Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Military Behavioral Health

ISSN: 2163-5781 (Print) 2163-5803 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/umbh20

Development and Validation of a Veteran-Supportive Supervisor Behavior Measure

MacKenna L. Perry, Leslie B. Hammer, Todd E. Bodner, W. Kent Anger & Krista J. Brockwood

To cite this article: MacKenna L. Perry, Leslie B. Hammer, Todd E. Bodner, W. Kent Anger & Krista J. Brockwood (2018) Development and Validation of a Veteran-Supportive Supervisor Behavior Measure, Military Behavioral Health, 6:4, 308-316, DOI: 10.1080/21635781.2018.1460284

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2018.1460284

MILITARY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
2018, VOL. 6, NO. 4, 308–316
https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2018.1460284

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Development and Validation of a Veteran-Supportive Supervisor Behavior Measure

MacKenna L. Perry[a,b], Leslie B. Hammer[a,b], Todd E. Bodner[a], W. Kent Anger[b], and Krista J. Brockwood[b]

[a]Department of Psychology, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon; [b]Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon

ABSTRACT

Despite efforts of thousands of post-9/11 veterans to reintegrate into the civilian workforce, little research attention has focused on organizational support for their needs. Using data from a sample of nearly 500 post-9/11 veterans and service members employed in a variety of organizations, the authors developed and validated a measure of *veteran-supportive supervisor behaviors* (VSSB), defined as behaviors exhibited by supervisors that are supportive of veterans and service members. Results provide evidence of construct, criterion-related, and incremental validity of the measure, and show that VSSB is significantly related to work-family and well-being outcomes, over and above other measures of supervisor support.

KEYWORDS

Military; reintegration; support behavior; service member; supervisor support; work-family; veteran

As of September 2015, there were over 4.7 million United States veterans from the post-9/11 era alone (National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, 2015). With tens of thousands of veterans having returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, very little focus has been concentrated on postdeployment reintegration efforts into the civilian workforce. Moreover, almost no research has examined issues related to reintegration of National Guard and Reserve Component (NG/RC) veterans and service members despite the fact that they have returned to fewer if any medical, community, or social supports compared to their active-duty counterparts (Griffith, 2015; Milliken, Auchterlonie, & Hoge, 2007). Although there is some research addressing the reintegration of people who have been away from our society for years due to incarceration (e.g., Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012), scant attention has been paid to the reintegration of veterans who served our country in deployments that kept them away from home—in many cases across a similar span of years. Furthermore, although there has been reintegration research on military members returning with health problems such as PTSD (e.g., Sayer et al., 2010), little research has focused on veterans who have returned to the United States and integrated into the workforce to make positive contributions to the US civilian society. Sayer et al. reported that 25–41% of Iraq-Afghanistan veterans stated they experienced "some" to "extreme" productivity problems, "including problems keeping a job and completing the tasks needed for home, work, or school" (p. 593). However, despite challenges of reintegrating into the civilian workforce, civilian employment can also provide significant benefit to veterans following deployment. Griffith (2015), for example, found that reservists who returned to their predeployment job following a period of deployment had decreased financial difficulties compared to those who did not resume their predeployment job, and resuming the job both mitigated negative effects of post-deployment suicide thoughts and amplified positive effects of deployment social support on changes in financial difficulties. Civilian employment can provide a variety of critical resources to returning veterans and service members, including not only financial support but social and emotional support, as well.

As reported in a survey of veteran employment challenges, based on a random sample of 1,845 post-9/11 veterans (Prudential Financial, 2012), 80% indicated that flexible leave from work was important to deal with health issues that veterans face, and 64% identified flexible work schedules as important for employers to provide, whereas 66% rated workplace veteran support programs as "critical" or "important" to their success at work. One critical recommendation that came out of the report on this Prudential survey was to provide supervisors and managers training aimed at improving their understanding of the value provided by veterans in the workplace and the value of developing a veteran-supportive organizational culture. It has been argued that if the workplace is not supportive of returning veterans

CONTACT MacKenna L. Perry perrma@ohsu.edu Portland State University, Psychology, 1721 SW Broadway, Portland, 97207-0751.

they will likely experience high levels of stress and work–family conflict (Hammer, Cullen, Marchand, & Dezsofi, 2005) and will be less likely to remain in the civilian workplace (Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner, & Zimmerman, 2011). It is thus important to identify the critical behaviors that civilian supervisors should engage in that demonstrate support for their current and former service member employees. Meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that training can effectively change supervisor behavior (Burke & Day, 1986; Taylor, Russ-Eft, & Chan, 2005). In addition, there is ample evidence that supervisor support can improve employee outcomes both at work and at home, such as turnover intentions (Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007) and work-to-family conflict (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). Once veteran-supportive supervisor behaviors (VSSB) are identified, training to increase supervisor engagement in these behaviors can be utilized to improve veteran outcomes.

Purpose of the study

Drawing on prior work that developed and validated the family-supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB) measure (Hammer, Kossek, Yrgaui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009; 2013), we developed the present VSSB scale to help identify and measure behaviors that civilian supervisors can engage in to provide support to service members who have transitioned, or are still transitioning, to civilian workplaces. Since the initial validation of the FSSB scale, FSSB has been tied to numerous beneficial outcomes for employees. A study by Mills, Matthews, Henning, and Woo (2014) found that FSSB was related to higher employee performance, through increases in both self-efficacy and affective commitment of employees. Likewise, Odle-Dusseau, Britt, and Greene-Shortridge (2012) found that employee perceptions of FSSB were negatively related to later turnover intentions and positively related to later job satisfaction and supervisor ratings of employee job performance. Although other measures of supervisor support behaviors, including the FSSB measure, may also be applicable to veteran and service member needs, veterans face unique challenges that may not be well captured by broader measures. The VSSB measure aims to assess supervisor support for returning veterans in the civilian workforce that includes both recently separated service members, and currently serving NG/RC service members who tend to move in and out of the workplace depending on monthly drills, annual trainings, or periodic deployments both domestically or internationally. The VSSB measure is intended to provide opportunities to address veterans' needs specifically, encouraging efforts to better support reintegration into the civilian workforce following military service.

Overall, we sought to contribute evidence surrounding the validity of the VSSB measure, as well as assess the relationship between perceptions of VSSB and important work-related attitudinal outcomes, using a sample of currently serving and recently separated post-9/11 service members. Ultimately, we hope that the VSSB measure will serve as a useful diagnostic tool for identifying veteran-supportive supervisors, as well as serve as a needs assessment for identifying needs for supervisor training.

Study hypotheses

To provide evidence of the validity of the VSSB measure, we hypothesized that (Hypothesis 1) veteran perceptions of VSSB would be positively related to FSSB scores and to a measure of general supervisor support; (Hypothesis 2) VSSB scores would be significantly, positively related to job satisfaction and work-family enrichment and significantly, negatively related to turnover intentions, work-family conflict, and stress; and (Hypothesis 3) the VSSB measure would predict job, work-family, and well-being variables (i.e., job satisfaction, turnover intentions, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, and stress) over and above other measures of supervisor support. In addition, to further explore perceptions of support reported in the VSSB and other previously existing support measures, we explored a research question (Research Question 1): Do perceptions of VSSB, FSSB, and general supervisor support (GSS) differ between service members who are still active in the NG/RC and already-separated veterans?

Method

Focus groups and item development

To develop the VSSB measure, the research team conducted focus group interviews with a pilot sample of employed veterans to identify critical supervisory behaviors that were representative of being veteran-supportive. Focus group participants were recruited primarily from a university veterans' association, as well as based on local contacts, such as former colleagues of the research team who had previously served in the military. Focus group participants included eight males and one female, and military affiliations for the focus group sample were representative of all branches of the United States military except the U.S. Navy. Age and other demographics were not collected. One-on-one interviews were conducted with an additional, nonoverlapping sample of veterans, including four males and one female, with ages ranging from 28 to 49. Content of the focus groups and interviews focused on civilian supervisor and organizational support for

transitioning veterans, workplace culture, and workplace support for nonwork needs. Example questions from the focus groups and interviews included asking how supportive or helpful the participants' civilian supervisors were in their transition back to civilian employment, what behaviors their civilian supervisors exhibited that were or were not supportive, and what participants would want their civilian supervisor to do to support their military service. Information collected during the focus groups and interviews was transcribed; subsequently, themes and supervisor support behaviors were identified.

Based on the themes and behaviors identified in the focus group and one-on-one interviews, three items from the emotional support dimension of the previously validated 14-item measure of FSSB (Hammer et al., 2009) were adapted for use in the present study (see Table 1). Item responses were along a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The three items selected were (a) My supervisor is willing to listen to my challenges in juggling work and military service, (b) My supervisor takes the time to learn about my military service, and (c) My supervisor helps me feel comfortable talking with him or her about my military service. These three items were chosen because they were applicable to a wider range of service members in the civilian workforce, including those both currently serving (i.e., NG/RC) and recently separated.

Participants

Following item development with the smaller focus group/interview sample, data for the measure validation portion of the study were obtained from the baseline survey of a larger project. This larger study, the Study for Employment Retention of Veterans, was designed to develop and validate supervisory training to improve the support received by veteran employees. Participating service members were enrolled based on two criteria: (a) currently serving in NG/RC or separated from military service after December 31, 2001 (i.e., Iraq-Afghanistan era veterans) and (b) currently employed at a participating employer at least 20 hours per week. The sampled service members were from 35 organizations in the Pacific Northwest, including 19 public and 16 private organizations from a variety of industries. Organizations ranged from about 50 to 17,000 employees (M = 2,000; Mdn = 600). An online survey was distributed to 605 qualifying service members from these organizations, and a total of 509 service members responded, for a response rate of 84%. Of all participants, approximately 48% reported separation from active duty, 34% indicated separation from the National Guard or Reserves, and 18% maintained active military status in the NG/RC at the time of data collection. Participants' current or most recent military branch was most commonly Navy Reserves (23%), Army National Guard (21%), or Army (12%), but there was also substantial representation from all other Reserves branches, as well as from the Air National Guard, Air Force, and Coast Guard. The survey sample was 84% male and 83% White; the next-largest race category endorsed was "multiple races," which included 7.5% of participants. Participants had an average age of 38.94 (SD = 9.31). Additional details on the study sample can be found in Hammer, Wan, Brockwood, Mohr, and Carlson (2017).

Measures

Supervisor support. In addition to the VSSB items, we included two additional previously validated supervisor support measures: general supervisor support and family-supportive supervisor behaviors. GSS was measured with a three-item scale (Yoon & Lim, 1999). A sample item is, "My supervisor is willing to listen to my job-related problems." Reliability estimated at .74. The construct of FSSB was measured with a four-item scale (Hammer, Kossek, Bodner, & Crain, 2013). A sample item is, "My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him/her about my conflicts between work and non-work." Reliability for this scale was estimated at .93. All supervisor support items were rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured with a three-item scale (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). A sample item is, "In general, you like working at your job." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was estimated at .89. Items were rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Turnover intentions. Turnover intentions were measured with a two-item scale (Boroff & Lewin, 1997) that included the items, "I am seriously considering quitting this company for an alternate employer," and, "During the next year, I will probably look for a new job outside this firm." Items were rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Spearman-Brown coefficient for the two items was .93.

Work–family conflict. The construct of work–family conflict was measured in two directions (work-to-family and family-to-work) with a total of six items (Matthews, Kath, & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). A sample work-to-family conflict item is, "I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities." Work-to-family conflict reliability (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) was estimated at .73. A sample family-to-work conflict item is, "I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities."

Family-to-work conflict reliability was estimated at .64. Items were rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Work–family enrichment. The construct of work–family enrichment was measured in two directions (work-to-family and family-to-work) with a total of six items (Kacmar, Crawford, Carlson, Ferguson, & Whitten, 2014). A sample work-to-family enrichment item is, "My involvement in my work helps me to understand different viewpoints and this helps me be a better family member." Work-to-family enrichment reliability (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) was estimated at .88. A sample family-to-work enrichment item is, "My involvement in my family helps me acquire skills and this helps me be a better worker." Family-to-work enrichment reliability was estimated at .81. Items were rated on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Perceived stress. Participants' perceived stress was measured with a four-item scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). A sample item is, "In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?" Cronbach's alpha for the perceived stress scale was estimated at .76. Items were rated on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Analyses

Confirmatory factor analysis models are traditionally used to test hypotheses about the dimensionality of a multi-item scale. As a three-item scale is just-identified and therefore perfectly fitting the data (e.g., $\chi^2 = 0.00$, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .00, comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.00) under a hypothesis of unidimensionality, we used the eigenvalues based on an exploratory factor analysis to evaluate the dimensionality of the scale, and the standardized factor loadings to evaluate how each item related to the underlying factor(s). An exploratory factor analysis and reliability analyses were conducted in R (R Core Team, 2017) to assess the internal structure of the VSSB scale. Analyses pertaining to evidence of construct, criterion-related, and incremental validity were conducted using Mplus version 7 (Muthen & Muthen, 2017) and accounted for nesting of veterans within organizations. Convergent validity evidence was based on a 3-correlated factor model using scores on the VSSB measure and scores on the measures of GSS and FSSB. Criterion-related validity evidence was based on regression analyses predicting important strain outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, turnover intentions, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, and perceived stress) from VSSB scores. Incremental validity evidence was based on regression analyses similar to the preceding but also including as predictors the measures of GSS and FSSB, thus controlling for their effects on these outcomes.

Results

Internal structure

Five hundred and two of the 509 participants provided responses to all three items. an exploratory factor analysis (see Table 1) indicated one dominant eigenvalue (eigenvalues of approximately 2.5, 0.3, and 0.1) suggesting one dimension of variability underlies responses to these items. Scale scores for the three-item VSSB measure were adequately reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .90), exceeding levels deemed acceptable for use in research (cf. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Convergent validity

Scores for the VSSB measure were positively and significantly related to scores on the measures of FSSB, $r = .66$, $p < .001$, and GSS, $r = .57$, $p < .001$. Scores on the measures of FSSB and GSS were also large, positive, and statistically significant, $r = .73$, $p < .001$. These correlations suggest that the measures of these three constructs are clearly and strongly related, as expected theoretically, but not so strongly related to suggest that they all measure a single underlying construct, providing support for Hypothesis 1. Given the magnitude of the correlations among the three support measures, we also conducted a factor redundancy test (Kline, 2016, p. 314) using a series of models with maximum likelihood estimation in Mplus. We began with a three-factor model, which fit the data well, $\chi^2(32) = 94.634$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.98. The three-factor model fit the data significantly better than the single-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 494.002$, $p < 0.001$, or than any of the two-factor models that equated VSSB and FSSB, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 434.117$, $p < 0.001$, VSSB and GSS, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 226.303$, $p < 0.001$, and FSSB and GSS, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 105.861$, $p < 0.001$. Table 2 provides factor loadings, error variances,

Table 1. Standardized factor loadings and error variances for an exploratory factor analysis model for veteran-supportive supervisor behaviors (VSSB).

Item	Loading	Error variance
1. My supervisor is willing to listen to my challenges in juggling work and military service.	.78 (.02)	.39 (.03)
2. My supervisor takes the time to learn about my military service.	.86 (.02)	.26 (.03)
3. My supervisor helps me feel comfortable talking with him or her about my military service.	.96 (.01)	.08 (.02)

Notes: *N*s = 491–494. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. All estimates significant, $p < .001$.

Table 2. Standardized factor loadings, error variances, and interfactor correlations for a three-factor model of supervisor support measures.

	Factor 1 (VSSB)		Factor 2 (FSSB)		Factor 3 (GSS)	
Item	Loading	Error variance	Loading	Error variance	Loading	Error variance
VSSB						
1. My supervisor is willing to listen to my challenges in juggling work and military service.	.79 (.02)	.37 (.03)				
2. My supervisor takes the time to learn about my military service.	.87 (.02)	.24 (.03)				
3. My supervisor helps me feel comfortable talking with him or her about my military service.	.94 (.01)	.11 (.02)				
FSSB						
1. My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him/her about my conflicts between work and non-work.			.90 (.02)	.19 (.03)		
2. My supervisor works effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and non- work.			.94 (.01)	.12 (.01)		
3. My supervisor demonstrates effective behaviors in how to juggle work and non-work issues.			.91 (.01)	.18 (.02)		
4. My supervisor organizes the work in my department or unit to jointly benefit employees and the company.			.81 (.02)	.35 (.04)		
GSS						
1. My supervisor can be relied upon when things get tough on my job.					.90 (.02)	.19 (.04)
2. My supervisor is willing to listen to my job-related problems.					.87 (.03)	.25 (.05)
3. My supervisor really does not care about my well-being.					.43 (.05)	.82 (.04)
Inter-factor correlations						
Factor 2 (FSSB)	.70 (.03)					
Factor 3 (GSS)	.67 (.03)		.85 (.02)			

Notes: $N = 509$. VSSB = Veteran Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (3-item measure); FSSB = Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors; GSS = General Supervisor Support Standard errors are reported in parentheses. All estimates significant, $p < .001$.

inter-factor correlations, and standard errors for the test of the three-factor model. These results provide additional evidence that the three support constructs are distinguishable and further support Hypothesis 1.

Criterion-Related validity

Table 3 provides the correlations between the three supervisor support measures and various work, work-family, and stress measures. Descriptively, the three measures correlated similarly with these outcomes. More specifically, VSSB correlated positively and significantly with job satisfaction, work-to-family enrichment, and family-to-work enrichment. VSSB correlated negatively and significantly with turnover intentions, work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, and stress. To provide further evidence of criterion-related validity, VSSB scores were used as predictors of important strain outcomes in Mplus, using the "complex" model type to adjust standard errors for clustering in the data. Standardized estimates from these analyses are reported below. Mirroring the patterns of correlations among these variables, VSSB was significantly and positively related to job satisfaction, $\beta = .30$, 95% confidence interval (CI) [.24, .37]; work-to-family enrichment, $\beta = .34$, 95% CI [.27, .41]; and family-to-work enrichment, $\beta = .13$, 95% CI [.03, .17]. VSSB was significantly and negatively related to turnover intentions, $\beta = -.30$, 95% CI [−.38, −.23], work-to-family conflict, $\beta = -.18$, 95% CI [−.25, −.11], family-to-work conflict, $\beta = -.15$, 95% CI [−.16, −.06], and perceived stress, $\beta = -.24$, 95% CI [−.31, −.17]. Thus, VSSB scores showed significant criterion validity with respect to all of these important outcomes in the expected directions, providing support for Hypothesis 2.

Incremental predictive utility

The next set of analyses tested whether the VSSB measure adds to the prediction of the aforementioned outcomes after controlling for both FSSB and GSS (see

Table 3. Correlations between supervisor support measures and work-, work/family-, and stress-related measures.

Variable	VSSB	FSSB	GSS
Job satisfaction	.30*	.40*	.34*
Turnover intentions	−.30*	−.44*	−.42*
Work-to-family conflict	−.18*	−.21*	−.19*
Family-to-work conflict	−.15*	−.18*	−.19*
Work-to-family enrichment	.34*	.37*	.33*
Family-to-work enrichment	.13*	.15*	.11*
Stress	−.24*	−.23*	−.24*

Notes: $Ns = 492–497$. VSSB = Veteran Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (3-item measure); FSSB = Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors; GSS = General Supervisor Support.
*$p < .01$.

Table 4. Results of the regression of work-, work/family-, and stress-related measures on three supervisor support measures.

	Outcome						
Predictor	Job Sat Coeff. (SE)	Turnover Coeff. (SE)	WFC Coeff. (SE)	FWC Coeff. (SE)	WFE Coeff. (SE)	FWE Coeff. (SE)	Stress Coeff. (SE)
Intercept	2.71* (0.35)	3.89* (0.24)	3.91* (0.26)	3.52* (0.20)	1.65* (0.27)	4.29* (0.38)	4.18* (0.21)
VSSB	0.04 (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)	−0.06 (0.04)	−0.05 (0.06)	0.15* (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)	−0.14* (0.06)
FSSB	0.31* (0.07)	−0.31* (0.07)	−0.11 (0.08)	−0.04 (0.06)	0.21* (0.07)	0.11 (0.11)	−0.03 (0.05)
GSS	0.10 (0.07)	−0.21* (0.06)	−0.07 (0.07)	−0.13 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)	0.00 (0.07)	−0.15* (0.06)
Model R^2	.17*	.22*	.05*	.04*	.17*	.03*	.08*

Notes: *Ns* = 498–500. All parameters reported within Table 4 are standardized estimates. VSSB = Veteran Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (3-item measure); FSSB = Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors; GSS = General Supervisor Support; Job Sat. = Job Satisfaction; Turnover = turnover intentions; WFC = work-to-family conflict; FWC = family-to-work conflict; WFE = work-to-family enrichment; FWE = family-to-work enrichment.
*$p < .05$.

Table 4). VSSB scores demonstrated significant incremental predictive utility over and above FSSB and GSS for both work-to-family enrichment, $\beta = .15$, 95% CI [.02, .27], and perceived stress, $\beta = -.14$, 95% CI [−.25, −.03], providing partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Comparing actively serving NG/RC service members with separated veterans

Finally, to assess Research Question 1, we next analyzed differences in scores on all three support measures by military status. Mean VSSB scores were significantly higher for active NG/RC service members ($M = 4.02$) than separated veterans ($M = 3.53$), $t(122.77) = 4.05$, $p < .001$, whereas mean FSSB and GSS scores did not differ significantly between actively serving NG/RC service members and separated veterans.

Discussion

Drawing on the work of Hammer et al. (2009; 2013), we developed and validated the VSSB construct. Our three-item VSSB scale measures a distinct form of supervisor support and helps to identify behaviors that are seen as supportive of veterans. The measure also serves as a needs assessment for supervisor training. We provided evidence of construct, criterion-related, and incremental validity, with VSSB demonstrating significant incremental validity in the prediction of work-to-family enrichment and perceived stress, over and above both FSSB and GSS measures, thus providing evidence of its distinction from other supervisor support measures, as well as its utility in predicting not only work-family outcomes but also broader well-being outcomes. These findings also demonstrate the importance of VSSB for work, family, and well-being outcomes of our veteran employees.

Furthermore, we found significant differences in VSSB ratings between active NG/RC service members and separated veterans, with active NG/RC service members reporting higher perceptions of received veteran-specific support. Similar differences among combinations of separated active duty, separated NG/RC, and active NG/RC were reported by Hammer et al. (2017), with active NG/RC service members reporting significantly higher levels of VSSB than either of the other groups. This finding suggests active and separated groups have differing experiences of support. One possibility is that active NG/RC service members have greater need for support. NG/RC service members continue to train with their units both monthly and annually, creating potential conflicts with civilian employment. In addition, even though federal laws protect civilian employment during deployment and training periods, many NG/RC members live in justified fear of negative consequences of remaining engaged in service (Wilcox et al., 2015). Research has suggested that NG/RC soldiers may expect or receive less support from their units and greater support from nonmilitary sources, including family and friends as well as supervisors and coworkers (Han et al., 2014). Alternatively, active NG/RC service members' needs may simply be more salient or clear to supervisors (e.g., increased opportunities for military-related topics to be raised, such as planning work time around drill weekends and training periods) and therefore more likely to be addressed. Furthermore, veterans are not required to self-disclose; therefore, supervisors may not even be aware of whether their supervisees are veterans. Active NG/RC service members, on the other hand, need to negotiate schedules around drill weekends and possibly deployment. Supervisors may not as easily understand how to meet the needs of separated veterans, while behaviors that support active NG/RC service members may be more intuitive. Future research should explore this issue in greater depth, including whether there are detrimental effects of the lower level of perceived support for separated veterans.

Study contributions

Our VSSB measure contributes to research and practice in several ways. First, we developed a measure of a unique supervisor support construct that is distinct from

other existing support constructs, including FSSB and GSS. The uniqueness of the VSSB construct shows that supervisors may be supportive more broadly or supportive of family needs, without necessarily supporting veterans' needs, or vice versa. Future research on support, particularly in samples containing veterans or active service members (e.g., NG/RC members), can benefit from considering veteran-supportive behaviors specifically, in addition to general and family-specific forms of support, as VSSB showed differential prediction of both work-family and well-being outcomes.

Second, our study provides practical guidance for managers and organizations about which behaviors employees see as supportive of veterans' and service members' needs in civilian workplaces that can provide a basis for supervisor training in the area of veteran support. Although veterans continue reintegrating into the civilian workforce as they return from service, organizational efforts to provide support systems remain limited, and there are often few to no veteran-specific resources available beyond those provided by governmental agencies (e.g., through the U.S. Department for Veterans Affairs), particularly within organizations themselves. By establishing example behaviors that supervisors can enact to show support for veterans' and service members' needs, the VSSB measure provides a starting point for establishing such organizational support systems. The items of the VSSB measure list several types of behaviors supervisors could engage in (i.e., listening to challenges the veteran is facing in juggling their civilian and military work experiences, taking time to learn about the veteran's military service, and helping the veteran feel comfortable talking about their military service). However, this list is not exhaustive and, as discussed, represents primarily emotional support behaviors. Other behaviors could also greatly improve veteran reintegration experiences and should be explored in more detail, such as developing onboarding plans or return-to-work policies that could be applied both to returning employees and veterans, role modeling curiosity about military service and other forms of service outside of work, and committing time to thinking or talking about all the positive contributions a military skillset could bring to civilian workplaces. Such behaviors may function as a basis for intervention efforts or may lead organizations to consider further development and cultural shifts to meet veteran needs. Future research can use this measure to assess and improve the support civilian supervisors provide to returning veterans.

Finally, the VSSB measure contributes to the literature by fostering continued efforts to emphasize the importance of supervisor support as an essential component of meeting employees' work–life needs and overall well-being (e.g., Hammer et al., 2009, 2013). Formal policies are essential to successful support of employees but are not sufficient to meet all needs. Even within the domain of formal policies, such distinctions as availability versus actual use of policies can significantly influence the rate at which employees benefit (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013). Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Kossek et al. (2011) found that work–family-specific support is more strongly related to work-family conflict than is general support, suggesting that specific forms of support make an especially important difference in relevant employee experiences. The manner in which supervisors and management teams enact policies (e.g., Allen et al., 2013) and engage in support (e.g., Kossek et al., 2011) thus appears to be important for successful efforts to improve employee outcomes. Future research can continue to explore and extend these ideas to veteran-specific support. The study by Kossek et al. (2011) showed that support that is specific to the domain of interest (e.g., work-family needs or veteran needs) can be uniquely useful for improving employee outcomes, and that conclusion is supported by our finding that the VSSB measure provided incremental predictive utility for both work–family enrichment and perceived stress, over and above other forms of supervisor support. The VSSB measure thus provides researchers with another tool to help emphasize the importance of efforts to increase the support supervisors and organizations provide to employees and to build understanding of the value of a variety of practices surrounding support.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the current study. First, although the majority of the regression coefficient estimates that were obtained to provide support for the criterion-related and incremental predictive validity of the VSSB measure were statistically significant, the effects vary in magnitude and should be interpreted as such. Some of the effects likely have less practical significance, despite reaching statistical significance. Second, representation across military status groups and military branches was limited in some cases. For example, the focus group/interview sample that was used in developing the VSSB items ($n = 14$) did not include representation from the Navy. The survey sample used in validating the VSSB measure ($n = 509$) included representation of active or separated Navy Reserves and Marine Corps Reserves members but no representation of those separated from non-Reserves Navy or Marines duty. It is possible that members/veterans of different branches have differing supervisor support needs, and this can be explored in future research. Finally, although other related support measures such as the FSSB measure

(Hammer et al., 2009, 2013) target additional forms of support, the VSSB measure contains only emotional support items. Although this allows the VSSB measure to apply to both separated veterans and actively serving members of the NG/RC, future research on a different population of interest may explore additional dimensions of support, such as instrumental support or role modeling behaviors.

Conclusion

Overall, little research has examined the ways in which civilian workplaces can better support veterans and service members (e.g., NG/RC members) in the civilian workforce. We identified the VSSB as one critical way in which organizations and management teams can provide support for veteran and service member needs and argue that our VSSB measure will enable important efforts to improve support in practical applications and to increase understanding of veteran and service member work experiences in research applications. Ultimately, the measure stands to provide supervisors and organizations with an important tool by which to assess and improve supervisor support.

Funding

This article received financial support from the Medical Research and Materiel Command, W81XWH-13-2-0020.

References

Allen, T. D., Johnson, R. C., Kiburz, K. M., & Shockley, K. M. (2013). Work–family conflict and flexible work arrangements: Deconstructing flexibility. *Personnel Psychology*, *66*, 345–376.

Boroff, K. E., & Lewin, D. (1997). Loyalty, voice, and intent to exit a union firm: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, *51*, 50–63. doi:10.1177/001979399705100104

Burke, M. J., & Day, R. R. (1986). A cumulative study of the effectiveness of managerial training. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *71*, 232–245. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.71.2.232

Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *24*, 385–396. doi:10.2307/2136404

Han, S. C., Castro, F., Lee, L. O., Charney, M. E., Marx, B. P., Brailey, K., … Vasterling, J. J. (2014). Military unit support, postdeployment social support, and PTSD symptoms among active duty and National Guard soldiers deployed to Iraq. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, *28*, 446–453. doi:10.1016/j.janxdis.2014.04.004

Davis, C., Bahr, S. J., & Ward, C. (2012). The process of offended reintegration: Perceptions of what helps prisoners reenter society. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, *13*, 446–469. doi:10.1177/1748895812454748

Griffith, J. (2015). Homecoming of soldiers who are citizens: Re-employment and financial status of returning Army National Guard soldiers from Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF). *Work*, *50*, 85–96.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the job diagnostic survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *60*, 159–170. doi:10.1037/h0076546

Hammer, L. B., Cullen, J. C., Marchand, G., & Dezsofi, A. (2005). Reducing the negative impact of work-family conflict on military personnel: Individual coping strategies and multilevel interventions. In T. W. Britt, C. A. Castro, & A. B. Adler (Eds.), *Military life: The psychology of serving in peace and combat*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Anger, W. K., Bodner, T., & Zimmerman, K. L. (2011). Clarifying work–family intervention processes: The roles of work–family conflict and family-supportive supervisor behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*, 134–150. doi:10.1037/a0020927

Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Bodner, T., & Crain, T. (2013). Measurement development and validation of the Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior Short-Form (FSSB-SF). *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *18*, 285–297. doi:10.1037/a0032612

Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Yrgaui, N. L., Bodner, T. E., & Hanson, G. C. (2009). Development and validation of a multidimensional measure of family supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB). *Journal of Management*, *35*(4), 837–856. doi:10.1177/0149206308328510

Hammer, L. B., Wan, W. H., Brockwood, K. J., Mohr, C. D., & Carlson, K. F. (2017). Military, work, and health characteristics of separated and active service members from the Study for Employment Retention of Veterans (SERVe). *Military Psychology*, *29*, 491–512. doi:10.1037/mil0000196

Kacmar, K. M., Crawford, W. S., Carlson, D. S., Ferguson, M., & Whitten, D. (2014). A short and valid measure of work–family enrichment. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *19*, 32–45. doi:10.1037/a0035123

Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Kossek, E. E., Pichler, S., Bodner, T., & Hammer, L. B. (2011). Workplace social support and work–family conflict: A meta−analysis clarifying the influence of general and work–family−specific supervisor and organizational support. *Personnel Psychology*, *64*, 289–313. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2011.01211.x

Maertz, C. P., Griffeth, R. W., Campbell, N. S., & Allen, D. G. (2007). The effects of perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support on employee turnover. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *28*(8), 1059–1075. doi:10.1002/job.472

Matthews, R. A., Kath, L. M., & Barnes-Farrell, J. L. (2010). A short, valid, predictive measure of work–family conflict: Item selection and scale validation. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *15*, 75–90. doi:10.1037/a0017443

Milliken, C. S., Auchterlonie, J. L., & Hoge, C. W. (2007). Longitudinal assessment of mental health problems among active and reserve component soldiers returning from the Iraq war. *JAMA*, *298*, 2141–2148. doi:10.1001/jama.298.18.2141

Mills, M. J., Matthews, R. A., Henning, J. B., & Woo, V. A. (2014). Family-supportive organizations and supervisors: How do they influence employee outcomes and for whom?

The International Journal of Human Resource Management, *25*, 1763–1785. doi:10.1080/09585192.2013.860387

National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (2015). Veterans by period of service and by children in or not in the household as of 9/30/2015. Retrieved from https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/Veterans_by_POS_and_by_Children.pdf.

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). Psychometric theory. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, *17*, 275–280.

Odle-Dusseau, H. N., Britt, T. W., & Greene-Shortridge, T. M. (2012). Organizational work–family resources as predictors of job performance and attitudes: The process of work–family conflict and enrichment. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *17*, 28–40. doi:10.1037/a0026428

Prudential Financial. (2012). *Veterans' employment challenges: Perceptions and experiences of transitioning from military to civilian life*. Retrieved from http://www.prudential.com/documents/public/VeteransEmploymentChallenges.pdf.

R Core Team. (2016). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. https://www.R-project.org/.

Sayer, N. A., Noorbaloochi, S., Frazier, P., Carlson, K., Gravely, A., & Murdoch, M. (2010). Reintegration problems and treatment interests among Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans receiving VA medical care. *Psychiatric Services*, *61*, 589–597. doi:10.1176/ps.2010.61.6.589

Taylor, P. J., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Chan, D. W. (2005). A meta-analytic review of behavior modeling training. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*, 692–709. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.90.4.692

U. S. Department of Labor. (2011a). Employment Situation of Veterans—2010. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.nr0.htm.

Wilcox, S. L., Oh, H., Redmond, S. A., Chicas, J., Hassan, A. M., Lee, P. J., & Ell, K. (2015). A scope of the problem: Post-deployment reintegration challenges in a National Guard Unit. *Work*, *50*, 73–83.

Yoon, J., & Lim, J. (1999). Organizational support in the workplace: The case of Korean hospital employees. *Human Relations*, *82*, 923–945. doi:10.1177/001872679905200704