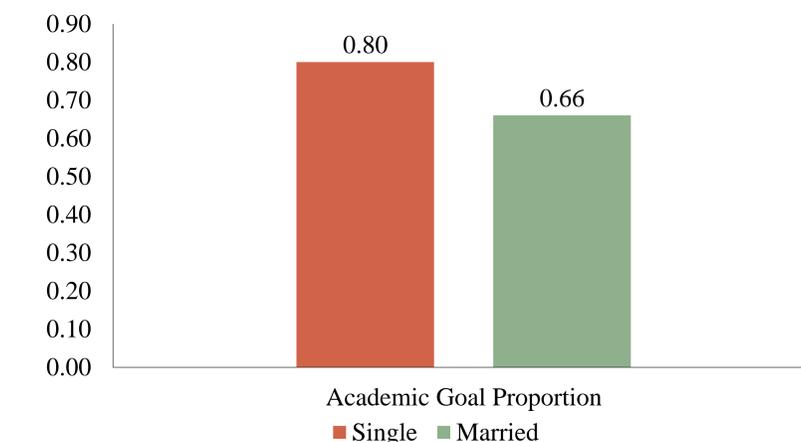


Figure 3. Academic/Occupational Goal Proportion by Relationship Status



Results

- Open-ended goal responses were coded into academic/occupational goals and romantic relationship goals and treated two ways:
 - presence/absence (0/1 code)
 - 52.9% of veterans reported at least 1 academic/occupational goal
 - 70.7% of veterans reported at least 1 intimate relationship goal
 - Proportion of goals in each category (0-1)
 - Mean proportion of academic/occupational goals: .087 (s=.13)
 - Mean proportion of intimate relationship goals: .13 (s=.12)
 - There was a significant difference between the proportion of academic/occupational and relationship goals reported, $t(224) = 3.75, p < .001$ (see figure 1).
- Gender was not related to either goal presence/absence or goal proportion for academic/occupational or intimate relationship goals. Additionally, relationship status was not related to academic/occupational goal presence/absence or proportion.
- Relationship status did not significantly relate to intimate relationship goal presence/absence but did significantly relate to intimate relationship goal proportion, $F(2,222) = 5.02, p = .0074$ (see figure 2).
 - Post-hoc analyses [Tukey HSD] revealed significant differences between singles and married on intimate relationship goal proportion.
- If singles are reporting significantly fewer intimate relationship goals than married perhaps they have significantly more academic/occupational goals. An independent samples t-test was conducted comparing singles and married on academic/occupational goal proportion.
 - Although academic/occupational goal proportion was not significantly different between singles and married individuals, $t(183) = .905, p = .367$ (see figure 3).

Discussion

- The results of this study indicates that gender did not relate to academic/occupational and intimate relationship goal presence/absence or goal proportion nor did relationship status relate to academic/occupational goals.
- However, married individuals did report significantly more intimate relationship goals than singles (but not those in a committed relationship) and singles report slightly more academic/occupational goals than married.
 - Future research on this specific population may reveal the importance of intimate relationships for military service members in other life domains besides academia and intimate relationships.

References

Reisz, Z., Boudreaux, M. J., & Ozer, D. J. (2013). Personality traits and the prediction of personal goals. *Personality and Individual Differences, 55*, 699-704