REINTEGRATION AND DECENT WORK AMONG UNITED STATES VETERANS: IMPACT OF MARGINALIZATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY

A Dissertation

presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

---

by

ANTHONY R. SCHMIEDELER

Dr. Patrick J. Rottinghaus, Dissertation Supervisor

July, 2024

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

REINTEGRATION AND DECENT WORK AMONG UNITED STATES VETERANS: IMPACT OF MARGINALIZATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY

presented by Anthony Schmiedeler,

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

_____

Professor Patrick J. Rottinghaus

_____

W. Michael Palmer, Ph.D., ABPP

_____

Professor Wolfgang Wiedermann

_____

Professor Leigh P. Neier

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved friends and family. I want to express my special appreciation and admiration for Rachel; thank you for your constant love and inspiration throughout this process. Special thanks are also needed to my parents; thank you, Mom and Dad, for without your unwavering support, I certainly would not have persisted in this academic journey. And to the rest of my family and friends, thank you all for sharing with me your kindness, care, intellect, passion, and humor; thank you for being who you are. I am immensely grateful for these relationships, and they have been so important to the completion of this dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, thank you to my advisor, Dr. Pat Rottinghaus, for your helpful support and guidance throughout this dissertation process. To my dissertation committee members, Dr. Michael Palmer, Dr. Wolfgang Wiedermann, and Dr. Leigh Neier, I am also thankful for your willingness to lend your expertise to this dissertation. I also want to acknowledge and thank faculty members who had previously served on my committee, Dr. Brittany Beasley and Dr. Francisco Sánchez. I am also grateful for the practicum experiences and supervision offered by Dr. John Neudecker and Dr. Palmer; these experiences helped develop my clinical skills and interest in working with veterans. Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank Dr. Ashley Curtis, whose research mentorship allowed me to grow in confidence as a researcher. Thank you again to all those mentioned; you have all played essential roles in this dissertation and my professional development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

United States military veterans face challenges when reintegrating into civilian society. Among these difficulties often exist barriers for veterans in navigating work and career experiences. This study tested factors that may contribute to experiences of decent work and reintegration in a sample of 90 United States veterans. Utilizing the Psychology of Working Theory as a framework, veterans' social support was hypothesized to be a moderating factor in the relationship between veterans' experiences of marginalization and decent work. Additionally, decent work was examined as a potential mediator in the association between veterans' career adaptability and reintegration. Separate moderation and mediation models were tested to examine the study's hypotheses. Results did not find social support to moderate the relationship between marginalization and decent work. However, decent work significantly and partially mediated the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration. Interpretation of these findings in the context of the literature is discussed, as well as implications for practice and theory, limitations, and future directions.

Keywords: veterans, reintegration, decent work, career adaptability, social support, marginalization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

United States Veterans' Work Experiences

Effective integration into civilian work life after military service enhances veterans of the United States' physical, mental, and overall well-being (MacLean et al., 2018). In a study surveying 386 Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraq Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans, 81% of respondents reported not having a job when leaving the military, and 23% reported working only part-time. Additionally, 47% of the surveyed veterans felt distant from people upon leaving the military, 71% reported significant adjustment challenges, and only 29% reported being satisfied with their lives (Castro et al., 2017). There is a great need for an improved conceptualization of how veterans succeed in their career pursuits following military service. Research has estimated that over one million OEF/OIF veterans are pursuing higher education using the post-9/11 GI Bill and that over 17% of these veterans report physical and psychological disorders (Norman et al., 2015). Research has found that post-9/11 veterans have more reported injuries than veterans from other United States military conflicts (Ainspan et al., 2018). Ongoing and swift changes to global labor markets, and the very nature of work itself (i.e., increased work usage of automation and artificial intelligence), exist as barriers for many job seekers (Blustein et al., 2019a). Coupled with this changing world of work tasked to veterans upon leaving the military, obtaining decent work may not yield the necessary focus it deserves. Keeping and engaging in satisfying employment has been a critical factor in successfully transitioning from the military into civilian life (Wewiorski et al., 2018).

Veterans often develop unique skill sets that can be marketable to potential employers. However, partially due to hypercompetitive job markets, civilians are often chosen for jobs over veterans (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021), possibly because of civilian life's flexibility and availability. Within this common occurrence, veterans can face barriers to their transitions into civilian job markets, career development, and career-related self-beliefs. In addition to being excluded from employment, veterans with social identities from underrepresented and minority backgrounds often face compounded discrimination when attempting to navigate their work transitions and careers following their military service (Albright et al., 2018; Saunders et al., 2023). Discrimination from civilian co-workers toward veterans based on their military identities exists in differing ways. Civilians have endorsed stereotypes that combat veterans will behave in violent and aggressive ways, as well as assuming such veterans have substance abuse and mental health concerns. Such exclusionary behaviors from potential civilian co-workers or supervisors can exacerbate the multitude of vocational barriers that veterans already face in finding secure employment.

Veterans have reported that emotional and contextual factors negatively impact their career-related beliefs. Experiencing direct combat has been observed to be a work-related barrier to veterans. More specifically, veterans with mental health concerns who experienced direct combat have increased difficulty reintegrating into work following their service compared to their fellow veterans who did not experience combat (Kukla et al., 2015). Following military service, veterans are often navigating not only exposure to posttraumatic stress but also experiencing various forms of moral distress from their military service. More research on how veterans can utilize different forms of resilience

from these events toward more positive transitions into civilian occupational functioning is needed (Griffin et al., 2020).

Reintegration into civilian life post-military service yields barriers extending into many ecological factors. Within both social and occupational settings, veterans navigate much more individualized settings as opposed to more familiar feelings of camaraderie and connectedness among fellow service members (Kranke et al., 2015). Both organizational and societal barriers exist with veterans and their career and employment experiences. Through qualitative interviews, Keeling et al. (2019) noted themes regarding barriers to finding transition and support services. Additionally noted were personal barriers toward developing personal career plans and how veterans would adjust to civilian workforces.

More research on how to best support veterans, particularly those reporting pervasive discrimination impeding their transitions into civilian society, is needed to achieve decent employment opportunities. Koenig et al. (2014) used qualitative methods to interview 17 male and 14 female OEF/OIF veterans on their experiences with their military to civilian transitions. The researchers found that there was often reported general confusion and culture shock for veterans who recently transitioned from military to civilian lives. This reported shock involved intrapersonal, interpersonal, and professional domains, highlighting the need for more veteran reintegration research based on intersectional theories (Elnitsky et al., 2017; Phillips & Lincoln, 2017). Vocational development among veterans can help to support both emotional and mental health. Research has found that invoking career counselors, such as those employed by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), can help to improve veterans' career trajectories.

Additionally, such career counselors can be the first line of interaction veterans have with VHA personnel toward removing the stigma of working with mental health professionals (Rozanova et al., 2016). Intertwined difficulties of needing to create a novel sense of self while navigating physical and psychological concerns act as barriers to veterans creating new careers. Such emerging challenges point toward the need for more research to understand the pathways in which veterans achieve a renewed sense of self personally and professionally following their military service (Rattray et al., 2019).

Research has pointed to veterans finding more workplace satisfaction in environments inclusive of military culture (e.g., VHA medical centers) than non-veterans (Yanchus et al., 2018). Gaining a better understanding of veterans' workplace perceptions in different work settings environments would benefit veterans who do not find themselves in work settings that align inclusively with potential preconceived workplace military-based values. Stereotyping from civilians and their reliance on such stereotypes create adverse environments for veterans, such as work environments that are less belonging and offer fewer structures (Shepherd et al., 2019). Studies have found that work satisfaction among veterans varies by military rank (MacLean et al., 2018). Additional components of veteran status and rank may contribute to how veterans navigate their reintegration experience. Studies have found that work satisfaction among veterans varies by military rank (MacLean et al., 2018).

There is limited quantitative research regarding the career-related beliefs of veterans (Ghosh & Fouad, 2016); thus, there is a need for more research regarding the career experiences of veterans. Additionally, calls have been made for research to understand how veterans facing various forms of discrimination and stigma cope with

and adapt their careers following their military service (Demers, 2013). Past research, primarily qualitative, points to relationships between constructs of vocational and psychological beliefs within the United States veteran population. Thus, more research, particularly theory-driven work, is needed to determine the quantitative patterns of association between key veteran specific vocational factors.

Psychology of Working Theory

Most individuals engage in work that can often be detrimental to their well-being and work that is not inherently intrinsic to one's self-concept (Blustein et al., 2001). Recent developments in vocational psychology have moved from exclusive foci on individuals from educated and socioeconomically privileged backgrounds toward historically excluded groups of workers. The Psychology of Working Theory's (PWT; Blustein, 2006, 2008; Duffy et al., 2016) conceptualization was to build a theory that was inclusive of all workers, focusing on circumstantial factors as being vital toward the vocational experiences of workers. This theory's contextual factors include marginalization, economic constraints, career adaptability, and work volition. PWT considers their collective and respective impacts on individuals' abilities to secure safe and dignifying jobs or decent work (Duffy et al., 2016). Supportive or decent work is a focus of PWT as this theory is founded on social justice and utilized to carry out research that enables workers' fundamental human rights in their work (Blustein et al., 2019b). There exist discrepancies in the treatment of veterans compared to civilian workers in civilian jobs and unequal favoritism in hiring and promotion. Additionally, more research can help better understand how veterans function and feel financial and psychological safety within their work regarding their military identities (Shepherd et al., 2021).

The explicit emphasis on work fairness and safety concerns exists in the PWT framework. For veterans' reintegration into civilian workforces, these PWT-focused concerns require further research, as documented examples of stereotypes toward veterans exist in their post-military employment (Shepherd et al., 2021). Individual factors, such as career adaptability, are used within PWT as they can be focused on and enhanced during interventions with career counselors. Career adaptability may be most important for veterans who are not only entering a precarious work environment (i.e., fourth industrial revolution [(Hirschi, 2018)]; COVID-19 affected unemployment [Blustein et al., 2020]) but also experiencing work-related discrepancies and unequal treatment. Employers often are entirely unversed in how transferable military skills are that veterans have from their service into jobs or careers that veterans would otherwise be able to adapt their already current skillset (Stone & Stone, 2015). Veterans possessing the necessary adaptable skills for such employment circumstances may better benefit in finding overall reintegration success than their fellow veterans. The latter may lack the necessary skills for successful change in the civilian workforce. Thus, proactively enhancing individual veteran career adaptability for today's work environment may help reduce reintegration difficulties.

Social support has been hypothesized and demonstrated to factor into the relationship between experiences of marginalization and securing decent work (Duffy et al., 2016). Such contextual factors help buffer against discrimination's harmful effects, such as economic constraints and marginalization. Engaging in social support also considers relational components of agentic action that individual workers and jobseekers can utilize for decent work (Blustein et al., 2019b). Veterans rely on social support in

their military experiences; however, much of the typical socialization does not translate into civilian socialization (Shepherd et al., 2021). Identifying the degree to which individual veterans report their subjective social support in the context of how much they consider their work decent can add to the hypothesized relationships that PWT posits between social support and decent work. Additionally, aside from the actionable change that can occur with increased social network utilization, social support can also lend workers purpose and meaning, particularly in jobs that may not interest the worker (Blustein et al., 2019b).

Veteran reintegration research can offer broad impacts across multiple disciplines (i.e., social psychology, clinical psychology, military psychology) that work with veteran populations (Shepherd et al., 2021). The PWT offers such a perspective, emphasizing its cross-discipline framework wherein sociopolitical and psychological components factor into experiencing decent work and the outcomes that result from securing such work (Duffy et al., 2016). For veterans, securing decent work and effectively reintegrating into civilian life poses difficulties. The PWT offers an inclusive and multifaceted considerate approach toward better understanding the impact of contextual factors for achieving decent work. Research on decent work, the pathways to securing such work, and decent work outcomes are needed (Duffy et al., 2016). In addition to contributing toward the research on decent work, utilizing PWT for understanding veterans' work and reintegration experiences provides a needed social advocacy framework that moves away from traditional career and vocational understandings for veterans that overemphasize individual choice and privilege (Blustein, 2001).

Further research is needed using PWT, which can add practical benefits toward novel interventions for helping career clients in an ever-changing and complex economic work system (Sampson et al., 2017). The PWT's framework allows for a basis for effectively answering pertinent work-related research questions that can help to translate into needed national work policy changes and practices (Blustein et al., 2019a). Additionally, PWT's models for securing decent work emphasize contextual and malleable individual factors. Thus, utilizing this theoretical orientation could likely yield benefits and answers that extend beyond the vocational psychology scholarly field and toward impacting the actual lived experiences of veterans.

Study Purpose and Hypotheses

This study sought to add to the needed body of research and practice to help better understand the factors, influences, and outcomes of decent work among the United States military veterans. This research was aimed at enhancing the understanding of veterans' barriers, supports, and individual characteristics in contributing to their experiences of decent work. By further investigating constructs associated with decent work, practitioners will have improved advocacy and interventions toward veteran clients in improving their personal and career development outcomes. Specifically, this study tested how veterans experience decent work and the potential outcomes of decent work on reintegration. Such a heightened understanding can enhance the overall career transitions of United States veterans. Addressed in this study is the needed research for expanding on the associated patterns between these factors within the veteran population.

Based on extant PWT research, a relationship between marginalization and decent work exists (Autin et al., 2021; Autin et al., 2022; Douglass et al., 2020; Duffy et al.,

2018; Duffy et al., 2020). A hypothesized moderator from the original PWT (Duffy et al., 2016), social support, has received minimal attention in its moderating role between marginalization and decent work. Thus, this study hypothesized that social support would moderate the relationship between self-reported marginalization and experiences of decent work (Figure B1).

For the identification of moderators, temporal precedence is required with potential moderating variables in their influence on the associations between independent variables and outcomes (Kraemer et al., 2001). Observed hypothesized relationships from the original PWT model (Duffy et al., 2016) regarding career adaptability predictors and outcomes exist (Autin et al., 2021; Autin et al., 2022; Douglass et al., 2020; Duffy et al., 2018; Duffy et al., 2020). Furthermore, research has suggested that career adaptability may serve better as a predictor than a mediator toward decent work; decent work has been predictive of self-determination needs (Duffy et al., 2019b). Thus, to expand PWT research toward theoretical and culturally specific modifications (Autin et al., 2021), this study hypothesized that decent work would mediate the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration among veterans (Figure B2).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will cover extant research on United States veterans' post-military service experiences of work. The literature first covered will provide an overview of the barriers to reintegration for veterans, general employment challenges veterans face, and reintegration in the context of the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT; Blustein, 2006, 2008; Duffy et al., 2016). Next, an overview will cover PWT and the benefits of studying decent work among veterans. This overview will include PWT research on marginalization, social support, and career adaptability related to veterans' work experiences. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief review of the literature and rationale for the current study.

United States Veterans' Reintegration

There is difficulty surrounding the operationalization of community reintegration for veterans, as one specific definition does not exist. Challenges exist because of how a culture or society might define what success is and is not in terms of reintegration for veterans. Resnik et al. (2012) noted these challenges and pointed toward operationalizing reintegration for veterans through a theoretical framework involving the International Classification of Health, Disability, and Functioning (ICF) as a starting point. One inclusion of difficulty or need for assistance with community participation focuses on having a lack of relaxation or leisure (ICD-11). Decent work includes jobs that allow free time and hours to pursue extracurricular interests. In this definition of reintegration, one can see how decent work is tied toward community reintegration and can serve as a starting point for defining community reintegration among veterans. Moreover, a dearth

of quantitative research measuring decent work exists. Such research can also strengthen by incorporating decent work outcomes, such as self-determination motivation (Allan et al., 2016), which can align with reintegrative outcomes.

Orazem et al. (2017) conducted an online expressive writing study with 100 veterans who wrote about their reintegration concerns. The researchers found that most participants wrote about their identity adjustment as they transitioned from the military. Emerging themes from this text provided by these veterans identified included: lack of belonging in and holding disdain toward civilian society, missing the military's structure and culture, feeling professionally behind civilians because of time spent with the military, and not being able to garner personal meaning post-transition from the military. From these themes, the authors did not note significant differences by gender but did note the differences between branches and types of service related to reintegration experiences. Reserves or veterans from the National Guard reported feeling behind professionally compared to civilians, while those who served active duty reported a lack of belonging post-military service. Veterans with more of a propensity toward adapting to life and work changes may help to lessen the feelings of lacking belonging and feeling professionally behind civilians. Experiencing decent work may strengthen that transition and help veterans adapt to the civilian structured culture.

Successful reintegration is the desired construct for returning veterans, as it is often a robust conceptualization of reconnecting with community, friends, and families. Ahern et al. (2015) utilized qualitative methods to find themes among 24 OEF/OIF veterans returning home from service. Identified themes involved veterans missing their military "families," not feeling support from civilians or institutions, and searching for a

"new normal." Additionally, available reintegration resources were not as accessible for veterans who reported mistreatment from their military experience. This study also called for more research toward understanding the means for engaging in community reintegration. Interventions focused on developing adaptable skills toward professional development, including finding, and securing decent work, may help facilitate needed community reintegration for returning veterans.

Most veterans do not experience clinical trauma during their military service, and more often than posttraumatic stress is the unique non-clinical transition-related stressors veterans experience while leaving the military (Mobb & Bonnanno, 2017). Veterans' social and cultural identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality) often link to how accessible career development resources are for veterans following service in the military (Smith, 2021). Veterans who experience less marginalization may likely report increased experiences of decent work and thus are more able to access available resources for furthering their careers and transitions out of the military. Successfully reintegrating into civilian workforces has been noted to be one of the quickest ways for veterans to broadly engage in successful civilian-life community reintegration (Stern, 2017).

Reintegration post-military service often has barriers that extend into many different ecological factors. Within both social and occupational settings, veterans often must navigate much more individualized settings as opposed to more familiar feelings of camaraderie and connectedness among fellow service members (Kranke et al., 2015). Additional components of veteran status, such as rank, contribute to how veterans navigate their reintegration experience. McAllister et al. (2015) surveyed 251 veterans and found that military rank indirectly affects the veterans' perceived work intensity

through veteran identity strain. An opportunity for a quicker or successful reintegration into civilian workforces and society may exist for veterans with higher military ranks. More research on how to best support veterans in achieving decent employment, particularly those reporting pervasive discrimination impeding their transitions into civilian society and opportunities, is needed.

Psychology of Working Theory

The Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) extends from a framework incorporating an inclusive and integrative sociocultural approach to potential theoretical and methodological approaches to vocational psychology (Blustein & Duffy, 2020). Blustein (2001) first described a psychology of working framework toward helping to assess better and understand the work needs, strengths, and barriers of workers or jobseekers with underrepresented identities or from traditionally marginalized communities. For example, Blustein et al.'s (2008) psychology-of-working perspective emphasized the need to consider workers and job seekers who navigated their vocational lives through oppressive systems. That is, individuals working within oppressive and marginalizing employment circumstances often are not afforded all the privileges of choice when selecting and pursuing different types of work. Many veterans may find themselves in such work circumstances.

Developed from the psychology-of-working framework, Duffy et al. (2016) conceptualized PWT as an empirically based theory to organize and test the fundamental assumptions from the psychology-of-working framework and help better understand how individuals experience and secure decent work. The International Labour Organization (1999) has focused on decent work, defining it as productive work entailing workers'

experiences of freedom, equity, and human dignity. PWT defines work as decent wherein individuals are employed in safe conditions, have time outside their jobs for adequate rest, work with jobs and organizations that abide by complementary values, are adequality paid, and receive access to adequate health care (Duffy et al., 2016). Predictors of experiencing decent work within PWT can include marginalization, economic constraints, and work volition. Feelings of anger, hopelessness, and frustration can accompany workplace experiences of marginalization, furthering the oppressive experiences of some types of jobs and organizations on individual workers (Blustein, 2008). Marginalization impedes decent work and is the intentional or unintentional exclusion and relegation of individuals by those holding more social power (Duffy et al., 2016). In the context of PWT, a more significant endorsement of marginalization predicts less likelihood of being able to take part in decent work (Duffy et al., 2016).

One moderating construct within PWT is social support. Duffy et al. (2016) described social support as the perceived support individuals feel from friends, family, and other significant people to cope with stress from feelings of marginalization. In PWT, hypotheses exist for enhanced social support to be positively associated with experiencing decent work. Social support in the PWT model positions as a moderator because of this positive buffering effect for individuals enduring such stressful experiences and feelings and experiences associated with well-being (i.e., decent work).

Other predictors in PWT include constructs characterized by self-regulatory attributes, helping to predict individuals' securement of decent work. One such construct is career adaptability, defined as one's ability to cope with present and future tasks related

to one's career or job (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). This adaptative construct helps explain the attainment of decent work; less known is its impact on decent work outcomes.

With the PWT model, career adaptability precedes experiencing decent work, which then predicts outcomes, including survival and self-determination needs (see Figure B3). Duffy et al. (2016) utilize Ryan and Deci's (1985) self-determination theory in defining PWT's self-determination needs as those for engagement in intrinsically or extrinsically activities conducted through a meaningfully self-regulated process. Such needs also result in decent work (preceded by career adaptability). Experiencing value congruence and accessing opportunities related to one's values have been suggested to promote self-regulation about one's work or job (Blustein et al., 2008). In PWT, experiencing decent work is hypothesized toward fulfilling self-determination needs, and PWT's framework allows for customization within its theoretical parameters (Duffy et al., 2016). This flexibility allows researchers to pursue specific research questions related to decent work, such as its predictive relationship to reintegration among veterans. Thus, this current study utilized PWT to understand if decent work moderated the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration, a construct specific to veterans and related to PWT's conceptualized self-determination needs.

Marginalization

Extant research has well-documented veterans' experiences of marginalization in their vocational experiences. Albright et al. (2018) used focus groups to better understand the barriers and resources that veterans had in their work-related experiences. Identified themes included limited availability of jobs and a lack of or inaccessible resources for their military-to-civilian transitions. Veterans with marginalized gender and racial

identities reported being unprepared for the additional oppressive job-related barriers after leaving the military. From these results, the researchers called for enhancing culturally competent supportive structures both for veteran career resources and jobs employing veterans, particularly veterans with marginalized identities. In studying decent work among women of color living in the United States, Kim et al. (2022) found marginalization and economic constraints, directly and indirectly, affected obtaining decent work through work volition. Cross-sectional survey research with 648 veterans with marginalized social identities found that white heterosexual women reported minor distress (measures of depression, anxiety, and sexism), and women of color reported feeling the most distressed (Lehavot et al., 2019). Going beyond experiences of work, marginalization, and discrimination for veterans also extends into their mental and physical lives. In a retrospective study from the 2001 Veteran Identity Program Survey, Sohn and Harada (2008) found that racism experienced during military service was predictive of less physical health among racial and ethnic minority veterans.

In addition to the mental health stigmatization that veterans face, political, patriarchal, and heterosexist policies can further stigmatize veterans with marginalized identities (e.g., the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, Transgender people’s ban from serving in the military; Brewster & Molina, 2021). Saunders et al. (2023) employed qualitative methods for capturing the narratives of 10 women of color student veterans and their experiences navigating higher education. Through a Critical Race Theory perspective, the researchers identified themes that included having no belonging, marginalized identity specific to academics, and holding multiple marginalized identities that led to additional work for personal equitable treatment and visibility. Saunders et al.

(2023) found that the resilience narrated by the participants came from grassroots on and off-campus social support networks toward collectively fighting against the oppression from the higher education systems of power. Veterans may also benefit from similar support structures toward experiencing more decent job environments and situations.

Furthermore, through a critical feminist lens, Hirudayaraj and Clay (2019) studied how veterans' gender and veteran status affects their treatment in civilian job environments. The researchers found that in male-dominated career fields, female veterans reported that they were treated and conceptualized by their male colleagues as not being "woman enough" based on their veteran identity. However, participants also reported not being "veteran enough" by their male coworkers because their female gender identity precluded them from being seen as equal to their male coworkers. Based on these results, Hirudayaraj and Clay (2019) called for additional work transition research on veterans and the biases and barriers they face, which contribute to their work experiences.

Veterans experience discrimination regarding their military identity as well. In a multi-pronged study of civilian perceptions of veterans, Shepard et al. (2019) found civilian undergraduate students (N = 248). Through survey measures of perceptions of veterans, participants significantly rated non- veterans as having greater capacities for a range of emotions and feelings than veterans. Additionally, in assessing the career perceptions of veterans, results showed that participants perceived veterans as being higher in agency and morality but less suited for careers that require high capacities of experience compared to non- veterans. Shepard et al. (2019) expanded on these findings by going beyond the college-aged participant pool to surveying 265 restaurant employees on questions related to veterans' capacities for specific restaurant work. Results of this

study indicated the selection of positions that are more agency-centric or client-facing (e.g., restaurant host versus dishwasher or cook) aligning more with non- veterans than veterans. Shepard et al. (2019) described these participants' feelings as consistent with a general societal dehumanization that civilians engage in toward veterans and their career perspectives. These potentially pervasive harmful feelings from civilians toward veterans may extend to veterans not being able to more fully experience the necessary positive components that make up decent jobs.

Caldwell and Lauderdale (2021) provided civilian undergraduate participants (N = 262) measures and videos that depicted veterans describing their post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)-related experiences. Results revealed that the undergraduate participants assigned more personal responsibility to a video of a woman veteran describing her PTSD symptoms than to a video of a male veteran describing his PTSD symptoms. The undergraduate participants completed measures of veteran familiarity, and increased familiarity was associated with less perceived feelings of anger, danger, and fear toward the veterans depicted in the videos. Caldwell and Lauderdale's (2021) findings suggest that there exist gendered norms for veterans but that familiarity with veteran status may help to better support veterans with marginalized identities. Thus, providing that needed familiar support of a veteran's experience may help to contribute toward more positive job attainment (i.e., decent work). Veteran status and military identities also illicit differing behaviors and treatment from civilians. Hipes et al. (2015) provided civilian participants with fake veteran partners whom the participants believed to be authentic. The fabricated research partners included military identities, those in the military and deployed, and those in the military who experienced PTSD. The researchers were

interested in finding if differing levels of social rejection existed among the civilian participants based on the varying identities of the fake veteran research partners. Findings included less perception of social exclusion for those who identified as simply being in the military and those with military deployment and PTSD. These results point toward the marginalizing experiences that likely exist for veterans in their work transitions into civilian employment. Moreover, a call for further research into the impact of discrimination on employment experiences among veterans exists (Keeling et al., 2018).

Social Support

Social support for military and veteran populations is essential because of the team-oriented and collectivist cultures that the military instills in veterans. The independent work culture that pervades much of the United States runs counter to veterans returning from service, complicating the difficulties with transitioning and adjusting to civilian-oriented work (Drebing et al., 2018). Smith et al. (2013) tested hypothetical relationships between different types of social support and post-deployment self-efficacy among 96 Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraq Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans. The researchers hypothesized that social support would help increase self-efficacy through social support features such as modeling and positive encouragement. Results indicated that veterans with higher reported received and perceived social support predicted increased post-deployment self-efficacy. These findings from this study indicate the positive effects of social support on post-deployment goals among veterans, among them possibly securing a decent job placement following their military service. Campbell et al. (2021) utilized a sample of 34,331 veterans and civilians (n = 2925 veterans) to perform cross-sectional retrospective analyses to see how social support

differed among veterans and civilians. Results indicated that veterans reported decreased social support, and male veterans had significantly smaller social networks than civilians. The researchers proposed that the lower social support could reflect the disconnect from civilian society and difficulty with becoming accustomed to new non-military job roles.

The means for social support implementation processes have significant ramifications. Using the Veteran Critical Theory (Phillips & Lincoln, 2017), Zhou et al. (2022) assessed how veterans utilized social media in terms of positive social support. Within Veteran Critical Theory, an emphasis is on wanting to understand what veterans think by using existing message posts to accurately report what and how veterans mean by their online posts. Zhou et al. (2022) assessed how social media usage by veterans related to their feelings of social support. Through a publicly available forum message board posting, the researchers found that more informal support existed for veterans rather than emotional support. Such informal support included informational and practical advice or recommendations for resources. Interestingly, Zhou et al. (2022) observed that posts with more positive and sympathetic messages received fewer interactions than those posts which were more void of emotional support.

Social support acts with benefactor aspects toward veterans' post-service mental health. DeBeer et al. (2014) conducted a cross-sectional survey study with 145 OEF/OIF veterans and found PTSD depressive symptoms not to affect suicidal ideation when veterans supported high social support. Conversely, when social support scores were low, PTSD depressive symptoms were associated with a more significant endorsement of suicidal ideation. Thus, social support can act as a buffer for military service's adverse mental health outcomes and possibly allocate more individual capacity toward securing

decent work. Social support can also help curb negative social interactions, such as friends or family who perceive supporting their veteran friend or family member but instead contributing to something negative, such as substance abuse (Drebing et al., 2018).

Observable benefits of social support connection among veterans in groups with multiple marginalized identities exist. For example, meaningful support groups for veterans with sexual and gender minority identities can help to develop safe and healthy social networks where heterosexist policies and experiences from the military can be safely heard and discussed (Alford & Lee, 2016). Outcomes of social groups also give way to the more authentic and, therefore, groups that meet the needs of veterans. For example, Gorman et al. (2018) reported that their peer specialist-led veteran coffee social hour eventually spurred into autonomous social peer groups that met outside the dedicated coffee social hour. Such an intervention led to social support, which expanded outside of structured hours and toward building social capital where veterans could utilize their networks consistently and reliably for support.

Career Adaptability

Previous definitions of career adaptability have noted this construct to refer to an "individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas" (Savickas, 2005). Career adaptability is a critical construct for veterans entering the workforce, especially given the essential self-knowledge and flexibility required for contemporary career development (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). Career adaptability is a malleable construct of associated characteristics, including feelings of confidence and control over individuals'

vocational situations (Duffy et al., 2016). Unfortunately, many veterans lack confidence in having the skillset for the necessary career adaptability following their service. Seguin et al. (2018) utilized a qualitative research study with ten student veterans with questions and feelings toward their future professional experiences. Emerging qualitative domains from the participants' responses included being satisfied with work and having adequate financial security, key descriptors of tenants of decent work. In pursuing these goals for veterans' work experiences, it may be helpful to focus on how decent work plays into the relationship between veterans adapting their professional careers to civilian communities. Shue et al. (2021) underwent a qualitative study directly inquiring veterans about their career transition barriers and concerns. The resulting four themes included: the need to prepare for the military-to-civilian transition, various factors that influenced the career transition, the experience of losing the military structure, and the experience of re-establishing oneself as a veteran and not an active military member. Such themes may also conceptualize veterans as having the necessary adaptable capacities to reintegrate into their communities successfully. Experiencing consistent decent work wherein a veteran can navigate the change in losing military structure may be part of how veterans successfully transition through the barriers.

Veterans endorsing aspects of higher career adaptability find beneficial effects. Buzzetta et al. (2020) sought to research the aspects that influence student veterans' meaning and purpose. With a sample size of 132 student veterans, the researchers found that lower career thoughts and higher scores of depression significantly predicted a lower presence of meaning in life of the student veterans. While necessary for the vocational research centered on veteran experiences, fewer deficit approaches (e.g., depression

measures) and more proactive constructs (i.e., career adaptability) could be beneficial for studying the derivation of purpose and meaning (e.g., reintegration) in veteran populations. Research on career adaptability among veterans has been chiefly with college and university student veteran populations. Ghosh and Fouad (2018) explored the types of vocational behaviors making up career adaptability and job engagement with student veterans. From 100 student veterans, results indicated significant negative relationships between career adaptability and occupational engagement. The researchers called for a different understanding of how student veterans become more involved in their work and jobs and the impact of career adaptability in this engagement process. Research on veteran career transition to civilian employment is also needed to fully consider significant demographic and cultural variables (Greer, 2017). Future impactful research demands an intersectional approach toward understanding how veterans adapt to their military transitions.

Career adaptability exists as a malleable characteristic in veteran populations. Gati et al. (2013) used a pre-posttest design for 1315 young adult veterans who underwent a workshop focused on their military-to-civilian transition. Following participation in a five-day workshop, veterans significantly reduced their career decision-making difficulties and increased their career decision self-efficacy. Career adaptability-related constructs can be focused on and increased in United States veteran populations, and the positive outcomes of career adaptability warrant further research. There have been longitudinal outcomes of increased career adaptability in populations undergoing professional and personal transitions. Studying transitions from school to work, Koen et al. (2012) found that providing 32 adult graduates with career adaptability resources

significantly increased career adaptability scores compared to a control group of 24 graduates over six months. Additionally, these researchers found that graduates who received the career adaptability training reported enjoying their jobs more than the control group.

Ghosh et al. (2019) conducted an exploratory study with student veterans to examine career transition readiness, career adaptability, academic satisfaction, and satisfaction with life. From 134 student veterans, researchers found significant positive associations between transition readiness and adaptability with a measure of life satisfaction. Additional regression analyses found that career adaptability only predicted life satisfaction (and not academic satisfaction). Ghosh et al. (2019) reported that these findings could help veterans' academic outcomes by providing more specific constructs for career counselors to focus on with veterans. With life satisfaction, it may be helpful to know whether career adaptability can predict similar veteran-specific constructs, such as community reintegration. Ghosh and Fouad (2016) examined if career adaptability predicted aspects of career transitions (i.e., confidence, readiness, awareness, support) among student veterans. Career adaptability was found only to be predictive of student veterans' readiness. Within these results, the researchers hypothesized that veterans transitioning from the military to school might lack confidence due to navigating a novel environment that may lack the traditional support structure of military service.

Concerning career adaptability, veterans working a decent job may help spur more reported experiences of readiness for reintegration into a veterans' community. Ghosh et al. (2022) studied job engagement and career adaptability between veterans (n = 418) and civilians (n = 411) and found that measures used for such constructs

demonstrated good factorial invariance. These results pointed toward the appropriate use of such vocational measures among veterans and civilians, despite their differences in professional and life circumstances. Within the career adaptability research among veterans, Ghosh et al. (2022) also pointed toward the needed study of potentially impactful moderators unique to military populations (i.e., combat experience, years of service).

Negative PTSD-related experiences can yield post-traumatic growth in veteran populations. In a survey study of 3157 United States veterans, Tsai et al. (2015) found that among veterans with PTSD, those with post-traumatic growth were found to have positive correlations with their mental and physical health. The researchers also found positive associations with increased scores in post-traumatic growth correlated to increased reported social connectedness and a sense of purpose among this veteran population. Based on this study, it may be that adaptive traits found from post-traumatic growth help relate to better community reintegration and that this relationship may strengthen by social connections found at work. Increased career adaptability often leads to positive adaptive outcomes (Kvasková et al., 2023). This finding provides further justification to study if career adaptability would help promote positive community reintegration outcomes among veterans. Moreover, veterans with access to opportunity structures and feelings of autonomy and relatedness and utilizing those structures may report enhanced career adaptability (Blustein et al., 2008).

Decent Work

Further research on the career experiences of veterans holding stigmatized identities is needed to understand better the personal and career transitions of veterans

leaving the military into the civilian workforce (Stern, 2017). As mentioned, PWT utilizes an intersectional lens toward helping to understand how individuals attain decent work, particularly among communities that navigate oppressive systems or hold marginalized identities. In a literature review of veteran workplace experiences, Gonzalez and Simpson (2021) found the necessity for approaching veteran vocational research through an intersectional perspective. Included in such a diversity approach is consideration of military culture for veterans in their workplace. Veterans' transitions into the civilian workforce often lack compatible culture and inclusion practices (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021). Further research is needed to understand the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on experiencing decent jobs in veteran populations. Keeling et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study with middle-aged veterans to understand their employment experiences. Emergent themes included the transitions before leaving their military service, noted as pretransition, and the notion of career planning. This study identified distinct positive and negative employment experiences among those who planned and did not. These results also point toward further quantitative research examining these phenomena among veterans.

Additionally, Keeling et al. (2018) found a theme of veterans desiring a sense of self-determination about their employment experiences. Along with the theme of wanting dignity in the autonomous choices of their employment from this study, one may see how the need for self-determination may correlate with the construct of community reintegration. Based on available Current Population Survey data from 2005 to 2011, Kleykamp (2013) noted how conceptualizing veterans as a single group does not adequately serve the diversity of the military population. Specifically, this retroactive

analysis of economic conditions for veterans noted that female veterans face more employability barriers than males.

Using a quantitative online sample of employed adults, Allan et al. (2020) found that meaningful work positively correlated with levels of decent work. Additionally, a need for belonging and proactive helping behaviors positively mediated the association between decent and meaningful work. The authors called for additional research into constructs of social connectedness that may serve as mediators within the PWT. Allan et al. (2020) reported that these patterns within the PWT require further testing as the theory's original usage is for work with marginalized populations (e.g., veterans). A need for research on the benefits of decent work remains as a dearth of research exists on the outcomes of decent work (Allan et al., 2020). As defined by PWT, decent work and its relationship with experiences of marginalization have been studied among adults with marginalized identities to predict decent work indirectly. In a sample of 364 working adults, a hostile sexual minority workplace climate directly predicted decreases in decent work (Allan et al., 2019). Decent work also mediates the work volition and meaningful work relationship (Allan et al., 2019).

Extant research uses decent work in its single construct and individual subcomponents. Kim et al. (2021) found specific work profiles from three different datasets that studied aspects of decent work (N = 1945). In this study, five distinct work profiles came about when comparing the participants' decent work subscale scores: those with average scores, low health care, indecent work, only decent healthcare, and decent work. In terms of marginalization, significantly, individuals who experienced decent work had the lowest marginalization. Individuals in the indecent work and health care

groups experienced the highest marginalization. Additionally, participants in this study in the low healthcare group reported less free time for activities outside of work and were more likely to identify as women. Kim et al.'s (2021) analyses indicate that decent work dimensions can be separated or identified as a single construct. Given the need for more research on decent work among veterans, it may be necessary to measure decent work as a single construct among this diverse population.

A cross-sectional study of 391 young adult Chinese workers found that decent work significantly positively affected job satisfaction (Wan & Duffy, 2022). Duffy et al. (2017) explained that when individuals obtain decent work and meet their basic needs, social connections are more likely to be created at work, leading to increased job satisfaction. Furthermore, Masdonati et al. (2022) recently conceptualized PWT as suitable for a school-to-work transition. Within this conceptualization, marginalization is predictive of successful transitions, and social support is a moderator. The authors found that social support positively influenced young adults' career self-efficacy. Applying PWT to military transitions may find similar hypothesized relationships for understanding veterans' pathways to work.

Summary

Experiences of marginalization contribute to barriers to achieving decent work (Duffy et al., 2016). Veterans face experiences of marginalization based on their social and cultural intersecting identities, which negatively impact veterans' mental health and employment experiences (Hirudayaraj & Clay, 2019; Keeling et al., 2018). This study will answer research calls for studying the factors (i.e., social support) that can help mitigate the experiences of marginalization that veterans face as it relates to their career

and work experiences. Based on the existing literature, increased perceived career adaptability is related to feelings of autonomy and relatedness (Blustein et al., 2008). Veterans with propensities toward adapting to career changes may feel reintegrated through their experience of decent work. This current study aimed to answer these calls for needed research on the outcomes of career adaptability's impact on decent work.

Further research is also needed to understand veteran career transitions through intersectional and sociocultural-centered frameworks (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021; Greer, 2017). Utilizing PWT, this study helped to answer these needs for theoretically grounded research on veterans' career transitions. This study contributed to the need for more research toward a better understanding of the factors and means that contribute to successful reintegration for veterans. There is not enough extant research on measuring decent work, particularly with measuring outcomes of decent work (Allan et al., 2016; Allan et al., 2020); this study helped answer this need by measuring reintegration as an outcome of decent work. The present study contributed to the research gaps among employment and reintegration for veterans and, specifically, analyzing potential factors and constructs that can help enhance veterans' work experiences and post-service well-being.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The following chapter provides an overview of the present study's methodological approaches. First, the procedures with sampling and participant characteristics are discussed. Next, an overview of the measures completed by participants is provided. Finally, the research design utilized by the study is described.

Participants and Procedure

United States veteran participants were recruited through email invitations to Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapters and chapter administrators requesting the study's flyer and information be disseminated to their respective SVA networks. SVA is a college-based organization for veteran college students and alums. Participants answered questions regarding their pay grade and rank at discharge, occupation code, military occupational specialty for Army and Marine Corps, enlisted classification for Air Force, or specialty code for the Navy. From these answers, the reliability of the individual's reported military service can be confidently established (Pederson, 2015). To participate, individuals had to be aged 18 or older, employed, and be a United States military veteran. Participants were compensated $10.00 for completing the survey, and the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures.

A total of 117 individuals clicked the survey link to begin the survey. All 117 individuals indicated they were age 18 or older. Six participants recorded being unemployed, and four participants recorded not being veterans and were thus all excluded. Additionally, nine individuals did not complete the survey and were also removed. Finally, eight individuals either did not begin the survey or did not agree to

participate, all being removed from the final dataset. Thus, 90 participants were included in the final analyses, an adequate sample size to test the study hypothesis based on the power analysis. Participant demographics are reported in Table A1 for the total sample of 90 participants who completed the survey items and were included in the analyses.

Measures

Demographics

Participants answered questions to provide demographic information, including age, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status (annual household income), relationship status, and level of education. Additionally, questions regarding military service included the length of tenure as a service member and amount of work experience as a veteran.

Marginalization

The Lifetime Experiences of Marginalization Scale (LEMS; Duffy et al., 2019a) measured subjective instances of individual marginalization (Appendix B). The LEMS begins with a prompt operationalizing marginalization. Consisting of three items, individuals answered three items on a seven-point Likert scale (e.g., "Throughout my life, I have had many experiences that have made me feel marginalized."). In its initial development, the LEMS reported having strong internal consistency reliability (0.94; Duffy et al., 2019a).

Social Support

The Deployment Risk and Resilience Inventory (DRRI-2) consists of multiple scales to assess deployment and post-deployment factors of the mental and physical health of United States veterans (Vogt et al., 2013). For this study, the DRRI-2 post-

deployment subscale measuring post-deployment support was utilized (Appendix C). This type of social support is the extent to which different members of a veteran's life provide emotional and instrumental benefits (Vogt et al., 2013). Individuals answer on a five-point Likert scale (e.g., "My family members and/or friends make me feel better when I am down."). The DRRI-2 post-deployment social support scale offers strong internal consistency reliability (0.90; Vogt et al., 2013).

Decent Work

The Decent Work Scale (DWS; Duffy et al., 2017) assesses key components of decent work, including workers' compensation, healthcare, working conditions, hours, and job values. Individuals answer on a seven-point Likert scale (e.g., "My employer provides acceptable options for healthcare."). The original instrument development estimated strong internal consistency reliability for the DWS total score (0.96; Duffy et al., 2017).

Career Adaptability

The Career Futures Inventory (CFI; Rottinghaus et al., 2005) evaluates different self-reported career planning attitudes, including a subscale measuring career adaptability, which assesses the degree to which individuals feel they can be or currently possess the necessary feelings and capacities to be adaptable to their current and future work. Individuals answer the career adaptability subscale of the CFI on a seven-point Likert scale (e.g., "I can overcome potential barriers that may exist in my career."). The original CFI contains 11 items on the career adaptability subscale. Previous research (Duffy et al., 2019a; Duffy et al., 2020) conducted with the CFI on the PWT has removed three CFI career adaptability subscale items ("My success will be determined by my own

efforts," "I am rarely in control of my career," "I am not in control of my career success") which overlap more with work volition than career adaptability. Removal of these work volition items remains eight items to be used from the CFI capturing individual career adaptability. The original development of the CFI career adaptability subscale demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability (0.85; Rottinghaus et al., 2005).

Reintegration

The Military to Civilian Questionnaire (M2C-Q) measures post-deployment community reintegration difficulty (Sayer et al., 2011). The M2C-Q is a 16-item assessment with questions on a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire conceptualizes reintegration as having concerns related to self-perceived difficulties adjusting to civilian life, potential substance use concerns, and potential mental health concerns. Total scores derive from questions relating to such potential reintegration concerns among veterans (e.g., Over the past 30 days, have you had difficulty feeling like you belong in "civilian" society?). The original development of the M2C-Q found strong internal consistency reliability (0.95; Sayer et al., 2011). Subsequent research utilizing the M2C-Q has also found strong internal consistency reliability (Sayer et al., 2015).

Research Design

Using the SPSS PROCESS macro, the moderation analysis assessed if social support (DRRI-2) moderated the relationship between marginalization (LEMS) and decent work (DWS). Additionally, mediation analyses examined whether decent work (DWS) mediated the relationship between career adaptability (CFI) and reintegration difficulties (M2C-Q). Before analyses, eligible participant data were assessed for critical assumptions of linearity, multivariate normality, no multicollinearity, and

homoscedasticity. Using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009), a power analysis was conducted for sample size estimation of the primary analysis involving the hypothesized model of social support as a moderator for the marginalization to decent work relationship. For a linear multiple regression involving three total predictors, a small-to-medium effect size (f^2) = 0.1, significance criterion of $\alpha = .05$, and power = .80, the minimum sample size needed is $N = 81$.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter describes results of the present study. First, critical assumptions involving linearity, multivariate normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity are examined. Next, descriptive values of participants' survey scores are presented. Finally, results of the moderation and mediation analyses are described.

Preliminary Analyses

Data Checking

Before analyzing data in a linear function, the critical assumptions of linearity, multivariate normality, no multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were assessed with the 90 participants' data. Predictor variables of social support and marginalization were analyzed with decent work as the dependent variable.

A common method for assessing whether nonlinearity exists in a statistical relationship is simple visual inspection of scatterplots (Garson, 2012). Specifically, linearity and multivariate normality can be assessed using a probability-probability (P-P) plot. The P-P plot with standardized residuals of the predictor variables against the fitted values of the dependent variable, decent work, would showcase a random pattern if nonlinearity were absent. An approximate linear plot of data points toward the assumed true probability distribution function providing a good fit with the data needed to find its true probability distribution function (Ramachandran & Tsokos, 2020). A lack of homoscedasticity can be easily observed through visual inspection; when the homoscedastic assumption is met, residuals form a cloud-like pattern of dots (Garson, 2012). A variance inflation factor (VIF) can be used to detect issues with

multicollinearity by assessing problematic high levels of intercorrelation among independent variables. VIF values greater than 4.0 typically indicate multicollinearity problems (Garson, 2012).

Linearity, multivariate normality (Figure B4), and homoscedasticity (Figure B5) were all assumed to be present from visual inspection. Additionally, the present study's independent variables, social support and marginalization, yielded VIF values of 1.073. Thus, no multicollinearity was assumed to exist.

Participant Descriptive Values

Participant descriptive values for marginalization, social support, decent work, career adaptability, and reintegration scores were gathered from the 90 participants who completed the survey items and were included in the analyses (Table A2).

Hypothesized Model Results

Moderation

The full regression model examining the association between marginalization and decent work was significant (R^2 = .16, p = .0019; Table A3). There was a positive association between social support and decent work (B = .72, SE = .24, p = .0032) and increased marginalization was non-significantly associated with less decent work (B = -.39, SE = .27, p = .1605). The interaction term between marginalization and social support was not significant (p = .0662; Figure B6).

Mediation

Results indicated that career adaptability was a significant predictor of decent work, B = 1.2507, SE = .3021, 95% CI [.6504,1.8510], β = .4038, p = .0001, and that decent work was a significant predictor of reintegration difficulty, B = -.0134, SE =

.0054, 95% CI [-.0241, -.0026], β = -.2618, p = .0152 (Table A4). The predictors accounted for approximately 19% of the variance in reintegration difficulty (R^2 = .1858). Results also indicated the indirect coefficient was significant, B = -.0167, SE = .0072, 95% CI [-.0330, -.0047], partially standardized β = -.1057. Career adaptability was associated with reintegration difficulty scores that were approximately -.0167 points lower, as mediated by decent work. Career adaptability was still a significant predictor of reintegration difficulty after controlling for decent work, B = -.0400, SE = .0167, 95% CI [-.0732, -.0067], β = -.2527, p = .0190, therefore the results are consistent with partial mediation (Figure B7).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, findings from the present study are discussed. This study utilized the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) and hypothesized whether social support moderates the relationship between experiences of marginalization and decent work among United States veterans. Findings from the moderation analysis and the mediation analysis, respectively, are discussed. Within each respective analysis, interpretations of the findings are first offered. Next, convergent and divergent literature related to the findings are highlighted. Finally, both practical and theoretical implications are then covered, followed by limitations and a summary of the study.

The findings from this study highlight both support and the need for additional research using the PWT. This study also contributes to the dearth of literature surrounding veterans' experiences of decent work. A key contribution of this study is the finding linking career adaptability to reintegration via decent work. Additional attention to increasing veterans' career adaptability may help enhance experiences of decent work and successful reintegration.

Moderation Analysis

The first tested model of this study was in the relationship between experiences of marginalization and decent work, with social support moderating this relationship (Figure B1). This hypothesis that marginalization would be associated with the experience of decent work was not fully supported by social support as a moderator. Social support did not entirely moderate the association between marginalization and decent work. There can be confidence in the results' validity as a priori determination of the necessary sample

size to detect any potential significant differences made with this study's sample. A significant association was found between marginalization experiences and decent work experiences. However, social support did not moderate this association, potentially pointing to social support being less critical in understanding this specific relationship. Several additional factors may be at play that have influenced the moderation results.

Social support has been found to enhance the well-being of veterans with mental illness (Grenawalt et al., 2023). Sampling in the current study was derived from non-clinical populations, and social support may not be as crucial in navigating the marginalization to decent work relationships. In general, among veterans, social support is a non-straightforward construct in the context of positive or negative outcomes. A recent meta-analysis from 51 studies (N = 26,708) analyzing the relationship between social support and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in veterans found that social support demonstrated decreasing, increasing, or no effect on change in PTSD symptom severity (Sorjonen & Melin, 2023). Additionally, in a randomized control study, Geraci et al. (2023) observed that veterans participating in one-on-one reintegration specialist programs reported fewer reintegration difficulties than veterans who participated in a social-based community program. There may be a difference among the United States veteran population, but the current study's non-clinical sample may benefit from social support at lower magnitudes than clinical samples.

Additional constructs within the PWT model that have been theorized to moderate the marginalization-decent work relationship include economic conditions, proactive personality, and critical consciousness (Duffy et al., 2016). More studies are needed on these constructs as moderators as they relate to the association between marginalization

and decent work in veteran populations. These constructs may hold more importance in this relationship than social support. Saunders et al. (2023) interviewed veterans of intersecting marginalized identities who drew upon resilience through critical insight to navigate their transitions into higher education. With economic conditions, research has found income to mediate the relationship between ethnicity/race and mood symptoms in female veterans (Nillni et al., 2023). Thus, additional potential moderators within veteran populations may play a more significant role in understanding the PWT marginalization to decent work relationships.

Testing in the PWT framework, assessing experiences of marginalization have often observed significant relationships between marginalization and perceived access to decent work across a wide variety of samples and studies (Autin et al., 2021; Autin et al., 2022; Douglass et al., 2020; Duffy et al., 2018; Duffy et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2023). Social support is positioned in the PWT model as a theoretical moderator between the marginalization and decent work relationship. Very few studies have analyzed social support within the PWT framework (Duffy et al., 2024). In one study, Wang et al. (2019) found social support to be a significant moderator between social status and decent work, but in the opposite hypothesized direction among a sample of urban Chinese workers. The present study similarly found unexpected results involving social support as a construct within PWT. Social support did not moderate the hypothesized relationship herein, which is not consistent within the PWT hypothesized model. In a review of PWT research, Duffy et al. (2024) described difficulty in drawing conclusions surrounding social support as a construct and the need for further development. Similarly, the current study's findings may reflect this varied construct of social support.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

The current study's findings indicate the relationship between decreased marginalization and increased decent work among United States veterans. These findings point to the continued need for specific interventions that may attenuate marginalized experiences for veterans as they relate to positive outcomes. Similar research has found gender and racial/ethnic minority status to be disproportionally predictive of psychiatric conditions in veterans (Merians et al., 2023). These disproportionate findings reflect the historic structural oppression marginalized United States veterans face, which negatively impacts veterans in healthcare, as well as economically and with vocational inequities (Feyman et al., 2022). Affirmative and culturally responsive healthcare services specific to LGBTQ+ veterans have been found to help with mitigating disparities and enhancing health among veterans (Schvey et al., 2023). Findings from this current study point to a relationship wherein when veterans experience less marginalization, there is a positive association with more access to decent work. Such future work should continue to mitigate and address marginalization as it leads to positive outcomes in veteran populations.

Additionally, moderating constructs aside from social support, such as economic constraints or critical consciousness, warrant further research on their potential impact on the association between marginalization and decent work. For example, ethnic and racial minority women veterans experience greater unmet needs in housing and basic needs such as food and clothing than White women veterans (Tsai et al., 2023), and transgender and gender diverse veterans are more likely to lack access to transportation in comparison to cisgender veterans (Jasuja et al., 2023). Economic constraints may be more impactful

in understanding the relationship between marginalization and decent work among veterans. Importantly, regardless of the constructs of interest in future studies, it is essential to avoid treating categories as comprehensive or universal for veteran populations, provided the understanding that veterans hold multiple intersecting identities that have salience in differing contexts and situations (Blevnis & Blevins, 2021).

Research studying PWT and social support has used varying measures for social support as a hypothesized moderator (Duffy et al., 2024). The present study likewise used an instrument capturing social support specific to veterans, which was developed using Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans (DRRI-2; Vogt et al., 2013). This measure was chosen to reflect critical aspects of PWT social support, gathering veterans' sense of social support from friends, family, and society, which play a part in more prominent economic factors that can influence one's work (Duffy et al., 2016). However, other measures for veterans' social support have been utilized. For example, the Sources of Support Scale (Kulka et al., 1990) has been used in veteran populations (Spripada et al., 2016) for studies examining post-traumatic stress disorder. Perceived social support has been captured using the Provisions of Social Relations scale (Turner et al., 1994) for studies of social support as a predictor of post-deployment coping self-efficacy among combat veterans (Smith et al., 2013). Social support among veterans has also been surmised from different measures non-specific to veteran populations, but these included questions related to subjective, emotional, informational, and instrumental factors (Adams et al., 2017). There have been multiple ways to establish social support among veterans. Additional research might lead to

further conceptualization or instrument construction of a social support measure more specific to veterans' experiences of navigating marginalization and decent work.

Relatedly, the present study utilized the commonly used Lifetime of Marginalization Experiences (LEMS; Duffy et al., 2019) in PWT research. This instrument captures lifetime experiences of marginalization and incorporates a holistic understanding of the experiences of marginalization, as opposed to experiences of oppression in specific incidents or domains (Duffy et al., 2019). The current study utilized the holistic approach for the LEMS to capture marginalization but used domain-specific social support given the veteran population of interest. Utilizing instruments related to marginalizing lifetime experiences as a veteran may be useful for further specifying the lived experiences of veterans experiencing decent work.

Mediation Analysis

The second tested model of this study was in the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration difficulties, and whether decent work mediated this relationship (Figure B2). Findings indicated significance in veterans scoring higher in career adaptability affecting their decent work with increased experiences of decent work which, in turn, affected their reported reintegration with less reintegration difficulty. This finding adds to the PWT literature by investigating outcomes of career adaptability and decent work in reintegration difficulties. The mediation results point to the positive contribution decent work can have in the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration difficulties among veterans. The present study's model hypothesized career adaptability to precede reintegration difficulties. As veterans endorse higher belief in their abilities to cope with employment and career-related challenges or tasks, they

endorse fewer reintegration difficulties. Perception of access to decent work plays a role in this relationship and explains how the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration exists in the sample.

Career adaptability within veterans is an important construct for navigating civilian job markets. Being able to adopt new skill sets and understand job requirements is often needed as military-specific skills have been found not always to be as easily transferrable into civilian employment (Hall et al., 2014). Veterans with higher career adaptability may hold more readiness for the needed requirements to begin their career transitions. Ghosh and Fouad (2016) yielded similar findings in a sample of college student veterans. Veterans who have successfully adjusted to civilian life have been found to have been proactive in identifying their specific future career directions (Rattray et al., 2023). With more adaptive skills, veterans from the present study reported fewer reintegration difficulties. More workability is predictive of employment in veterans, and life satisfaction increases the likelihood of a better reintegration of veterans from military to civilian employment (Krigbaum et al., 2020). Similarly, from the current study, veterans' increase in career adaptability was predictive of increased decent work, which in turn helped explain how veterans faced less reintegration difficulty. In veteran populations, increased values-based living is associated with improved reintegration (Spencer et al., 2023). Findings from the present study may explain the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration difficulty through decent work's emphasis on organizational values that align with an individual's personal values.

A diverse veteran population was sampled in this current study. The sample was also highly educated, with 61% having at least a bachelor's degree and 30% having a

graduate degree. Additional education may afford more opportunities to develop career adaptability-related skills, leading to improved reintegration. Research has noted that veterans with high school education have fewer opportunities for developing and experiencing job skills for post-service civilian work (Clemens & Milsom, 2008). However, this aspect of education in relation to experiencing decent work, which makes up necessary education for a higher likelihood of decent work, is not established. Duffy et al. (2022) pointed to studying a construct of decent education with an emphasis on subjective education experiences, such as adequate educational/vocational programming for post-high school, as being a potentially important predictor of decent work. Future research may focus on veteran samples with specific levels of education to elicit any differences that may exist for establishing greater levels of decent work.

The current study's finding of career adaptability predicting decent work has been found in PWT research across various samples and contexts. Vilhjálmsdóttir (2020) found that lower career adaptability scores predicted lower decent work scores in Icelandic young adults. Chen et al. (2020) sampled Chinese employees and found career adaptability vital in acquiring decent work. Research with Nigerian emerging adults found that future decent work perception was predicted by career adaptability (Ezema & Autin, 2023). Additionally, Williams et al. (2023) found career adaptability predictive of decent work in a sample of Black American workers. The current study supports the hypothetical directions of career adaptability to decent work in the PWT model. However, Duffy et al. (2024) note that some PWT research that did not find a significant prediction of decent work from career adaptability utilized alternative career adaptability measures. In the current study, career adaptability was measured using the more

commonly utilized Career Futures Inventory (CFI; Rottinghaus et al., 2005) for research within PWT. The CFI may be more sensitive to career adaptability's relationship to decent work via its emphasis on flexibility in work (Duffy et al., 2024).

Within many of these studies investigating career adaptability and decent work, the outcome of interest is often decent work itself. In the present study, decent work was also hypothesized to work as a mediating variable. Limited research focuses on decent work as a mediating variable, but the extant literature supports the study's findings. Wang et al. (2019) found decent work to mediate the relationship between Chinese urban workers social class and career outcomes, including job satisfaction and turnover intention. Wen et al. (2024) sampled rural Chinese pre-service teachers and found decent work to mediate the association between participants' career calling and resilience. European university students were surveyed and found decent work to mediate the association between job instability and life satisfaction. However, decent work did not mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction (Zammitti et al., 2023). Moreover, in a study of Swiss apprentices, Zambelli et al. (2023) observed the mediating effect of decent work for associations between person-supervisor and person-group fit and job satisfaction. Duffy et al. (2016) posit decent work as a key mediator between contextual factors and psychological outcomes. However, less research currently exists specifically examining decent work as a mediator, which is consistent with the PWT framework that the current study examined.

Regarding psychological outcomes, the current study's dependent variable was reintegration, conceptualized as an extension of PWT's focus on self-determination as an outcome of decent work. Within Self-Determination Theory, when essential needs are

met, such as freedom, choice, feeling components in one's surroundings, and fitting within an environment, constitute key elements of self-determination needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Increased decent work has been demonstrated to predict self-determination needs being met. Smith et al. (2024) found that decent work associated with self-determination needs fulfillment and was moderated by workplace relational civility. Tokar et al. (2024) conducted a study on adult workers with chronic health conditions and observed decent work positively predictive of self-determination needs. Furthermore, in a study of veterans, decent work was also found to predict self-determination needs (Seol et al., 2024). The current study's findings of reintegration being predicted by decent work appear to be the first to examine the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration among veterans.

The present study's observed relationship between career adaptability and reintegration difficulties has not been explicitly studied in the literature. As previously noted, reintegration difficulties were conceptualized in this study as being analogous to self-determination needs within the PWT framework. Research has demonstrated relationships between career adaptability and being predictive of self-determination needs (Maggio et al., 2021). Among adults with substance use disorder, Maggio et al. (2021) found career adaptability to be predictive of life satisfaction and mediated by self-determination. In other research, career adaptability has been observed to be predictive of other positive outcomes, such as academic satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2015) and perceived employability (Coetzee et al., 2019). Interestingly, some research has found that veterans' adaptive coping skills are not predictive of satisfaction with life. Grzesik and Ghosh (2023) assessed 132 veterans and found that adaptative and maladaptive coping did not

mediate the relationship between veterans' personal resources and satisfaction with life. However, the present study's findings reflect many of the positive outcomes resulting from career adaptability. Additionally, the findings from the current study may support the notion that career adaptability is better served as a predictor than a mediator concerning self-determination-related outcomes (Duffy et al., 2019b).

Practical and Theoretical Implications

The findings from the present study have practical and theoretical implications for informing intervention surrounding veterans' careers and transition into civilian society. A focus on the enhancement of veterans' career adaptability may be found through vocational interventions targeting this specific construct. Existing interventions have shown promise for this effect through randomized control trials among university students. Koen et al. (2012) implemented a career adaptability training group to a training and control group of recent college graduates. Group participants from the career adaptability training group had increased employment quality versus the control group students. Green et al. (2019) utilized a career adaptability training course among university students. Results demonstrated that students within the career adaptability training course had higher career adaptability immediately following the course and six months later in follow-up compared to the control group. These training courses indicate the malleability of career adaptability. Rabbe et al. (2023) qualitatively interviewed veterans of their military-to-civilian transitions and found a prominent theme of veterans having trouble transferring their military skills to meaningful civilian jobs. Such a finding reflects the benefit of career adaptability training that can be had in veteran populations.

Existing veteran programs have found success in general for veteran career development. Stevenson et al. (2021) interviewed veterans utilizing a Veterans Affairs hospital's Vocational Evaluation Center (VEC). Through this study, veterans reported that the VEC helps clarify uncertainty in their career transitions, identify their strengths, and assist in vocational planning. The present study reflects how a program such as a VEC can be utilized to emphasize key elements toward enhancing career adaptability. Further adaptations of such programs may benefit veterans with greater consideration of the themes of decent work. The need for greater specificity of veteran career transition programs has been highlighted by other existing programs. Geraci et al. (2023) found through a randomized control trial that veterans who participated in programs that provided one-on-one sponsors to veterans transition out of the military had fewer reintegration difficulties after 12 months of their program completion than veterans who participated in group-based social community programs which lacked the individual one-on-one focus. This finding, and the current study's finding of the benefit of decent work toward reintegration, may reflect the need for personalization with veterans' career development following their military service.

From a PWT perspective, this study's findings of the beneficial effects of career adaptability and decent work on reintegration point toward interventions based on this theoretical framework. Veterans have reported that instability regarding basic needs is a major barrier to positive employment outcomes (Stevenson et al., 2023). A lack of basic needs being met may also often reflect larger systems in place that contribute to veterans' distress in finding work. PWT's focus on decent work meeting an individual's necessities for dignified work and employment helps to push back against this distress at the

individual and systemic levels. Blustein et al. (2019b) identified the focus of vocational counseling with PWT to promote clients' proactive engagement. Counselors implementing interventions with veterans may move toward empowering veterans to become change agents in their own personal and professional lives. Within PWT, this involves critical consciousness, which helps address oppressive contextual factors that can negatively affect important aspects of vocation, such as career adaptability and decent work. Individually, this points to working with veterans to find the necessary behaviors and actions that will promote the most rewarding work life for them individually. Counselors can advocate with their veterans and at large for how best to identify and act against abusive work situations. Career adaptability captures this essence of proactive engagement, which calls upon the individual client to find their own internal resources to help take charge of their work prospects and move toward their work goals.

In promoting this proactivity, counselors might turn to helping veterans focus on their self-determination. According to Self-Determination Theory, when basic psychological needs are satisfied, including experiencing decent work, individuals experience improved overall well-being and increased motivation in settings such as work (Deci et al., 2017). Clinically, counselors can personalize their work with veterans, as well as helping them pursue jobs that are best identified meet the standards for decent work. Additionally, such vocational counseling with veterans may also include looking beyond traditional linear careers for veterans (e.g., law enforcement) reintegrating into civilian life that is more central to veterans' core values (Raabe et al., 2024). Individual work can be done to identify what a self-determined reintegrated life looks like for a veteran and raise consciousness about how or which work systems would

or would not promote veterans' reintegrated experiences of work. The present study's mediation model aligns with a PWT-informed approach to counseling with veterans based on principles of Self-Determination Theory.

Additional variables beyond decent should be analyzed to explain the career adaptability to the reintegration relationship. One such potential moderator variable could be the period of conflict a veteran served. Potential cohort effects may mediate and further explain the relationship between career adaptability and reintegration, which could be pursued for future research. Additional future research might better assess this study's mediation model finding in a longitudinal format to track changes over time with the career adaptability to decent work relationships in veterans. PWT was developed as a framework with varying predictors and outcomes of decent work (Duffy et al., 2024). As decent work was found to be a partial mediator, additional mediating variables can be incorporated into future research to help better understand this relationship. This study was also the only known PWT-based work into reintegration difficulties as an outcome variable. Further study of reintegration among veterans within PWT will be needed, and additional research testing the study's model with added specificity of aspects and identities veterans hold might promote more specific interventions. For example, in establishing confidence in participants' veteran statuses, this study asked participants to provide military rank and occupation. Such military variables may be incorporated into future multivariate structural equation modeling research to investigate veterans' experiences of decent work and reintegration.

Limitations and Summary

The current study had limitations. Sampling through online participation can create risks of reliability of data being gathered in terms of both quality and from whom the participants completed the surveys. This study attempted to mitigate this limitation by sampling through veteran-run programs and implementing military-specific demographic questions to help with reliability and data quality concerns. Additionally, this study had an adequate power and sample size for the tested models. However, this was also a limitation in that it was unable to conduct more multivariate modeling, which requires larger samples. As previously mentioned, this study utilized cross-sectional analyses. This limitation restricts the conclusions of temporal precedence of the studied variables and calls for more longitudinal research to understand the models better.

This study helps to add to the dearth of psychological and social factors that provide evidence related to the career development of veterans (Stevenson et al., 2020) by approaching veteran career transitions through recommended intersectional and sociocultural-centered frameworks (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021) via PWT. In surveying a diverse sample of veterans, the hypothesis of social support moderating the marginalization to decent work relationship was not supported, pointing to the need for testing additional moderators in this relationship among veterans. Additionally, further examination of different ways of capturing social support among veterans in PWT may be needed. This study also helps contribute to the need for a more holistic understanding of the factors contributing to successful reintegration for veterans. The hypothesis that decent work would mediate the association between career adaptability and reintegration was supported. The findings of this study highlight the complexity of veterans' reintegration experiences into civilian workforces. While transition difficulties remain,

more successful reintegration can be made by promoting proactive engagement among individual veterans toward more dignified and decent work.

References

Adams, R. E., Urosevich, T. G., Hoffman, S. N., Kirchner, H. L., Hyacinthe, J. C., Figley, C. R., Boscarino, J. J., & Boscarino, J. A. (2017). Social support, help-seeking, and mental health outcomes among veterans in non-VA facilities: Results from the Veterans' Health Study. *Military Behavioral Health, 5*(4), 393–405. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2017.1333067

Ahern, J., Worthen, M., Masters, J., Lippman, S. A., Ozer, E. J., & Moos, R. (2015). The challenges of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans' transition from military to civilian life and approaches to reconnection. *PloS one, 10*(7), e0128599. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0128599

Ainspan, N. D., Penk, W., & Kearney, L. K. (2018). Psychosocial approaches to improving the military-to-civilian transition process. *Psychological Services, 15*(2), 129–134. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000259

Albright, D. L., McCormick, W. H., Carroll, T. D., Currier, J. M., Thomas, K. H., Hamner, K., Slagel, B. A., Womack, B., Sims, B. M., & Deiss, J. (2018). Barriers and resources for veterans' post-military transitioning in south Alabama: A qualitative analysis. *Traumatology, 24*(3), 236–245. https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000147

Alford, B., & Lee, S. J. (2016). Toward complete inclusion: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender military service members after repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. *Social Work, 61*(3), 257–265. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24883440

Allan, B. A., Autin, K. L., & Duffy, R. D. (2016). Self-determination and meaningful work: Exploring socioeconomic constraints. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00071

Allan, B. A., Autin, K. L., Duffy, R. D., & Sterling, H. M. (2020). Decent and meaningful work: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *67*(6), 669–679. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000432

Allan, B. A., Tebbe, E. A., Bouchard, L. M., & Duffy, R. D. (2019). Access to decent and meaningful work in a sexual minority population. *Journal of Career Assessment, 27*(3), 408–421. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072718758064

Autin, K. L., Shelton, A. J., Diaz Tapia, W. A., Garcia, R. G., & Cadenas, G. A. (2021). Testing Psychology of Working Theory among Spanish-speaking Latinx workers in the U.S. *Journal of Career Assessment, 29*(3), 379–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072720976620

Autin, K. L., Williams, T. R., Allan, B. A., & Herdt, M. E. (2022). Decent work among people of color: The moderating role of critical consciousness. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *30*(3), 455–473. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727211039811

Blevins, K. R., & Blevins, A. L. (2021). Advocating for minority veterans in the United States: Principles for equitable public policy. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, 7*(S1), 136-142. https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-2021-0024

Blustein, D. L. (2001). Extending the reach of vocational psychology: Toward an inclusive and integrative psychology of working. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 59*(2), 171-182. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1823

Blustein, D. L. (2008). The role of work in psychological health and well-being: A conceptual, historical, and public policy perspective. *American Psychologist, 63*(4), 228–240. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.4.228

Blustein, D. L., Ali, S. R., & Flores, L. Y. (2019). Vocational psychology: Expanding the vision and enhancing the impact. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *47*(2), 166–221. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000019861213

Blustein, D. L., Duffy, R., Ferreira, J. A., Cohen-Scali, V., Cinamon, R. G., & Allan, B. A. (2020). Unemployment in the time of COVID-19: A research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *119*, 103436. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103436

Blustein, D. L., Kenny, M. E., Autin, K., & Duffy, R. (2019). The psychology of working in practice: A theory of change for a new era. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *67*(3), 236–254. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12193

Brewster, M. E., & Molina, D. A. L. (2021). Centering matrices of domination: Steps toward a more intersectional vocational psychology. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *29*(4), 547–569. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727211029182

Buzzetta, M. E., Lenz, J. G., Hayden, S. C. W., & Osborn, D. S. (2020). Student veterans: Meaning in life, negative career thoughts, and depression. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *68*(4), 361–373. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12242

Cadenas, G. A., & McWhirter, E. H. (2022). Critical consciousness in vocational psychology: A vision for the next decade and beyond. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *30*(3), 411-435. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727221086553

Caldwell, H., & Lauderdale, S. A. (2021). Public stigma for men and women veterans with combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder. *Current Psychology, 40*(1), 322–332. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9940-5

Campbell, S. B., Gray, K. E., Hoerster, K. D., Fortney, J. C., & Simpson, T. L. (2021). Differences in functional and structural social support among female and male veterans and civilians. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology, 56*(3), 375–386. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-020-01862-4

Castro, C. A., Kintzle, S., & Hassan, A. (2017). The state of the American veteran. *Los Angeles, CA: Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families, School of Social Work, University of California*.

Chen, S. C., Jiang, W., & Ma, Y. (2020). Decent work in a transition economy: An empirical study of employees in China. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 153*, 119947. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.119947

Clemens, E. V., & Milsom, A. S. (2008). Enlisted service members' transition into the civilian world of work: A cognitive information approach. *The Career Development Quarterly, 56*(3), 246–256. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00039.x

Coetzee, M., & Engelbrecht, L. (2020). How employability attributes mediate the link between knowledge workers' career adaptation concerns and their self-perceived employability. *Psychological Reports*, *123*(4), 1005–1026. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294119844981

DeBeer, B. B., Kimbrel, N. A., Meyer, E. C., Gulliver, S. B., & Morissette, S. B. (2014). Combined PTSD and depressive symptoms interact with post-deployment social

support to predict suicidal ideation in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans. *Psychiatry Research, 216*(3), 357–362. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2014.02.010

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). The general causality orientations scale: Self-determination in personality. *Journal of Research in Personality, 19*(2), 109–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566(85)90023-6

Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of a science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4*(1), 19–43. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113108

Demers, A. L. (2013). From death to life: Female veterans, identity negotiation, and reintegration into society. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 53*(4), 489–515. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167812472395

Douglass, R. P., Autin, K. L., Buyukgoze-Kavas, A., & Gensmer, N. P. (2020). Proactive personality and decent work among racially and ethnically diverse working adults. *Journal of Career Assessment, 28*(3), 512–528. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072719894571

Drebing, C. E., Reilly, E., Henze, K. T., Kelly, M., Russo, A., Smolinsky, J., Gorman, J., & Penk, W. E. (2018). Using peer support groups to enhance community integration of veterans in transition. *Psychological Services, 15*(2), 135–145. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000178

Duffy, R. D., Allan, B. A., England, J. W., Blustein, D. L., Autin, K. L., Douglass, R. P., Ferreira, J., & Santos, E. J. R. (2017). The development and initial validation of

the Decent Work Scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 64*(2), 206–221. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000191

Duffy, R. D., Blustein, D. L., Diemer, M. A., & Autin, K. L. (2016). The Psychology of Working Theory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 63*(2), 127–148. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000140

Duffy, R. D., Choi, Y., Kim, H. J., & Park, J. (2024). Recommendations for conceptualizing and measuring constructs within Psychology of Working Theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *32*(1), 48-62. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727231179196

Duffy, R. D., Douglass, R. P., & Autin, K. L. (2015). Career adaptability and academic satisfaction: Examining work volition and self efficacy as mediators. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 90*, 46-54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.07.007

Duffy, R. D., Gensmer, N. P., Allan, B. A., Kim, H. J., Douglass, R. P., England, J. W., Autin, K. L., & Blustein, D. L. (2019). Developing, validating, and testing improved measures within the Psychology of Working Theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *112*, 199-215. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.02.012

Duffy, R. D., Kim, H. J., Allan, B. A., & Prieto, C. G. (2020). Predictors of decent work across time: Testing propositions from Psychology of Working Theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 123*, 103507. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103507

Duffy, R. D., Kim, H. J., Gensmer, N. P., Raque-Bogdan, T. L., Douglass, R. P., England, J. W., & Buyukgoze-Kavas, A. (2019). Linking decent work with physical and mental health: A psychology of working perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *112*, 384–395. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.05.002

Duffy, R. D., Kim, H. J., Perez, G., Prieto, C. G., Torgal, C., & Kenny, M. E. (2022). Decent education as a precursor to decent work: An overview and construct conceptualization. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *138*, 103771. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2022.103771

Duffy, R. D., Velez, B. L., England, J. W., Autin, K. L., Douglass, R. P., Allan, B. A., & Blustein, D. L. (2018). An examination of the Psychology of Working Theory with racially and ethnically diverse employed adults. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *65*(3), 280–293. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000247

Elnitsky, C. A., Blevins, C. L., Fisher, M. P., & Magruder, K. (2017). Military service member and veteran reintegration: A critical review and adapted ecological model. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *87*(2), 114–128. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000244

Ezema, G. N., & Autin, K. L. (2023). Examining predictors and outcomes of future decent work perception among Nigerian emerging adults. *Journal of Career Assessment*. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727231201958

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A. G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, *41*(4), 1149–1160. https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.41.4.1149

Feyman, Y., Asfaw, D. A., & Griffith, K. N. (2022). Geographic variation in appointment wait times for US military veterans. *JAMA Network Open*, *5*(8), e2228783. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.28783

Garson, D. (2012). Testing statistical assumptions. Blue Book Series: Statistical Associates Publishing.

Gati, I., Ryzhik, T., & Vertsberger, D. (2013). Preparing young veterans for civilian life: The effects of a workshop on career decision-making difficulties and self-efficacy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *83*(3), 373–385. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2013.06.001

Geraci, J. C., Dichiara, A., Greene, A., Gromatsky, M., Finley, E. P., Kilby, D., Frankfurt, S., Edwards, E. R., Solomon Kurz, A., Sokol, Y., Sullivan, S. R., Mobbs, M., Seim, R. W., & Goodman, M. (2023). Supporting servicemembers and veterans during their transition to civilian life using certified sponsors: A three-arm randomized controlled trial. *Psychological Services*, *20*(S2), 248–259. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000764

Ghosh, A., & Fouad, N. A. (2016). Career transitions of student veterans. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *24*(1), 99–111. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072714568752

Ghosh, A., & Fouad, N. A. (2018). Career adaptability and occupational engagement of student veterans. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *66*(2), 182–188. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12132

Ghosh, A., Kessler, M., Heyrman, K., Opelt, B., Carbonelli, M., & Fouad, N. A. (2019). Student veteran career transition readiness, career adaptability, and academic and life satisfaction. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *67*(4), 365–371. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12205

Ghosh, A., Niileksela, C. R., & Grzesik, E. R. (2022). Measurement invariance of the Occupational Engagement Scale – Student and Career Adapt-Abilities Scale across veterans and civilians. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *30*(3), 590–609. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727211059735

Gonzalez, J. A., & Simpson, J. (2021). The workplace integration of veterans: Applying diversity and fit perspectives. *Human Resource Management Review, 31*(2), 100775. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2020.100775

Gorman, J. A., Scoglio, A. A. J., Smolinsky, J., Russo, A., & Drebing, C. E. (2018). Veteran coffee socials: A community-building strategy for enhancing community reintegration of veterans. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *54*(8), 1189–1197. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-018-0288-y

Green, Z. A., Noor, U., & Hashemi, M. N. (2020). Furthering proactivity and career adaptability among university students: Test of intervention. *Journal of Career Assessment, 28*(3), 402–424. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072719870739

Greer, T. W. (2017). Career development for women Veterans: Facilitating successful transitions from military service to civilian employment. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 19*(1), 54–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316682737

Grenawalt, T. A., Lu, J., Hamner, K., Gill, C., & Umucu, E. (2023). Social isolation and well-being in veterans with mental illness. *Journal of Mental Health*, *32*(2), 407–411. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2021.2022625

Griffin, B. J., Williams, C. L., Shaler, L., Dees, R. F., Cowden, R. G., Bryan, C. J., Litz, B., Purcell, N., Burkman, K., & Maguen, S. (2020). Profiles of moral distress and associated outcomes among student veterans. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, *12*(7), 669–677. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000584

Grzesik, E. R., & Ghosh, A. (2023). Hope, proactive personality, coping styles, and satisfaction with life among veterans during COVID-19. *Military Psychology*, *35*(5), 440–450. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2023.2204060

Hall, K. C., Harrell, M. C., Bicksler, B. A., Stewart, R., & Fisher, M. P. (2014). Veteran employment. *Santa Monica, CA, USA: RAND Corporation*.

Hipes, C., Lucas, J. W., & Kleykamp, M. (2015). Status- and stigma-related consequences of military service and PTSD: Evidence from a laboratory experiment. *Armed Forces & Society*, *41*(3), 477–495. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X14536710

Hirschi, A. (2018). The fourth industrial revolution: Issues and implications for career research and practice. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *66*(3), 192–204. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12142

Hirudayaraj, M., & Clay, C. (2019). Experiences of women veterans within the private sector: Examining the intersection of gender and veteran status. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *30*(4), 473–494. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21367

International Labour Organization. (1999). Report of the director-general: Decent work. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc87/rep-i.htm

Jasuja, G. K., Reisman, J. I., Rao, S. R., Wolfe, H. L., Hughto, J. M. W., Reisner, S. L., & Shipherd, J. C. (2023). Social stressors and health among older transgender and gender diverse veterans. *LGBT Health*, *10*(2), 148–157. https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2022.0012

Keeling, M. E., Ozuna, S. M., Kintzle, S., & Castro, C. A. (2019). Veterans' civilian employment experiences: Lessons learnt from focus groups. *Journal of Career Development, 46*(6), 692–705. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845318776785

Keeling, M., Kintzle, S., & Castro, C. A. (2018). Exploring U.S. veterans' post-service employment experiences. *Military Psychology*, *30*(1), 63–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2017.1420976

Kim, H. J., Duffy, R. D., & Allan, B. A. (2021). Profiles of decent work: General trends and group differences. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *68*(1), 54–66. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000434

Kim, H. J., McNeil-Young, V. A., Wang, D., Duffy, R. D., & Underill, B. D. (2022). Women of color and decent work: An examination of Psychology of Working Theory. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *70*(2), 125–137. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12291

Kleykamp, M. (2013). Unemployment, earnings and enrollment among post 9/11 veterans. *Social Science Research*, *42*(3), 836–851. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.12.017

Koen, J., Klehe, U.-C., & Van Vianen, A. E. M. (2012). Training career adaptability to facilitate a successful school-to-work transition. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *81*(3), 395–408. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.10.003

Koenig, C. J., Maguen, S., Monroy, J. D., Mayott, L., & Seal, K. H. (2014). Facilitating culture-centered communication between health care providers and veterans transitioning from military deployment to civilian life. *Patient Education and Counseling*, *95*(3), 414–420. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2014.03.016

Kraemer, H. C., Stice, E., Kazdin, A., Offord, D., & Kupfer, D. (2001). How do risk factors work together? Mediators, moderators, and independent, overlapping, and proxy risk factors. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, *158*(6), 848–856. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.158.6.848

Kranke, D., Gin, J., Saia, R., Heslin, K., & Dobalian, A. (2016). A qualitative investigation that applies an ecological strengths-based perspective to veterans' experience of reintegration into civilian life. *Military Behavioral Health*, *4*(1), 75–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2015.1119771

Krigbaum, G., Good, C. C., Ogle, A. K., Walsh, M., Hess, R., & Krigbaum, J. (2020). Factors in the transition of career military personnel to the civilian workforce. *TIP: The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, *57*(4).

Kukla, M., Rattray, N. A., & Salyers, M. P. (2015). Mixed methods study examining work reintegration experiences from perspectives of veterans with mental health disorders. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, *52*(4), 477–490. https://doi.org/10.1682/JRRD.2014.11.0289

Kulka, R. A., Schlenger, W. E., Fairbank, J. A., Hough, R. L., Jordan, B. K., Marmar, C. R., & Weiss, D. S. (1990). *Trauma and the Vietnam war generation: Report of findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study.* Brunner/Mazel.

Kvasková, L., Hlado, P., Palíšek, P., Šašinka, V., Hirschi, A., Ježek, S., & Macek, P. (2023). A longitudinal study of relationships between vocational graduates' career adaptability, career decision-making self-efficacy, vocational identity clarity, and life satisfaction. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *31*(1), 27-49. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727221084106

Lehavot, K., Beckman, K. L., Chen, J. A., Simpson, T. L., & Williams, E. C. (2019). Race/ethnicity and sexual orientation disparities in mental health, sexism, and social support among women veterans. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *6*(3), 347–358. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000333

MacLean, A. (2018). A few good men and women: Gender, race, and status in the wartime volunteer military. *Population Research and Policy Review*, *37*(4), 591–613. http://www.doi.org/10.1007/s11113-018-9479z

Maggio, I. D., Shogren, K. A., Wehmeyer, M. L., Nota, L., & Sgaramella, T. M. (2021). Career adaptability, self-determination, and life satisfaction: A mediational analysis with people with substance use disorder. *Journal of Career Development*, *48*(3), 213-228. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845319847006

Masdonati, J., Massoudi, K., Blustein, D. L., & Duffy, R. D. (2022). Moving toward decent work: Application of the Psychology of Working Theory to the school-to-work transition. *Journal of Career Development*, *49*(1), 41–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845321991681

McAllister, C. P., Mackey, J. D., Hackney, K. J., & Perrewé, P. L. (2015). From combat to khakis: An exploratory examination of job stress with veterans. *Military Psychology*, *27*(2), 93–107. https://doi.org/10.1037/mil0000068

Merians, A. N., Gross, G., Spoont, M. R., Bellamy, C. D., Harpaz-Rotem, I., & Pietrzak, R. H. (2023). Racial and ethnic mental health disparities in U.S. military veterans: Results from the National Health and Resilience in Veterans Study. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, *161*, 71–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2023.03.005

Nillni, Y. I., Horenstein, A., McClendon, J., Duke, C. C., Sawdy, M., & Galovski, T. E. (2023). The impact of perceived everyday discrimination and income on racial and ethnic disparities in PTSD, depression, and anxiety among veterans. *PloS one, 18*(9), e0291965. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0291965

Norman, S. B., Rosen, J., Himmerich, S., Myers, U. S., Davis, B., Browne, K. C., & Piland, N. (2015). Student veteran perceptions of facilitators and barriers to achieving academic goals. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development, 52*(6), 701–712. https://doi.org/10.1682/JRRD.2015.01.0013

Orazem, R. J., Frazier, P. A., Schnurr, P. P., Oleson, H. E., Carlson, K. F., Litz, B. T., & Sayer, N. A. (2017). Identity adjustment among Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans with reintegration difficulty. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 9*(S1), 4–11. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000225

Phillips, G. A., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). Introducing Veteran Critical Theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 30*(7), 656-668. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1309586

Raabe, J., Eckenrod, M. R., Cooper, E., & Crain, J. A. (2024). Facilitating United States service members' transition out of the military: A Self-Determination Theory perspective. *Journal of Career Development, 51*(1), 40-59. https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453231198064

Ramachandran, K. M., & Tsokos, C. P. (2020). *Mathematical statistics with applications in R.* Academic Press.

Rattray, N. A., Natividad, D., Spontak, K., Kukla, M., Do, A. L., Danson, L., Frankel, R. M., & True, G. (2023). Learning from women veterans who navigate invisible

injuries, caregiving, and reintegration challenges. *BMC Women's Health*, *23*(1), 665. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-023-02815-0

Rattray, N. A., True, G., Natividad, D. M., Salyers, M. P., Frankel, R. M., & Kukla, M. (2019). The long and winding road to postsecondary education for U.S. veterans with invisible injuries. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 42*(3), 284–295. https://doi.org/10.1037/prj0000375

Resnik, L., Bradford, D. W., Glynn, S. M., Jette, A. M., Johnson Hernandez, C., & Wills, S. (2012). Issues in defining and measuring veteran community reintegration: Proceedings of the working group on community reintegration, VA Rehabilitation Outcomes Conference, Miami, Florida. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development, 49*(1), 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1682/jrrd.2010.06.0107

Rottinghaus, P. J., Day, S. X., & Borgen, F. H. (2005). The Career Futures Inventory: A measure of career related adaptability and optimism. *Journal of Career Assessment, 13*(1), 3–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072704270271

Rottinghaus, P. J., Falk, N. A., & Eshelman, A. (2017). Assessing career adaptability. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Psychology of career adaptability, employability and resilience* (pp. 85-105). Springer Cham.

Rozanova, J., Noulas, P., Smart, K., Roy, A., Southwick, S. M., Davidson, L., & Harpaz-Rotem, I. (2016). "I'm coming home, tell the world I'm coming home". The long homecoming and mental health treatment of Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans. *Psychiatric Quarterly, 87*(3), 427–443. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11126-015-9398-7

Sampson Jr, J. P., Bullok-Yowell, E., Dozier, V. C., Osborn, D. S., & Lenz, J. G. (2017). Integrating theory, research, and practice in vocational psychology: Current status and future directions. *Florida State University Libraries*.

Saunders, R., Lim, J. H., & Harris, H. L. (2023). Bended womanhood bended back: The intersection of race, gender, and culture in women of color veterans and their transition into higher education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *16*(3), 261. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000242

Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42–70). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sayer, N. A., Frazier, P., Orazem, R. J., Murdoch, M., Gravely, A., Carlson, K. F., Hintz, S., & Noorbaloochi, S. (2011). Military to Civilian Questionnaire: A measure of postdeployment community reintegration difficulty among veterans using Department of Veterans Affairs medical care. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *24*(6), 660–670. https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20706

Sayer, N. A., Orazem, R. J., Noorbaloochi, S., Gravely, A., Frazier, P., Carlson, K. F., Schnurr, P. P., & Oleson, H. (2015). Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans with reintegration problems: Differences by Veterans Affairs healthcare user status. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *42*(4), 493–503. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-014-0564-2

Schvey, N. A., Exley, L. S. L., & Pearlman, A. T. (2023). Culturally Responsive Approaches for LGBT+ Active-Duty Service Members and Veterans. In *First-*

Line Clinical Approaches with Active Duty Service Members and Veterans (pp. 25-37). Routledge.

Seguin, T. C., Bjornsen-Ramig, A. L., Blount, A. J., & Dinkel, D. M. (2018). A wellness approach to investigating student veterans' career goals. *Journal of Military and Government Counseling*, *6*(2), 138-153.

Seol, J. H., Sohn, Y. W., Yoo, M., & Park, Y. (2024). Decent work, posttraumatic stress disorder, and posttraumatic growth from the psychology of working perspective: A three-wave study of military personnel. *Journal of Career Assessment, 32*(1), 26-47. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727231163321

Shepherd, S., Kay, A. C., & Gray, K. (2019). Military veterans are morally typecast as agentic but unfeeling: Implications for veteran employment. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *153*, 75–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2019.06.003

Shepherd, S., Sherman, D. K., MacLean, A., & Kay, A. C. (2021). The challenges of military veterans in their transition to the workplace: A call for integrating basic and applied psychological science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *16*(3), 590–613. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620953096

Shue, S., Matthias, M. S., Watson, D. P., Miller, K. K., & Munk, N. (2021). The career transition experiences of military veterans: A qualitative study. *Military Psychology*, *33*(6), 359–371. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2021.1962175

Smith, A. J. (2021). Towards a trauma-informed existential career development group for veterans-in-transition: A conceptual exploration. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, *46*(2), 187-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/01933922.2021.1900958

Smith, A. J., Benight, C. C., & Cieslak, R. (2013). Social support and postdeployment coping self-efficacy as predictors of distress among combat veterans. *Military Psychology*, *25*(5), 452–461. https://doi.org/10.1037/mil0000013

Smith, C. M., Allan, B. A., & Blustein, D. L. (2024). Decent work and self determination needs: Exploring relational workplace civility as a moderator. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *32*(2), 226-242. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727231186768

Sohn, L., & Harada, N. D. (2008). Effects of racial/ethnic discrimination on the health status of minority veterans. *Military Medicine*, *173*(4), 331–338. https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED.173.4.331

Sorjonen, K., & Melin, B. (2023). Prospective associations between social support and posttraumatic stress disorder may be spurious: A re-meta-analysis of longitudinal studies and a simulation. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *340*, 174–180. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2023.08.014

Spencer, S. D., Zimmerman, M. B., Donis, N., Rodrigues, M., Jackson, D. O., & Dindo, L. (2023). Reintegration challenges among post-9/11 veterans: The role of mental health symptoms and resilience-and avoidance-based coping strategies. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, *30*, 97-105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2023.09.007

Sripada, R. K., Lamp, K. E., Defever, M., Venners, M., & Rauch, S. A. (2016). Perceived social support in multi-era Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *204*(4), 317–320. https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000000476

Stern, L. (2017). Post 9/11 veterans with service-connected disabilities and their transition to the civilian workforce: A review of the literature. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *19*(1), 66–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316682928

Stevenson, B. J., Gorman, J. A., Crossman, D. M., & Mueller, L. (2021). Providing career development services to veterans: Perceived need, acceptability, and demand. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 64*(2), 97-107. https://doi.org/10.1177/0034355220914737

Stevenson, B. J., Kathawalla, U., Smith, C., & Mueller, L. (2023). Career development in transitional work settings: A qualitative investigation among veterans and vocational counselors. *Journal of Career Development, 50*(4), 947-964. https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453221137344

Stone, C., & Stone, D. L. (2015). Factors affecting hiring decisions about veterans. *Human Resource Management Review*, *25*(1), 68–79. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2014.06.003

Tokar, D. M., Duffy, R. D., & Kaut, K. P. (2024). Predictors of work fulfillment and general well-being in workers with chiari malformation: The importance of decent work. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *32*(2), 283-304. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727231190630

Tsai, J., El-Gabalawy, R., Sledge, W. H., Southwick, S. M., & Pietrzak, R. H. (2015). Post-traumatic growth among veterans in the USA: Results from the National Health and Resilience in Veterans Study. *Psychological Medicine, 45*(1), 165–179. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291714001202

Tsai, J., Mitchell, L., Nakashima, J., & Blue-Howells, J. (2023). Unmet needs of homeless U.S. veterans by gender and race/ethnicity: Data from five annual surveys. *Psychological Services*, *20*(1), 149–156. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000557

Turner, R. J., Turner, J. B., & Hale, W. B. (2014). Social relationships and social support. In R. J. Johnson, R. J. Turner, & B. G. Link (Eds.), *Sociology of mental health: Selected topics from forty years, 1970s-2010s* (pp. 1–20). Springer Science + Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07797-0_1

Vogt, D., Smith, B. N., King, L. A., King, D. W., Knight, J., & Vasterling, J. J. (2013). Deployment Risk and Resilience Inventory-2 (DRRI-2): An updated tool for assessing psychosocial risk and resilience factors among service members and veterans. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *26*(6), 710–717. https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21868

Wan, W., & Duffy, R. D. (2022). Decent work and turnover intention among new generation employees: The mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of job autonomy. *SAGE Open*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221094591

Wang, D., Jia, Y., Hou, Z. J., Xu, H., Zhang, H., & Guo, X. L. (2019). A test of Psychology of Working Theory among Chinese urban workers: Examining predictors and outcomes of decent work. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *115*, 103325. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.103325

Wen, Y., Chen, H., Liu, F., & Wei, X. (2023). The relationship between career calling and resilience among rural-oriented pre-service teachers: The chain mediating

role of career adaptability and decent work. *Behavioral Sciences, 14*(1), 11. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14010011

Wewiorski, N. J., Gorman, J. A., Scoglio, A. A. J., Fukuda, S., Reilly, E., Mueller, L., O'Connor, M., Penk, W. E., & Drebing, C. E. (2018). Promising practices in vocational services for the community reintegration of returning veterans: The individual placement and support model and beyond. *Psychological Services, 15*(2), 191–199. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000177

Williams, T. R., Autin, K. L., Pugh, J., Herdt, M. E., Garcia, R. G., Jennings, D., & Roberts, T. (2023). Predicting decent work among US Black workers: Examining Psychology of Working Theory. *Journal of Career Assessment, 31*(4), 756-772. https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727221149456

Yanchus, N. J., Osatuke, K., Carameli, K. A., Barnes, T., & Ramsel, D. (2018). Assessing workplace perceptions of military veteran compared to nonveteran employees. *Journal of Veterans Studies, 3*(1), 37. https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.3

Zambelli, C., Rossier, J., & Marcionetti, J. (2023). A longitudinal study of relations among apprentices' nonwork orientation, decent work, and job satisfaction. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance,* 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-023-09609-8

Zammitti, A., Valbusa, I., Santilli, S., Ginevra, M. C., Soresi, S., & Nota, L. (2023). Development and validation of the Decent Work for Inclusive and Sustainable Future Construction Scale in Italy. *Sustainability, 15*(15), 11749. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151511749

Zhou, J., Saha, K., Lopez Carron, I. M., Yoo, D. W., Deeter, C. R., De Choudhury, M., & Arriaga, R. I. (2022). Veteran Critical Theory as a lens to understand veterans' needs and support on social media. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, *6*(CSCW1), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1145/3512980

Appendix A

Tables

Table A1

*Participant Demographics (*N *= 90)*

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Female	32	36%
Male	58	64%
Age (Mean [*SD*])	37.54 (*11.1*)	
Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	3	3%
Gay	1	1%
Lesbian	2	2%
Straight	84	93%
Race		
Asian or Asian American	2	2%
Black or African American	13	14%
Latinx	12	13%
Multiracial	10	11%
White	53	59%
Relationship Status		
Casually dating	3	3%
Dating exclusively	15	17%

Domestic partnership	1	1%
Engaged to be married	4	4%
Married	53	59%
Not dating	14	16%
Education		
High school diploma or equivalency	14	16%
Associate degree	21	23%
Bachelor's degree	28	31%
Master's degree	22	24%
Doctorate	5	6%
Annual Income		
Less than $5,000	3	3%
$5,000 through $15,999	8	9%
$16,000 through $34,999	11	12%
$35,000 through $49,999	7	8%
$50,000 through $74,999	18	20%
$75,000 and greater	43	48%
Military Branch		
Air Force	17	19%
Army	45	50%
Coast Guard	2	2%
Marines	12	13%
Navy	14	16%

Military Service Years (Mean [*SD*])	9.84 (*7.3*)
Years of Work Experience as Veteran (Mean [*SD*])	4.49 (*2.9*)

Table A2

*Bivariate Correlations and Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (*N = *90)*

	1	2	3	4	5
1	-				
2	-.265*	-			
3	-.214*	.328**	-		
4	-.263*	.459**	.404**	-	
5	.322**	-.317**	-.364**	-.358**	-
M	11.356	38.811	70.211	31.389	1.127
SD	5.482	6.323	14.592	4.711	0.745
α	.941	.851	.833	.895	.905

Note. 1 = marginalization; 2 = social support; 3 = decent work; 4 = career adaptability; 5 = reintegration difficulty.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table A3

Moderator Analysis: Social Support as Moderator of Marginalization and Decent Work Association

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Marginalization	-.39	.27	-1.42	.16
Social Support	.73	.24	3.03	.003
Marginalization x Social Support	-.08	.04	-1.86	.07

Table A4

Mediation Analysis: Career Adaptability Predicting Decent Work and Reintegration Difficulty

	B	*SE*	LLCI	ULCI
Career Adaptability on Reintegration Difficulty effect	**1.25**	.30	.65	1.85
Reintegration Difficulty unique effect	**-.01**	.001	-.02	-.003
Decent Work indirect effect	**-.02**	.007	-.03	-.01

Note. Bold font indicates significance ($p < .05$).

Appendix B

Figures

Figure B1

Graphic Representation of Hypothesized Model regarding Social Support as a Moderator

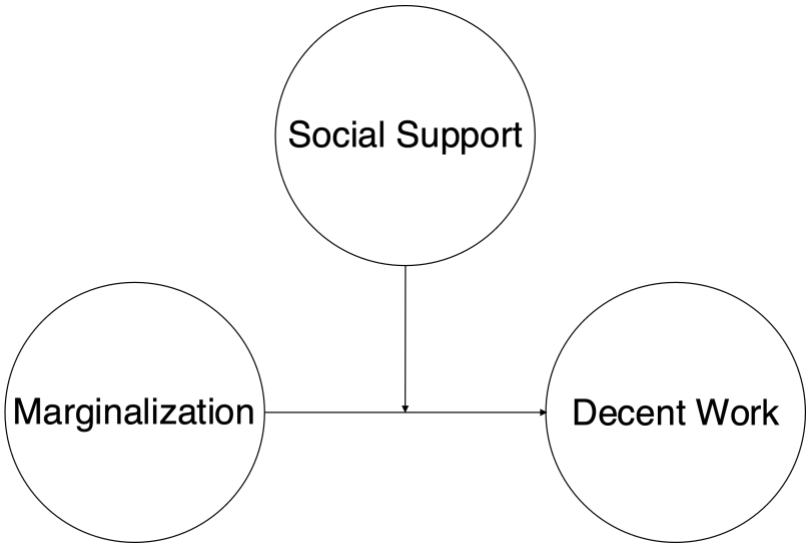


Figure B2

Graphic Representation of Hypothesized Model regarding Career Adaptability Predicting Decent Work and Decent Work Outcomes

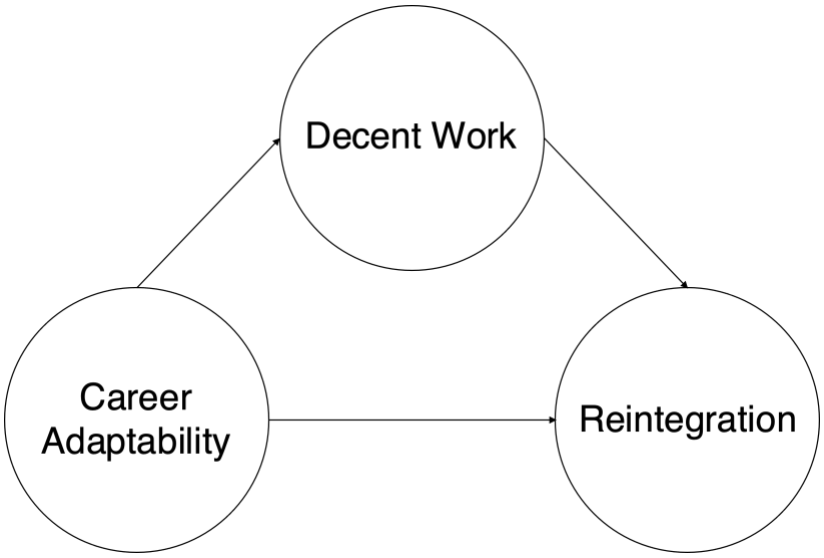


Figure B3

Graphic Representation of Hypothesized Psychology of Working Theory Model regarding Career Adaptability Predicting Decent Work and Decent work Outcomes

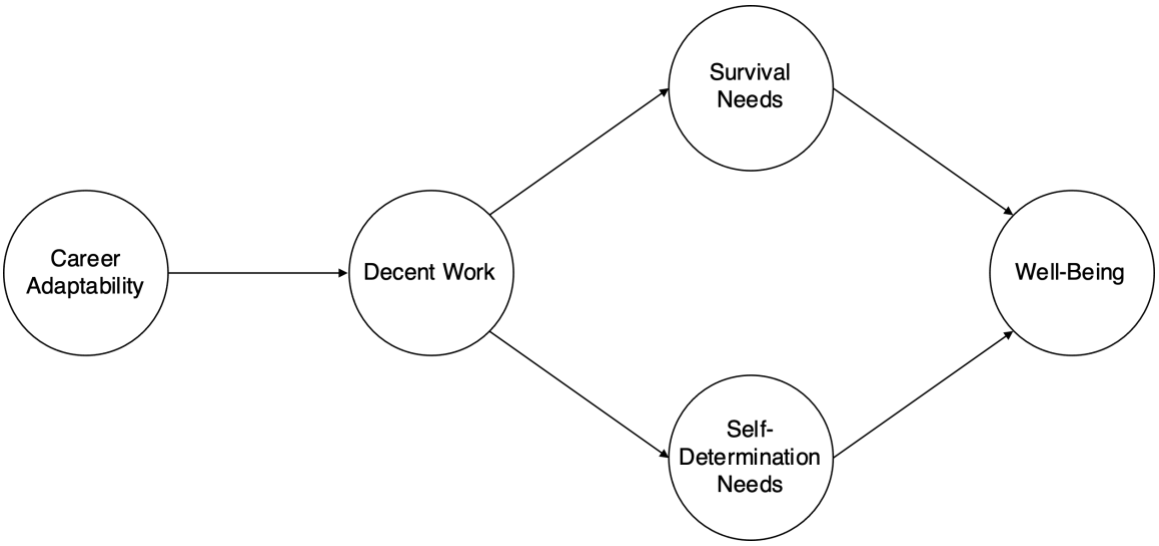


Figure B4

Test of Multivariate Normality

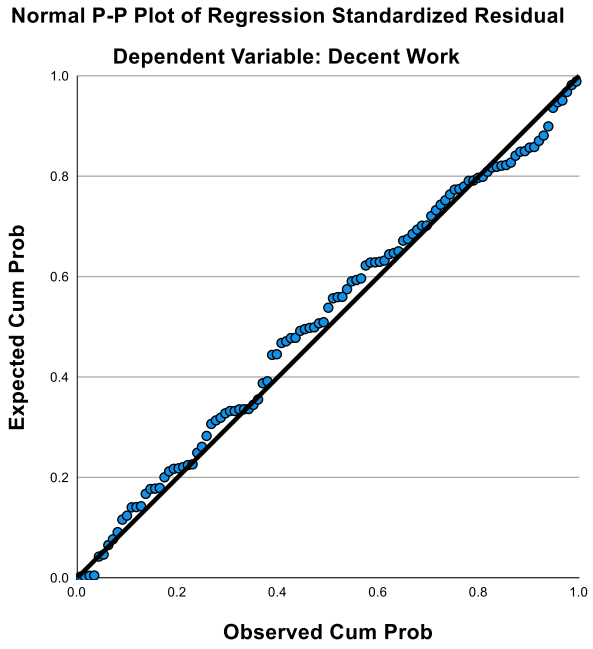


Figure B5

Test of Homoscedasticity

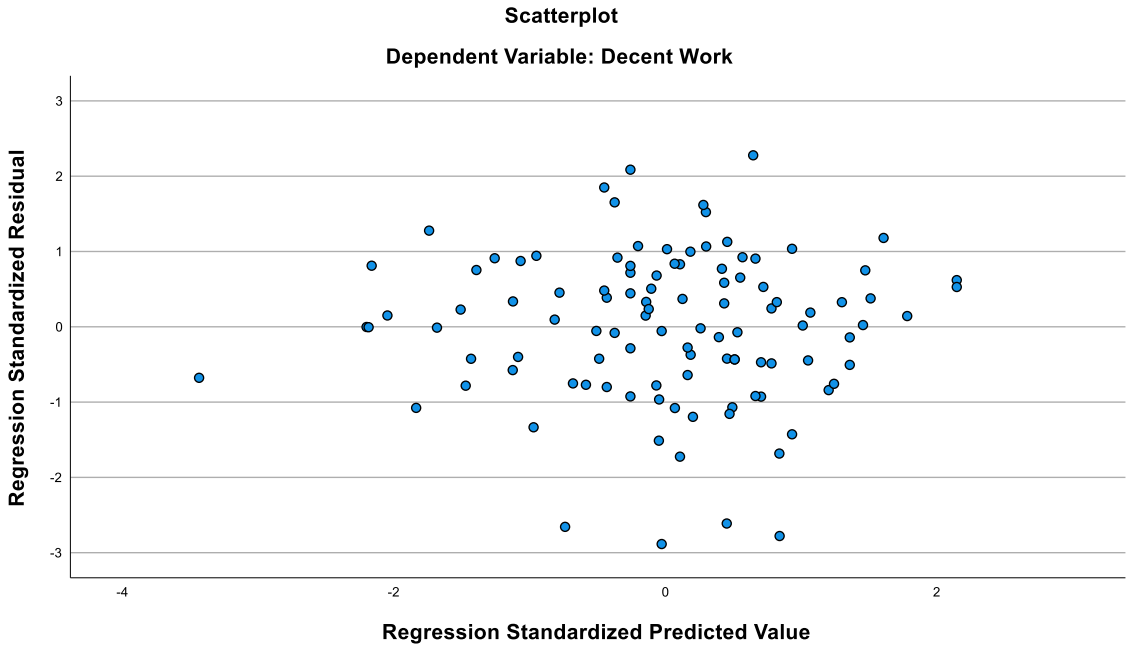


Figure B6

Graphic Representation of Moderation Results regarding Social Support as Moderator of Marginalization and Decent Work Relationship

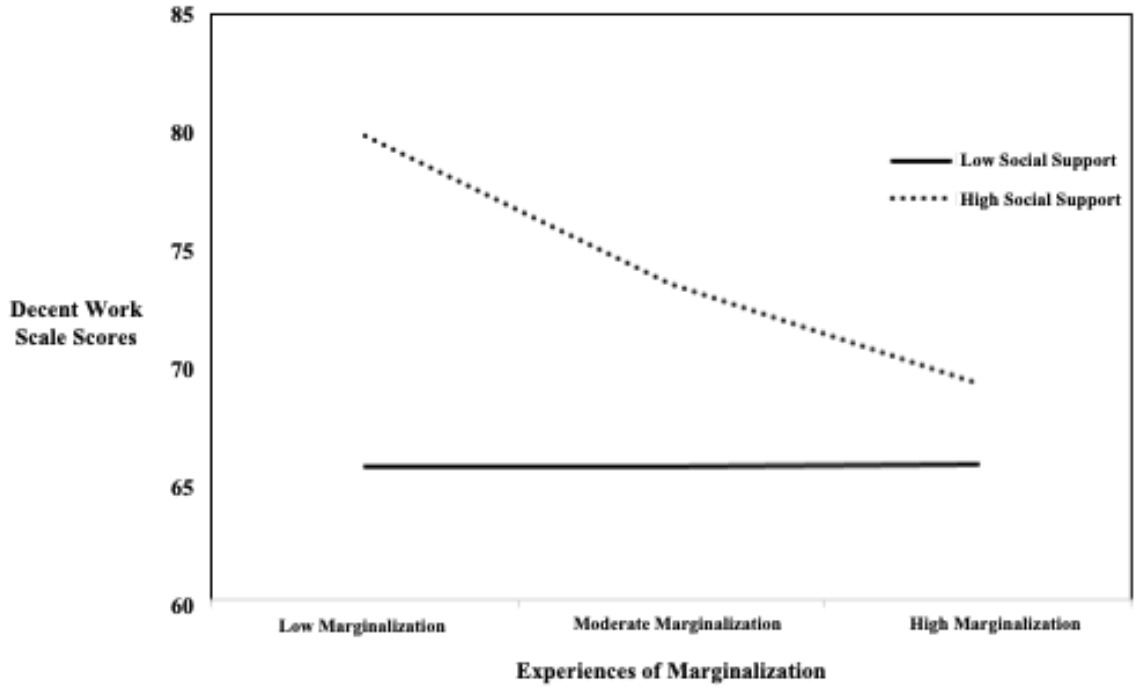
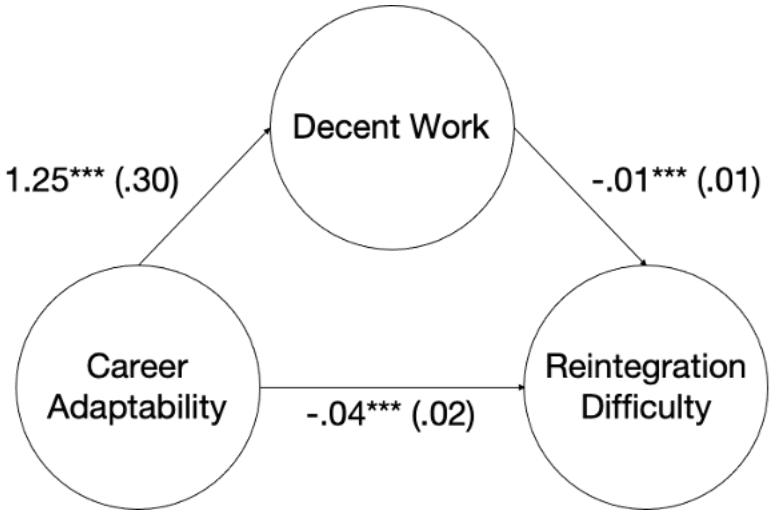


Figure B7

Graphic Representation of Mediation Results regarding Career Adaptability Predicting Decent Work and Reintegration Difficulty



Appendix C

Demographic Form

Age:

Gender:

Sexual orientation:

Race/ethnicity:

Estimated annual household income:

Relationship status:

Highest level of completed education:

Military service years/length:

Military branch membership:

Military occupation:

Rank at discharge:

Years of work experience as veteran (years of work post-military service):

Appendix D

Lifetime Experiences of Marginalization Scale

We are interested in the degree to which you consider yourself to be marginalized in the United States. By marginalized, we mean being in a less powerful position in society, being socially excluded, and/or having less access to resources because you are a member of a specific group, have a specific identity, or life history. This often occurs due to one's gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, religious beliefs, physical appearance, or being a part of other minority groups/identities. With this definition in mind, please respond to the following items below considering the experiences you have had throughout your entire life

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Neutral
5 = Slightly Agree
6 = Moderately Agree
7 = Strongly Agree

1. Throughout my life, I have had many experiences that have made me feel marginalized.
2. During my lifetime, I have had many interpersonal interactions that have often left me feeling marginalized
3. I have felt marginalized within various community settings for as long as I can remember"

Appendix E

Deployment Risk and Resilience Inventory-2 – Section O: Postdeployment Support

The next set of statements refers to social support AFTER YOUR MOST RECENT DEPLOYMENT, as well as current social support. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. ...the American people made me feel at home.
2. ...people made me feel proud to have served my country in the Armed Forces.
3. ...my family members and/or friends make me feel better when I am down.
4. ...I can go to family members or friends when I need good advice.
5. ...my family and friends understand what I have been through in the Armed Forces.
6. ...there are family and/or friends with whom I can talk about my deployment experiences.
7. ...my family members or friends would lend me money if I needed it.
8. ...my family members or friends would help me move my belongings if I needed help.
9. ...if I were unable to attend to daily chores, there is someone who would help me with these tasks.
10. ...when I am ill, family members or friends will help out until I am well.

Appendix F

Decent Work Scale

Please choose one answer to each of the following statements based on this scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Neutral
5 = Slightly Agree
6 = Moderately Agree
7 = Strongly Agree

1. I feel emotionally safe interacting with people at work
2. At work, I feel safe from emotional or verbal abuse of any kind
3. I feel physically safe interacting with people at work.
4. I get good healthcare benefits from my job.
5. I have a good healthcare plan at work.
6. My employer provides acceptable options for healthcare.
7. I **am not** properly paid for my work. (r)
8. I **do not** feel I am paid enough based on my qualifications and experience. (r)
9. I am rewarded adequately for my work
10. I **do not** have enough time for non-work activities. (r)
11. I have **no time** to rest during the work week. (r)
12. I have free time during the work week
13. The values of my organization match my family values.
14. My organization's values align with my family values.
15. The values of my organization match the values within my community.

Appendix G

Career Futures Inventory

This questionnaire assesses critical factors for people considering career transitions. You will be asked a series of questions regarding your current thoughts and feelings about how you plan your career. Please answer the following items as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers. Read each statement carefully, then use the following scale to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. I get excited when I think about my career
2. I am eager to pursue my career dreams
3. I am unsure of my future career success
4. Thinking about my career frustrates me
5. It is difficult to relate my abilities to a specific career plan
6. I understand my work-related interests
7. I do not understand job market trends
8. I can overcome potential barriers that may exist in my career
9. It is difficult for me to set career goals
10. I am not in control of my career success
11. I tend to bounce back when my career plans don't work out quite right
12. I am rarely in control of my career
13. Thinking about my career inspires me
14. My career success will be determined by my efforts
15. I will definitely make the right decisions in my career
16. I enjoy trying new work-related tasks
17. I am good at adapting to new work settings
18. I can adapt to change in my career plans
19. It is hard to discover the right career
20. Others would say that I am adaptable to change in my career plans
21. I will adjust easily to shifting demands at work
22. I can adapt to change in the world of work
23. Planning my career is a natural activity
24. I am good at understanding job market trends
25. It is easy to see future employment trends

Appendix H

Military to Civilian Questionnaire

Over the past 30 days, have you had difficulty with…

0 = No difficulty
1 = A little difficulty
2 = Some difficulty
3 = A lot of difficulty
4 = Extreme difficulty

1. Dealing with people you do not know well (such as acquaintances or strangers)?
2. Making new friends?
3. Keeping up friendships with people who have no military experience?
4. Keeping up friendships with people who have military experiences (including friends who are active duty or veterans)?
5. Getting along with relatives (such as siblings, parents, grandparents, in-laws and children not living at home)?
6. Getting along with your spouse or partner (such as communicating, doing things together, enjoying his or her company)?
7. Getting along with your child or children (such as communicating, doing things together, enjoying his or her company)?
8. Finding or keeping a job (paid or nonpaid or self-employment)?
9. Doing what you need to do for work or school?
10. Taking care of your chores at home (such as housework, yard work, cooking, cleaning, shopping, errands)?
11. Taking care of your health (such as exercising, sleeping, bathing, eating well, taking medications as needed)?
12. Enjoying or making good use of free time?
13. Taking part in community events or celebrations (for example, festivals, PTA meetings, religious or other activities)?
14. Feeling like you belong in "civilian" society?
15. Confiding or sharing personal thoughts and feelings?
16. Finding meaning or purpose in life?

VITA

Anthony Robert Schmiedeler was born on September 13, 1993, in Topeka, KS. In 2016, he completed a Bachelor of Arts in human biology with a concentration in psychology and a minor in religious studies at the University of Kansas. In 2018, he obtained a Master of Science in psychology with a concentration in research from Avila University. His master's thesis focused on the lived experiences of undergraduate students who had previously enrolled in majors classified as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). In 2019, he began his Doctor of Philosophy in counseling psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia and is currently a psychology pre-doctoral intern at the Salt Lake City VA Health Care System. Following his internship, he plans to complete a clinical post-doctoral fellowship at the VA Bedford Healthcare System. His main research interests have involved topics related to vocational and health psychology.