

Abstract

- The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether the Veteran Resource Center at CSUF would affect the first-time generation combat veterans feeling a sense of belonging within a college campus.
- Many returning combat veterans have a significant disadvantage in pursuing higher education, especially first-time generation students.

Introduction

The Veterans Resource Center

is a unique program located inside California State University of Fullerton. The VRC has various programs and activities that support the needs of its military-connected student population

- The services are catered to all military-connected students such as family, and the veterans themselves.
- Some of the programs are the Titan Warriors Wellness program, The Veterans Ambassadors program, support services such as academic, financial and community events.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- Many returning veterans struggle with the The risk factors such as war place them at a higher setback within their college community and academic achievement. Many military-connected students can significantly benefit from services designed to support their unique needs in the academic and campus environment.
- The Implementation of programs that focus on military-connected students' specific needs will help them achieve personal, academic, and professional success.
- In July 2008, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) established the Veteran Student Services (VSS) office, which provided comprehensive services to veterans and military-connected students;

Literature Review

- Many first-time generation students face a variety of adversities due to their socio-economic status. For many seeking higher education has become a dream with many challenges and struggles. These struggles are ongoing setbacks that produce low-academic performance, financial stress and finally dropping out of college (Change et al.,).
- As individuals are exposed to various good and bad experiences, it can alter their personal goal, wellbeing and perception (Hutchinson, 2016).

Methodology

RESEARCH DESIGN

- The current study was a secondary analysis of the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) data, 2019-2020 Qualtrics Survey Tool, named Department Assessment Survey (CSUF VRC, 2020).
- The original study aimed to collect students' satisfaction on the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) which collected data from service members and connected military students who participated in VRC services and programs.
- The current study aimed at 1300 surveys but ended up with 427 who responded. The method was convenient sampling

Instrumentation:

2019-2020 Assessment (web-survey)

- VRC assessment survey participants (2,645) comprised of military-connected students between the ages of 17 and under to 49 who provided data for the participation in various services and events offered by the VRC.
- The questionnaire consisted of 63 questions with sections that included: 1) demographic information 2) military-connected branch and deployment 3) participation in various programs 4) Military/Veterans Affairs federal/state benefits utilized for higher education 5) satisfaction levels for the services received at various programs 6) challenges experienced by the COVID-19 pandemic and 7) recommendations for future services the VRC could provide (VRC Assessment)

Program Evaluation

The relationship the Difference Between First-Time and Non-First-Time Generation Combat Veteran Students sense of Belong at the Veterans Resource Center at CSUF college.

Dependent variables. The dependent variable for this study was a sense of belonging. Sense of belonging included academic success, community engagement, and career awareness and connection

Independent variables. For the current study, the independent variable is first-time generation students.

Results

Descriptive Analys

- There was 357 combat veterans that participated at the VRC**
- There were more males (60.9%) then females (38.3%) first-time generation veterans**
- Hence there were more females (50.0%) then males (47.4%) in non-first-time veterans.**
- There were more first-time generation male veterans than females.**

Inferential Analysis

Chi-Square

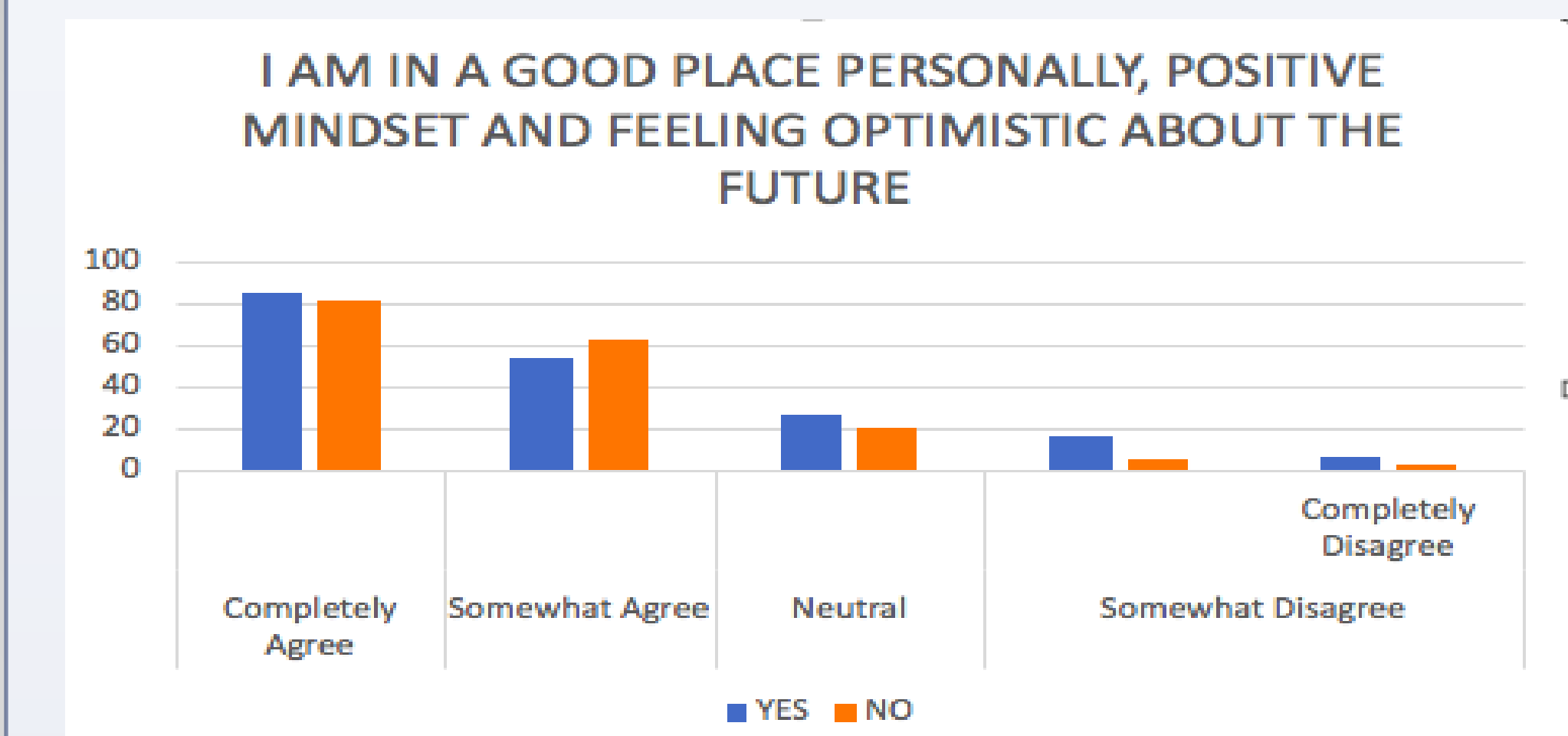
- A test was completed to study the relationship between first-time and non-first-time generation veterans and feeling a sense of belonging on a college campus through the Veterans Resource Center services.
- No significant difference was found between

Table 1
Demographics by Group (N = 374)

	First-Time Generation n=194	Non-First-Time Generation n=180
Gender(%)		
Female	49 (38.3%)	57 (50.0%)
Male	78 (60.9%)	54 (47.4%)
Gender variant/Non-confirming	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.9%)
Ethnicity(%)		
Asian	29 (14.9%)	24 (13.3%)
Black/African	6 (3.1%)	19 (10.6%)
Caucasian	27 (13.9%)	51 (28.3%)
Hispanic/Latino	74 (38.1%)	40 (22.2%)
Native American	4 (2.1%)	1 (0.6%)
Other	9 (4.6%)	2 (1.1%)
Age(%)		
17 or younger	3 (2.3%)	
18-20	11 (8.5%)	26 (22.8%)
21-29	65 (50.4%)	59 (51.8%)
30-39	41 (31.8%)	23 (20.2%)
40-49	6 (4.7%)	2 (4.4%)
50-59	2 (1.6%)	1 (0.9%)
60 or older	1 (0.8%)	

No significant demographic differences by group.

Feeling opositive mindset about the future



Clinical significance association between first-time generation veterans and being in a good place personally with a positive mindset and feeling optimistic about the future

Discussion

Findings:

- There were more hispanic, first-time generation males
- There is still a gap in first-time hispanic generation veterans and understanding their limitations and challenges.
- There was very little information on other risk factors compiled from the VRC.

Social and community findings:

- There is a continued need to keep updating services for returning veterans in the academic arena.
- There should be more trainings on veterans and their challenges as a community, culture and struggles within their family unit.

Recommendations of utilization of future surveys:

- The survey should be concise and unduplicated.
- The questions should pertain to each service and event.
- There should be a pre-survey and post-survey for each service or program.

Implications for future social work practice:

Findings from this study will have implications for future social worker practice.

- MC students need assistance with integrating back in the college community.
- MC students will need more academic and financial support.
- MC students will need more mental health because they are first-time generation college students.
- MC will need more advocates in policy and practice.