Data regarding perceived underemployment were collected through The Veterans Metrics Initiative (TVMI) and Veterans Engaging in Transition Studies (VETS) Survey. The analyses were conducted with a sample of post-9/11 veterans who separated from the United States military in 2016 and participated in 7 waves of data collection; almost 10,000 veterans participated in Wave 1. At Wave 6, approximately 33 months post-separation, a perceived underemployment measure was included in the survey. Survey responses were collected from 5,258 veterans. Veterans were surveyed about factors such as job turnover, work satisfaction, and salary from Waves 1 to 7.

Prevalence of Perceived Underemployment in the Three Domains:

- **Skills:** 47%
- **Education:** 41%
- **Leadership Experience:** 55%

**Perceived Underemployment** is defined as the involuntary discrepancy between a worker’s education, skills, pay, or time and a worker’s desired employment. The TVMI and VETS survey items asked about perceived underemployment in three domains: **skills**, **education**, and **leadership experience**.

**Demographics of Veterans Working for Pay at Wave 6:**

- Average age of ~ 36 years with a range of 20 to 66 years
- 71% White non-Hispanic
- 85% male
- 73% E1-E9
- 25% O1-O7+

**Predictors of Perceived Underemployment**

**Education**

- Veterans who had not completed a bachelor’s degree by Wave 6 reported higher levels of perceived underemployment in relation to skills and leadership experience and significantly lower levels of perceived underemployment in relation to education.

**Paygrade**

- Veterans in lower, enlisted paygrades reported higher levels of perceived underemployment.

**Disability Rating and PTSD**

- Veterans who had a disability rating of 90-100% reported significantly higher levels of perceived underemployment in relation to skills and education.

**Race/Ethnicity**

- Black non-Hispanic veterans reported the highest levels of perceived underemployment.

- Veterans who had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at Wave 1 and/or Wave 6 reported higher levels of perceived underemployment.

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Veterans who were dissatisfied with their job were more likely to report leaving that job for a better opportunity.

Veterans who reported leaving their job in Wave 2 reported increases in work satisfaction over time (see Figures 1-2).

Veterans who felt they were underemployed in relation to their skills, education, and leadership experience reported lower salaries at Wave 6.

All veterans had increases in salary over time.

Veterans who were dissatisfied with their pay and benefits and left to pursue a better opportunity reported a significant increase in salary compared to veterans who were dissatisfied and did not leave their job or those who were neutral or satisfied with their pay (see Figure 3).