A Qualitative Study on the

Academic Perspectives of Military Families

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Dissertation Submitted to the Doctoral Program

of the American College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION in Curriculum and Instruction

December 2022

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Abstract

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. The study aimed to fill the knowledge gap to better prepare stakeholders to support military families during their transitions. The problem was the academic roadblocks students of military service members faced when they moved from one duty station to another. The research study revealed military service members' perspectives about the academic challenges their children experienced when transitioning from one military installation to another. The study also revealed what military service members perceived about their child's academic support in school. Data collection involved observable, verifiable, and confirmable evidence in supporting the research questions. Interviews and surveys were used in the study. The participants included 15 military service members, their spouses, and veterans. The following themes emerged from the data analysis: lack of support given to military families, career and family security, minimal support for students with disabilities during relocations, the need for improved communication and consistency, and resiliency and support. Recommendations for further research can be expanded in the following ways: seeking the perspectives of educators, administrators, school district superintendents, and government personnel involved in the policy-making that supports military families.

Keywords: *active duty, deployment, morale, welfare and recreation, permanent change of station, relocation, reserves, and temporary change of station*.

Dedication

I dedicate this writing to my husband, children, and close friends, who have put up with my constant conversations and passions that have driven this work. I also dedicate this writing to all military service members and their families.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge my dissertation chair, Dr. Kevin Dartt, and committee member, Dr. Tiffany Hamlett, who kept me on track and focused. They always answered my questions and guided and encouraged me when I wanted to give up.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air force are the five United States military branches. Across all military branches, there are around 1.3 million active-duty servicemen and women and over 850,000 reserve military members (Department of Defense, 2018). With so many people serving in the military, there are just as many, if not more, military families than soldiers. Active-duty military members made up more than half of the total military force (55.2%, with 42.5% (2,204,839) having dependent children (Department of Defense, 2018). The following sections comprise the introduction of the research: (a) the background and statement of the problem, (b) the purpose and significance of the study, (c) research questions, (d) theoretical framework, (e) definition of terms, (f) assumptions, (g) scope and delimitations, (h) limitation, and (i) chapter summary.

Background of Problem

Military service members, spouses, and dependents face challenges directly connected with separation, relocation, temporary duty station assignment (TDY), deployment, and reunification. Some support measures are already implemented, such as Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) and the Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS) program (Julian et al., 2018). Military service members and their spouses work diligently to reestablish relationships with the uncertainty of when separation will occur. There is also a struggle when moving from one state to another. According to the Military Child Education Coalition (2017), military service members need a process that properly collects and transfers student records.

The problem began when the government started having families accompany their military service members when they relocated from one base to another. Military families struggle with the different state-to-state policies that hinder the education process of the students

of military service members. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military

Children (ICEOMC) was created to address the issue faced by military service members related

to the educational policy (Esqueda et al., 2013).

The problem increases as more military families relocate and are misinformed or unaware

of the benefits and supports available for military spouses and children. The early philosophical

foundations of school climate research and theory were found in Dewey and Piaget (De Pedro et

al., 2015). Both theorists recognized the importance of the school environment on students'

learning and emotional well-being (De Pedro et al., 2015). The establishment and

implementation of caring school settings that encourage students' healthy social and intellectual

development arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Comer, 2009).

Statement of Problem

The problem was the academic roadblocks students of military service members faced

when they moved from one duty station to another. The Interstate Compact Education Uniform

Agreement policy (ICEOMC) is a uniform policy intended to address academic needs during the

transition (Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), 2018). Those impacted

by the problem include current and future military parents and children. Additional research

indicates how military children have higher unfavorable mental health outcomes due to the stress

of military life events (De Pedro et al., 2015). Although the research focused on mental

health in military families, little research supported the compact agreement's effects on military

service members.

To date, no studies on military-connected children have investigated the role of the

school environment, such as school climate, in improving mental health and well-being. Military

service members must be informed of the support available to transition from state to state and

deal with their children's challenges as they attend Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) and military-connected schools. The perspectives that military service members shared have bridged the gap in research and provided the necessary resources for military-connected school districts, stakeholders, and the government to make changes in the academic support for children of military service members.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. Children of various ages must adjust to a lifestyle full of unpredictability even though the military culture is driven by routine (Shafer et al., 2016). Some military service members opted to homeschool their children to balance frequent relocations and avoid the academic struggle of moving from one school to another. The research contributes to the existing knowledge about the academic perspectives of military service members as they transition, the impact that the ICEOMC has had on their families, and the support from their child's schools (Esqueda et al., 2013).

Current data highlight varying aspects of military relocation, deployment, and reintegration. However, there is insufficient research explaining the military service member's perspective. School districts addressed the factors that affect military students academically due to the study. Communities had a clearer understanding of the health factors that impact military service members. Support measures were identified to make military service members and spouses aware of their benefits.

Significance of the Study

There was a need for military service members and families to discuss challenges related to military life, such as deployment, relocation, health issues, and academic challenges. Despite all the advancements and opportunities for the military to cope with transitions, there was still a gap in how families were supported in schools. Family members are significantly affected by their loved ones' military service, which causes an increase in physical, mental, and academic challenges. There was also a 12% increase in stress disorders in children and behavioral care visits (Gorman et al., 2010). Providing support to the military spouse is a central concern when efforts and measures are implemented to support military families (Gewirtz et al., 2011). This study identified aspects and helped the government and secondary schools continue improving the support provided to military service members and their families. Current research included support regarding the mental health issues for military families, but there was minimal literature about the academic challenges. Military-connected schools will adapt curricula and guide military children to support their academic success due to this study.

Research Questions

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools.

Research Question 1: What are military service members' perspectives about the academic challenges their children experience when there is a transition from one military installation to another?

Research Question 2: What are military service members' perspectives about their child's academic support?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the family stress theory guided by Hill (1958) and Burr (1973). The learning process can positively and negatively affect military children (Astor et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017; Moeller et al., 2015). Military parents had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and describe how those experiences have transformed their lives and viewpoints. According to Hill (1958) and Burr (1973), the family stress theory allowed parents of military children to reflect upon the transitions of military life and what was learned to determine if the stress endured equaled a positive or negative experience. According to Bush and Price (2020), the family stress theory explored all families' periodic, acute stressors. When stress was frequent in a military family or lacked support through relationships or organizations, family crises or challenges built up physically, mentally, and academically. The primary stress theory's primary interest was the family unit, not the individual (Bush & Price, 2020). Through this research, school districts adapted the level of academic support that military children and their parents receive. School districts will be aware of triggers due to the demands of military life to help military students succeed in their future endeavors. A detailed description of the theoretical framework will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Definition of Terms

Listed are terms used interchangeably throughout the research study.

Active duty (AD)- Active duty refers to the status of the military that the service member is in. This is classified as full-time employment with the military (National Center for PTSD, 2012)

*Deployment-*A service member is deployed overseas during a wartime situation. Deployment may last three months or longer (National Center for PTSD, 2012)

*MWR-*Morale, welfare, and recreation department was created for military families, and service members can engage in planned activities (My Army Benefits, 2021)

*PCS-*Permanent change of station occurs when the military family or service member relocates due to order (Powers, 2018).

*Relocation-*Relocation occurs when the soldier has received orders to move to a new duty station (Powers, 2018).

*Reserves-*Soldiers in the reserves work part-time with the military and report for duty once per month (National Center for PTSD, 2012).

*TDY-*Temporary change of duty station occurs when a military service member must work away from home for a period (Powers, 2018).

Assumptions

Assumptions are the foundation of research, which is why they are critical to the validity and credibility of the study. Simon and Goes (2013) asserted that the reader accepts the research's assumptions. The first assumption was that participants would answer research questions honestly and share their experience. Secondly, the inclusion criteria of the research are appropriate and, therefore, ensure that the participants have all experienced the same or similar phenomenon of the study. Finally, participants were eager to share their experiences, hoping to make positive changes for future military families. The research demonstrated that each

assumption was most likely met and valid; otherwise, the study would be useless (Simon &

Goes, 2013).

Scope and Delimitations

Study delimitations are the characteristics that result from the extent of the study's

boundaries and deliberate decisions made throughout its preparation (Theofanidis & Fountouki,

2018). Delimitations emerge from implicit method and design characteristics and are the

outcome of specific choices made by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). The purpose of the

basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding

their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected

schools. The scope of the research was military service members and their families who have

children enrolled in a public school and have moved at least once during their military career.

The military service member was active on duty, a veteran, or a reserve retiree. The research

not include military personnel with children not in school yet, or those attending private schools.

According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018), delimitations are in the researcher's control.

Thus, delimitations were concerned with the study's theoretical background, objectives, research

questions, variables under study, and study samples.

Limitations

Limitations are potential flaws in the study that are beyond the researcher's control. There

are limitations in everything a researcher does (Simon, 2011). Limitations to the research were

the number of participants who chose to be part of the study. Another limitation of the research

was the time it took to meet with participants based on their schedules. Society was battling a

bacterium, and at times participants had to quarantine. To manage the limitations, adequate time

was used to provide participants time to answer research questions and share their experiences. Participants were provided a breakdown of the interview process.

Chapter Summary

Frequent transfers, absence from loved ones, and the adjustment of their loved ones returning home provided challenges. Military families are strong, but there was a disparity in the level of assistance. It is possible that schools and other community organizations did not have complete knowledge of the support needed to assist military families in their areas. The perspectives of military service members and their families provided clear guidance to stakeholders regarding the challenges, the areas where change was needed, and the limitations of the study addressed potential flaws that are frequently beyond the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Assumptions were common beliefs of research that could not be proven (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. The study's perspective of military families included the literature review, methodology, research findings, data analysis, discussion, and conclusion sections. An overview of Chapter 2 consisted of the type of research conducted, research findings, data analysis, findings, interpretation, and conclusion**.**

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Children of military families must adjust to a lifestyle full of unpredictability even though the military culture is driven by routine (Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). Current data highlights varying aspects of military relocation, deployment, reintegration, and mental health challenges. However, insufficient research explains how separation, relocation, temporary duty (TDY), deployment, and reintegration connect health-wise, academically, and mentally (Classen et al., 2019) to provide a clear view of military culture. The problem was there are academic roadblocks that students of military service members face when they move from one duty station to another. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. Common themes from the literature review were academic challenges, resiliency during separation and deployment, mental health, and support to military families.

As a result of the study, school districts will address the factors that affect military students academically and adapt the level of support provided to military service members and their families. The family stress theory supported the study's purpose and justified that military families undergo constant change and need adequate support throughout transitions. The upcoming sections of the paper include qualitative research, research findings, data analysis, findings, interpretation, and conclusions.

Literature Search Strategy

The following search engines were used to collect sources: (a) EBSCO and (b) ProQuest database utilizing the ACE Library as the search engine. Common search terms for this paper were *family stress theory and military families, challenges of military families, coping and*

the resiliency of military families, academic struggles of military children, mental health and military families, deployment and separation, and *perspectives of military families and veterans.* Sources were narrowed down using full-text peer-reviewed sources with a date range of 2015-2021.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the family stress theory guided by Hill (1958) and Burr (1973). The learning process can positively and negatively affect the military child (Astor et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017; Moeller et al., 2015). Military parents will have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and describe how those experiences have transformed their lives and viewpoints. According to Hill (1958) and Burr (1973), the family stress theory allowed parents of military children to reflect upon the transitions of military life and what was learned to determine if the stress endured equaled a positive or negative experience. Through this research, school districts adapted the academic support that military children and their parents receive. School districts are aware of triggers that can occur due to the demands of military life to help military students be successful in their future endeavors.

Hill created the family stress theory to study the impact of separations and reunions on families after World War II (Daneshpour, 2017). The original theory by Hill (1958) focused on factors B and C in the ABC-X model. Factor B was family resources, and Factor C defined the meaning attached to the event. The primary interest of the stress theory is the family unit, not the individual. Burr (1973) and Hill (1958) used the social systems approach with the family stress theory conceptualization of families under stress. The social systems approach shifts the focus beyond the family and the individual to the larger social context (Burr, 1973; Hill, 1958).

Families are embedded in an ecosystem and have multiple economic, developmental, historical, spiritual, cultural, and genetic influences.

The original family stress theory focuses on factors A, the stressor event; factor B, the family's resources and strengths; factor C, the definition of meaning attached to the event; X, the stress level produced (Burr, 1973; Hill, 1958). The family stress theory explores all families' periodic, acute stressors. When stress is frequent in a military family or lacking support through relationships or organizations, family crises or challenges build up physically, mentally, and academically (Burr, 1973; Hill, 1958).

Further research was conducted by Burr (1973), who expanded the family stress theory to focus on the X factor. The X factor is the degree of stress resulting from A, B, and C. Families are viewed as organisms with boundaries to maintain; however, military families do not live in isolation (Burr, 1973). According to Daneshpour (2017), two concepts were considered critical in a family's reaction to crisis: (a) vulnerability, or the ability to withstand the initial impact of a stressor depending on the family's resources; and (b) regenerative power, or the family's ability to recover following a crisis. A stressor event is any occurrence that provokes an extreme amount of change in the family system (Daneshpour, 2017). Stress will arise when the routine changes from relocation, deployment, or separation. It is important to note that military families develop resiliency after frequent changes and stressors occur in their lives (Daneshpour, 2017; Price et al., 2019). Stressor events do not necessarily increase stress levels to the point of crisis if the family's stress level can be managed and return to a new equilibrium (Daneshpour, 2017; Price et al., 2019). Families may experience distress or eustress, which is moderate psychological stress interpreted as beneficial based on positive or negative experiences (Daneshpour, 2017; Price et al., 2019).

According to Daneshpour (2017), the original family stress model was considered the pre-crisis model, which examined reactions before the event or stress. The current model includes the post-crisis model representing an ongoing change following a crisis (Daneshpour, 2017). Researchers consider the family stress theory part of a social system perspective. The social system approach allows the researcher to focus beyond the family and the individual to the broader social system (Daneshpour, 2017; Price et al., 2019). The stress level for military families can be based on each influence or only a few (Price et al., 2019).

The social system approach investigates the challenges associated with each influence (Price et al., 2019). Transitions in military life can fall into two categories: (a) normal and (b) unpredictable. Eventually, the unpredictable, such as deployment, relocation, and separation, become normal (Daneshpour, 2017; Price et al., 2019). The stress a military family may experience, along with anxiety, shifts into resiliency (Daneshpour, 2017; Monney & Lapiz-Bluhm, 2018; Price et al., 2019). Military families develop coping strategies due to the challenges of moving, deployment, separation, and reintegration (Monney & Lapiz-Bluhm, 2018). The family stress theory explains what causes stress and why the life of a military family may be challenging. Coping and resiliency result from stress, and coping is the process of achieving balance in the family system (Briggs et al., 2019; Daneshpour, 2017; Monney & Lapiz-Bluhm, 2018; Price et al., 2019).

Research Literature Review

Academic Challenges

There was a knowledge gap in educational research regarding military-connected schools and students. Only 87,000 out of 1 million children attend Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools (Astor et al., 2013; Esqueda et al., 2013; Moeller et al., 2015). Most

military students attended a public school in their local district. Frequent school transitions across multiple state lines created numerous challenges for students and parents (Esqueda et al., 2013; Moeller et al., 2015). For example, students begin school in one state that starts at age 5 for kindergarten, but that rule may be different for another where the child's age and birthdate are necessary factors.

Until 2008, differing state and district policies hindered the educational progress of military children in public schools (Astor et al., 2013; Moeller et al., 2015). Congress recognized the need for further support for students from military families in military-connected schools. As a result, a memorandum of understanding, called the Interstate Compact Agreement, was created between the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Defense to bridge the gap in services that military students are provided at DoDEA schools and military-connected schools (Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). States took a few years to implement the compact agreement drafted and approved in 2008. According to Esqueda et al. (2013), some states symbolically endorsed the compact agreement but failed to spread the changes down to superintendents at the district level.

Greater accountability and expectation were required to ensure that the Interstate Compact Agreement was being followed. Schools with a higher population of military students should receive additional professional development to be made aware of the change and the required responsibilities that will make transitions smoother for military families (Classen et al., 2019; Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Before implementing the Interstate Compact Agreement, most school districts had varying policies affecting the transitioning of military students from one school to another. The compact agreement addresses children of active-duty members of the armed services, reserve and national guard on active-duty

orders, and veterans who are medically discharged from the military (Jackson, 2010; Military

Child Education Coalition, 2017). Although DoDEA schools were designed with the necessary

support that military families would need as they transition from state to state, specifications

were not included for the number of children enrolled in military-connected schools.

The growing awareness of the Interstate Compact Agreement terms has helped reduce

some of the inconsistencies and uncertainties school-aged children face with parents serving on

active duty (Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). According to Military

Child Education Coalition (2017), military students experienced various structures, curricula,

standards, and priorities for public education. The role of military school liaisons at DoDEA

schools bridges families and students transitioning to other DoDEA schools and military-

connected schools. Still, there was a disconnect when students transitioned from one military-

connected school to another. The Interstate Compact has existed for many years, but many

military families are unaware of the benefits and rights of the program (Classen et al., 2019;

Military Child Education Coalition, 2017).

Families contend with attendance challenges, placement issues, course and program

placement, or absences from school when a parent returns from deployment (Classen et al.,

2019; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). The interstate compact agreement specified the

process for military families in the following categories: state forms, graduation, transfer, and

enrollment, oversight, enforcement, dispute resolution, placement flexibility, students with

disabilities, and absences (Classen et al., 2019; Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education

Coalition, 2017). Over the past two decades, deployments have become the norm for service

members and their families. Students and their families have had to keep up with these

transitions' academic demands and testing requirements. Each category of the Intestate Compact

Agreement was intended to support and smooth military life transitions (Esqueda et al., 2013; Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017).

Military students risk knowledge gaps and academic struggles due to frequent transitions. When students move during the middle of a school year, they may be required to repeat content that they have previously learned or be expected to know the content that was not covered at their previous school (Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Educators face the complexity of identifying learning gaps in students transitioning in the middle of a school year. Teachers were given professional development to discover new ways of teaching the content and differentiating the curriculum for military students (Esqueda et al., 2013).

Students with Disabilities

The landscape of public education shifted with the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 and the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 (Cortiella, 2021). The NCLB and IDEA were two of the nation's most important laws regarding children's education. NCLB was built on four basic principles: (a) accountability for results, (b) an emphasis on doing what works, (c) parental involvement, and (d) local control and flexibility (Cortiella, 2021). IDEA focused on the education of students with disabilities. Specifically, IDEA required developing an individualized education program (IEP) outlining the instruction necessary to allow the child to participate and progress in the same curriculum as all children (Cortiella, 2021).

However, each state has a level of flexibility in applying critical parts of the IDEA Act (Cortiella, 2021; Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Children with disabilities have unique challenges besides being part of a military family. A student's accommodations on their IEP at one school determined their accommodations at their new

school. New schools must provide comparable services for a new student who enters with an IEP

(Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Still, school districts have significant

discretion in determining what constitutes a comparable service and may not have the resources

to provide some assistance (Cortiella, 2021; Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education

Coalition, 2017). For example, a student may receive IEP services in a self-contained

environment, but self-contained services are not offered at the school that the military family is

transferring to. A school may modify the specification of the IEP, which may cause alarm and

concern for parents as they transition (Cortiella, 2021; Military Child Education Coalition,

2017).

Others had a medical-specific plan known as a 504 plan, which provided additional

support to students to ensure that the classroom environment met the student's needs (Cardinal

Innovations Healthcare, 2019; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). The process involved

for students with disabilities may be ongoing from 6 to 12 months (Classen et al., 2019; Davis &

Finke, 2015). With frequent moves comes the challenge of military families receiving the

support necessary to transition. Each permanent change of station (PCS) move often requires

rewriting the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP was a detailed document that

provided detailed information regarding the child's accommodation needed in the classroom

(Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). It required the input of

teachers, therapists, and parents. The process can be drawn out depending on the child's specific

needs. If a family relocates, the process might drag on for a few months, delaying the child's

academic services the child is entitled to and needs (Esqueda et al., 2013).

Administrators reported that effectively managing and implementing IEPs for highly

mobile students was one of the most complicated aspects of school transitions (Esqueda et al.,

2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). However, military families should not have

these issues based on the rules specified by the Interstate Compact Agreement (Jackson, 2010).

Further research is needed to determine how external stressors such as transitions and repeated

deployments negatively affect military children's academic functioning and behavioral outcomes

(Classen et al., 2019; Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017).

Communication Between Teachers, Stakeholders, and Military Parents

The needs of children in the classroom observed by the educator differed from those

expressed by the military parent. A concern for educators was the need for practical professional

development opportunities. There was a disconnect between what is expected of educators and

the level of responsibility (Classen et al., 2019; Esqueda et al., 2013; Military Child Education

Coalition, 2017). According to Classen et al. (2019), educators desired to know more about the

military culture. Professional development was provided occasionally but not enough for

educators (Classen et al., 2019). To help the process go smoothly, educators established positive

relationships with families. One of the best ways educators gained informal knowledge was by

connecting with veteran educators with previous military experience (Jackson, 2010).

Military families and educators agreed that clear communication was a step in the right

direction for educators to understand the needs of families (Classen et al., 2019). Military

families felt closure and a sense of understanding when educators took the time to listen to their

concerns. Military parents, teachers, and school district personnel are allies for the same cause.

Leaders at the district level have power that educators do not have. The superintendent of a

school district and the post commander of the military installation could come together and

discuss the available resources for military families (Classen et al., 2019). The partnership

between the military and school district also allows both sides to share unique viewpoints and

perspectives so that common ground can be established. Positive and open communication between families, the community, the military installation, and other stakeholders are necessary to receive the support and help military families need as they transition (Classen et al., 2019).

Mental Health

Mental health and wellness encompass several different areas. Military service members' mental health and their families are unique because of deployment and frequent relocation. The stability of a military family is vital for students to succeed in school and thrive through the unique challenges of military life (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Cramm et al., 2019). The military service member can perform their military duties efficiently when the family is stable and secure. Transitioning and adapting to the new standard can be hard when the average period for military families to remain at a duty station is two to three years (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Cramm et al., 2019). One unique challenge is that some military families live on or near a military installation and have access to childcare programs, medical facilities, and schools.

In contrast, others live in remote areas where access is limited or unavailable. Service members come from culturally diverse backgrounds and geographical regions. During a family's time at one location, the service member may have to be deployed for up to a year, depending on their military occupation (Blamey et al., 2019; Cramm et al., 2019). The service member may sometimes receive orders for an unaccompanied tour to an overseas location such as Korea or Germany. Studies show that shorter deployments and frequent communication with service members can buffer the adverse effects of the absence (Blamey et al., 2019; Cramm et al., 2019). The lack of consistency in receiving healthcare, as families transition, has caused an increase in adolescent psychiatric hospitalizations and emergency department visits (Blamey et al., 2019).

Military children of active duty and reserve service members face many mental challenges. The children struggle with feelings of isolation (Blamey et al., 2019) because families often move away from extended family support during relocation or deployment, which military children heavily depend on. Military families learn to cope by supporting one another. It can be difficult raising children without a service member. Many military spouses learn to rely on friends, who become extended family when challenges arise.

During a short relocation, a service member may only be at a station due to training, which results in less time spent away from their loved ones. According to Huebner (2018), families are geographically mobile and move at a 2% faster rate than families not associated with the military. The mental stability of a military family encompasses psychological, emotional, behavioral, and physiological well-being (Huebner, 2018). Grief, lack of contact with a service member, and transitions from deployment affect the well-being of military families. Family outcomes change over the deployment cycle; however, the service member reported better family environments. According to Meadows et al. (2017), service members and their spouses have opposing viewpoints on the positives and negatives of deployment. Service members reported better family environments during deployment, while spouses reported a decline in their environment (Meadows et al., 2017).

Military spouses also reported a decline in parenting satisfaction, while service members reported higher parenting satisfaction (Meadows et al., 2017). One study revealed an 11% increase in mental and behavioral health outpatient visits in children 3 to 8 years of age during parental deployment (Cramm et al., 2019; Huebner, 2018). Another study of 6 to 12-year-olds and their civilian parent revealed increased depression and symptoms associated with distress and anxiety.

Life Stressors with Deployment and Relocation

According to Briggs et al. (2019), stressors related to deployment and relocation can trigger unwanted behaviors in children. Unwanted behaviors may increase because of a lack of contact with the deployed parent, increased household responsibilities, increased emotional intensity, missing the deployed family member, lack of family traditions, and anxiety over their safety (Blamey et al., 2019; Briggs et al., 2019; Cramm et al., 2019; Huebner, 2018). During separation and relocation (Borah & Fina, 2017; Davis & Finke, 2015; O'Neal et al., 2018), negative behavior increased and did not minimize until the military service member returned. Davis and Finke (2015) also reported that early research portrayed the military family as authoritarian with behaviorally challenged children. Children with autism have difficulties expressing their emotions during separation, increasing the negative behaviors exhibited during relocation or separation (Borah & Fina, 2017; Davis & Finke, 2015; O'Neal et al., 2018).

Military spouses and children tend to experience frustration, depression, and anxiety during relocation and deployment (Huebner, 2018). For a military child to adapt to each changing environment, it is recommended that students have access to supportive peer relationships, extracurricular activities, and other services to help relieve potential stressors at home and school (Huebner, 2018; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Research indicates that children between 12 and 17, who have made multiple geographic moves, are likely to have mental health struggles (Davis & Finke, 2015; Huebner, 2018; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017; Shaw, 2020). Children are most concerned about the stress of relocation, school transitions, and deployment. However, increased mental healthcare and behaviors have been associated with special needs children. The direct effect of deployment on children differs across preschool, school-age, and adolescents.

Additional factors that affect the stress level of military families are the spouse's physical health, the spouse's and children's mental health, family functioning, length of deployment, and protective factors (Briggs et al., 2019). Military spouses reported that the longer the deployment, the more children had emotional problems and depressive symptoms (Briggs et al., 2019; Meadows et al., 2017). The military has made positive gains to help families transition with relocation and deployment. The stability of the family at home often allows the deployed soldiers to perform their job duties efficiently while overseas. In 2011, the U.S. Army established a window of grace for 2 years between soldiers' deployment times. Forty-three percent of U.S. personnel deployed multiple times; the average deployment length is 7.7 months, with an average of 21 months at home between deployments (Blamey et al., 2019; Huebner, 2018).

Four common health conditions were examined in military families: behavioral or conduct problems, depression, anxiety or other emotional problems, and ADD/ADHD (Blamey et al., 2019; Cramm et al., 2019; Huebner, 2018). Typically, the more deployments a family experiences, the greater the health challenges. Children growing up in military families have more mental health issues than civilian children. The military health system is used to track and monitor all dependents of military service members. In 2015, 17% percent of children ages 6 to 21 had noncomplex chronic needs (Blamey et al., 2019; Cramm et al., 2019; Huebner, 2018).

Resiliency during Separation and Deployment

The repeated transitions and required adaptions may create adaptability and independence among mobile military children (Davis & Finke, 2015). Several counselors noted that the military-connected students were often more mature than the other students and seemed able to manage the little bumps in school life (Borah & Fina, 2017; Davis & Finke, 2015). Parents,

teachers, and counselors believed post-secondary transitions would be less complicated for military-connected children because of their experience dealing with transitions. Many students developed unique ways of managing the changes (Borah & Fina, 2017; Davis & Finke, 2015).

Children in military families can experience resilience and vulnerability, just as civilian children do. According to Daneshpour (2017), resources and definitions to resist change in the family system are critical ways for stress never to become a crisis. When a person or family is first confronted with stressors, coping strategies resist the stressor. Many military families are resilient despite exposure to deployments and other military life challenges, so understanding the potential buffering role of adaptive family functioning in the face of military operational stress has important implications for the development and dissemination of interventions (Daneshpour, 2017; O'Neal et al., 2018).

Deployment is a stressor that can facilitate growth or cause a crisis in the family concerning family functioning (Daneshpour, 2017; O'Neal et al., 2018). Resilience is critical in all deployment phases, and support networks help improve coping skills in military families. The mental health of their parent may impact a child's resilience level. It is essential to consider the family dynamics when caring for military children (Daneshpour, 2017; O'Neal et al., 2018). When children had socialization with other military children during deployment, they functioned better.

Interventions to promote resiliency should be designed at the family and community levels. Studies suggest that deployment length has a different effect on boys and girls (Daneshpour, 2017; O'Neal et al., 2018). Boys were more prone to maladjustments associated with deployments. Boys more keenly felt the absence of the male figure during adolescence (Meadows et al., 2017). As families learn to adapt to deployment or separation, they may

develop cohesion that reflects the level of emotional bonds that each family member holds for

one another. Flexibility is another trait acquired through leadership, rules, and roles in the family

(Daneshpour, 2017; O'Neal et al., 2018).

Coping Strategies for Military Families

Family communication, or the lack of communication, was associated with

depression/anxiety in service members and their spouses (Davis & Finke, 2015; Shaw, 2020).

Positive and open communication amongst spouses was crucial in getting through deployment.

To help guide military parents through the process Shaw (2020) recommended several steps

parents can take before relocation, deployment, and reintegration to make the process smoother

for children. Parents can have a family meeting, listen to their child's feelings, and reassure them

of future changes. There are multiple ways families can engage in conversation with technology,

even with the deployed soldier. Students with disabilities will need time to process and prepare

before significant changes occur in a family (Davis & Finke, 2015; Huebner, 2018; Shaw, 2020).

The emotional and behavioral health of family members at home can affect the psychological

stability of the military service member during deployments and separations (Nolan & Misca,

2018).

The coping process for younger children can be different when separated during

deployment (Nolan & Misca, 2018). Separation during deployment spans months, not minutes,

and for a child with little concept of time, adjusting can be the most complicated repair process

(Mindell et al., 2015; Nolan & Misca, 2018). A military child will undergo a disruption and

repair process during separation and reintegration. The repair process requires a patient parent

who can help engage the child in reestablishing a relationship. The targeted age for the repair

process is 3 to 9 years old. The repair process involves a 7-minute task between parent and child, clean-up, and challenging tasks (Kemp et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that a military child will need day-to-day experiences engaging the child's needs to find opportunities for interactive repair (Mindell et al., 2015; Nolan & Misca, 2018). Several techniques can be effective when working with young children to cope and develop resiliency during deployment, separation, and reintegration. Pediatricians and practitioners urge the importance of routines in supporting children and helping them to develop a sense of security (Nolan & Misca, 2018). According to Mindell et al. (2015), a regular bedtime routine for children diminishes a display of poor behavior or increased hyperactivity.

Another successful strategy that can support young children in the coping process is to communicate the psychological presence of the absent parent (Borah & Fina, 2017; Daneshpour, 2017; Houston et al., 2013). The primary guardian or caregiver of the child should support by keeping the thoughts of the deployed parent in the views of young children. Using video chats, emails, and letters and recording videos can support a child during the months of separation (Borah & Fina, 2017; Daneshpour, 2017; Houston et al., 2013). Pictures of the absent parent holding or playing with the child can trigger positive memories. Studies also show that when the at-home parent makes themselves emotionally and physically available to young children, they feel secure in the absence of the deployed parents (Borah & Fina, 2017; Daneshpour, 2017; Houston et al., 2013). Caregivers can engage in play with children to help them explore their feelings.

Support to Military Families

Many factors affect the vulnerability and resiliency of military families. O'Neal et al. (2018) determined that household functionality, consistent communication, increased resiliency

amongst all family members, and minimal vulnerabilities make a military family resilient. This study was one of the most current studies on military families and the effects of military life. The study had 214 families and 642 individuals to support the data collected (O'Neal et al., 2018). Managing the home by the military spouse is a significant component of family resilience and reintegration (O'Neal et al., 2018). When the civilian spouse manages the finances, household or home responsibilities, and matters related to the children, they reported having a positive reintegration process.

The Department of Defense recognizes the need to provide resources to military families to successfully navigate the stressors of military life (Adirim & Johnston, 2019). Programs have been developed to educate parents about the typical reactions of young children to stresses of the deployment cycle and help them manage their children's anxiety (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Nolan & Misca, 2018). Strong Families Strong Forces is a home-based reintegration program for military families with children under 6 (Adirim & Johnston, 2019). According to Nolan and Misca (2018), a trial was conducted at Boston University to help parents gain insights into their parent's and children's deployment and reintegration experiences. Some of the modules included in the home-based program are "Becoming a Military Family," Catching Up with Your Child," and "Saying Goodbye and Moving Forward." DeVoe et al. (2016) found that military parents who participated in the program suffered less stress, anxiety, and depression. Parents were able to keep young children's feelings in mind and demonstrate sensitivity while parenting.

Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS) program was designed to support families in transitioning back together after deployment or separation (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Nolan & Misca, 2018). It is a widely implemented resilience-enhancing program for military families with children ages 3 to 17 (Julian et al., 2018; Nolan & Misca, 2018; Saltzman et al., 2016).

Children 6 and older can fully engage and benefit from the program. The program is designed

with eight modules divided between children, parents, and families. Families are equipped with

the coping skills needed to navigate the stress from deployment (Julian et al., 2018; Nolan &

Misca, 2018; Saltzman et al., 2016). Families would participate in this program before the

service member's deployment. When this program was completed pre-and post-deployment

(Julian et al., 2018; Nolan & Misca, 2018; Saltzman et al., 2016), the results were positive, and

there were minimized distress levels for service members' spouses and children. The program

also teaches resilience skills and aims to enhance the parent-child relationship by increasing

parents' understanding of their children's development and the mental health challenges posed

by the deployment cycle for the whole family. The FOCUS intervention was followed up for 6

months and showed decreased distress and improved family functioning (Saltzman et al., 2016).

The After Deployment Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT) program is a web and group-

based parenting class focusing on families with more than one child between 4 and 12. Parents

reported improving their control and emotions, overall parenting skills, and minimized stress

(Julian et al., 2018; O'Neal et al., 2018; Saltzman et al., 2016). The results suggest that all

parents in military families are likely to benefit from parenting interventions (Julian et al., 2018;

O'Neal et al., 2018; Saltzman et al., 2016). Unique opportunities arose to study military families

during wartime and the effects deployment had on families. The FOCUS and the ADAPT

interventions are guided by research that aims to strengthen family practices and support

adaptive functioning during times of stress and transition (Julian et al., 2018; O'Neal et al., 2018;

Saltzman et al., 2016).

Strong Military Families (SMF) is another support program created for 10 weeks (Nolan

& Misca, 2018). It is another intervention for military families with young children. The

program's aim is like the Strong Families Strong Forces program. Both programs aim to enhance

military families' needs and parenting skills (Nolan & Misca, 2018; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018).

Parents and children often find comfort and relief in learning about their children's normal

experiences during deployment and reintegration. It is particularly helpful to understand that

healing after significant disruptions, including deployment, often comes with the repeated

opportunities parents have to offer support around disruptions and repairs in everyday life (Nolan

& Misca, 2018; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). When parents understand the children's

experiences of separation and work to meet the children's needs, the stress levels potentially

decrease. The pattern of results highlights the need to allocate resources, mainly when limited, to

those families grappling with injury-related stressors, those with more and older children, and

those managing the burdens associated with multiple deployments of longer length (Nolan &

Misca, 2018; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018).

Moreover, programs, interventions, and support services that foster healthy parental

social and family functioning, positive interactions, and resiliency are critical to minimizing the

impact of operational stress on both the workforce and the family members that support them

(Nicosia et al., 2016; Nolan & Misca, 2018; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). "Talk, Listen,

Connect," a multi-phase initiative to help young children during deployment, features characters

from the popular U.S. puppet show 'Sesame Street' in a video, storybooks, and worksheets that

describe the experience of being separated from a parent for a lengthy period (Nicosia et al.,

2016; Nolan & Misca, 2018). Evaluation of the initiative suggests that toddlers and preschool

children who watched the videos and read the supporting material were less likely to have

behavioral difficulties (Nicosia et al., 2016; Nolan & Misca, 2018). Even with all the available

resources for military families, some families may miss support because they lack information

and exposure. Many military families do not reside on a military installation; therefore, the normal routine may not consist of going to the pharmacy, the grocery stores, or shopping malls on an installation. Often information about resources was communicated through informational flyers at the hospital on a post or the commissary (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018).

As an additional layer of support, the Department of Defense created a pilot program to reach the entire community. HealthySteps is a pilot program by Zero to Three implemented at pediatric clinics and two hospitals (Adirim & Johnston, 2019). Military families may be unaware of this program but have benefited from it. Through HealthySteps, a child development professional within the pediatric clinic provides warm connections to parents outside the usual fifteen to twenty minutes that parents may have with their child's pediatrician (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018).

Families that reside hundreds of miles away from extended families have difficulty coping with the stresses of work, especially as first-time parents or are new to military life. Professionals with HealthySteps are dependable and provide face-to-face visits, phone call checkups, and virtual meetings as needed for families (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). HealthySteps aims to prevent escalating situations that may require a higher level of clinical care if left unchecked, which can lead to family discord and diminish military readiness (Adirim & Johnston, 2019; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018).

Supports for Military Children During Deployment

Previous sections have discussed the support provided to military parents with young children. One research examined a mobile app focused on coping and resilience for military

adolescents. The goal was to decrease negative coping and pave the way for positive and healthy futures. The Mil-Teen-Chat app is a free platform distributed to military community groups that teaches coping, recovery skills, and resilience to improve adolescents' mental health (Puskar et al., 2018). The app helps students focus on communication, bringing children together, fostering a sense of community, and helping to build relationships. Military children have difficulty connecting with others and relating their experiences (Nicosia et al., 2016; Puskar et al., 2018; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). The app does not directly address the problem that some children may be in or dealing with, but it is a positive step in the right direction.

Educational Support: Exceptional Family Member Program

The Department of Defense has created an Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) that assists military families with members identified as having special needs (Nicosia et al., 2016). The EFMP is a broad program that assists with medical care, counseling, therapeutic services, and children's education. The most significant proportion of disabilities includes attention-deficient disorder and autism spectrum disorders (Davis & Finke, 2015; Nicosia et al., 2016). Family and school reports on its effects vary considerably. It is important to note that the EFMP program is separate and distinct from special education and 504 requirements, programs, and accommodations. More than 128,000 military family members are enrolled in the EFMP, and two-thirds of those family members are children (Davis & Finke, 2015; Nicosia et al., 2016). The EFMP program support providers from all branches of the military.

The EFMP program was designed to be an additional layer of support for military families, ensuring educational needs were met when service members were considered for various duty stations (Nicosia et al., 2016). There is a detailed process that active-duty service members must go through to get their children enrolled in the EFMP program. Still, guidance

was provided through an EFMP representation at each military installation and the Military

OneSource guide (Davis & Finke, 2015; Nicosia et al., 2016). The Military OneSource guide is

another support organization that provides advice to military families in a multitude of areas,

such as finances, education, separation from the military, deployment advice and training,

employment support for military spouses, and housing guidance (Davis & Finke, 2015; Nicosia

et al., 2016). There may be a communication gap, but the EFMP program is mandatory for all

active-duty service members (Huebner, 2018; Nicosia et al., 2016).

Davis and Finke (2015) interviewed military spouses with children with autism (ASD)

about their experiences with therapeutic services. Some families spoke about the limited

availability to support their child with autism after relocation. External supports also included

online social networking and social groups. Davis and Finke (2015) recommended that further

research was needed to expand the support given to families of children with autism. The study

is a starting point for further research on military families with children with ASD and other

related disabilities. The Family Readiness System is a system of services and programs for

military families to cope with deployment, relocation, and other military concerns (Nicosia et al.,

2016). The Family Readiness System supports military families with mobility, relocation

assistance, financial readiness, and new parent support programs.

Military Family Life Counselors

Another layer of the Interstate Compact Agreement included providing Military Family

Life Counselors (MFLC). The focus for these counselors was the child's health and well-being.

Counselors support military children to support low self-esteem, behavioral problems, and

changes at home (Huisman, 2019). Some K-5 school sites reported that MFLCs were vital to

families, and at other places, little data was collected to support the benefits of these counselors.

One study provided an account of a positive experience that a parent had when her child felt invisible in school (Davis & Finke, 2015; Huisman, 2019; Nicosia et al., 2016).

However, research conducted by the military one source provided insight into how military families can contact counselors. MFLC counselors serve families of service members on active duty, the National Guard and Reserves, and Department of Defense civilians (Davis & Finke, 2015; Huisman, 2019; Nicosia et al., 2016). Children of deceased military service members under 18 are also eligible. Military families are more apt to receive information and support from someone with prior military experience or a military connection (Davis & Finke, 2015; Huisman, 2019; Nicosia et al., 2016).

Counterargument

Although there may be negative impacts for military families related to relocation, separation, and deployment, the effects may not be responsible for the academic challenges that children go through (DeSimone & Gohn, 2020). The government created the Interstate Compact Agreement in 2008 to bridge the gap for military families to make the transition easier for families (Jackson, 2010). Several support measures are already in place to support military service members and their families. The challenges that military families go through may make military children more resilient. According to DeSimone and Gohn (2020), continual relocations and deployments have helped military children adjust to a new normal that can be beneficial instead of hindering their academic progress. As students self-identify as military children, a source of pride and comfort can develop to help make sense during a difficult time (Meadows et al., 2017). Military children and their civilian parents often emerge with a broader understanding of the world after living in other cultures, after deployments, and after multiple relocations (DeSimone & Gohn, 2020; Meadows et al., 2017).

Gaps in Literature

Students attending military-connected schools may face achievement gaps due to frequent moves (Esqueda et al., 2013; Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Society is shifting to a digital age with online learning, so achievement gaps among military students attending college after high school will take time to analyze (Esqueda et al., 2013; Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). To further the discussion of education, an FLE (Family Life Education) framework was created to extend the knowledge base of information for military members and their families to understand life in the military culture (Mancini et al., 2020). Family life educators will focus on tailoring military programs to make a positive difference in the lives of military families (Mancini et al., 2020).

The literature gives guidance from the perspective of the service member. Still, there are limitations to the views of the military spouse regarding educational opportunities, how their lives change during separation and relocation, and the overall pros and cons of military life. Gaps in the literature exist regarding the success of the support programs created for military families, such as ADAPT, FOCUS, EFMP, and Military Family Life Counselors; therefore, longitudinal studies are needed (Classen et al., 2019; Monney & Lapiz-Bluhm, 2018). More diverse samples are needed, emphasizing minorities and male spouses to bridge the gap in research. Deployment, relocation, and reintegration are stressors for military families. Still, the impact could change over time based on factors such as the military branch, the state, city, or region of relocation, and the interventions provided to families pre-and post-deployment (Classen et al., 2019; Mancini et al., 2020; Monney & Lapiz-Bluhm, 2018).

Chapter Summary

The literature review examined the critical elements of military families' academic challenges and the support provided to military families. The review was divided into the common themes presented throughout the various literature sources. The most significant themes involve deployment challenges and relocation challenges (Julian et al., 2018; Meadows et al., 2017) related to mental health and academics for military children. As challenges arose, the department of defense worked to find solutions that benefited parents by providing interventions to help make the deployment and reintegration process easier on families. As families received support during the emotional transitions, they received academic guidance through the Interstate Compact Agreement, Military family life counselors, school liaisons, and medical professionals (Classen et al., 2019; Julian et al., 2018; Mancini et al., 2020; Meadows et al., 2017; Monney & Lapiz-Bluhm, 2018).

The Interstate Compact Agreement was created to serve as a bridge between military families and military-connected schools. It took some states a few years to fully agree with the guidance documents of the interstate compact agreement, but all states are now in compliance (Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). The goal is to continue spreading the word about the agreement's benefits, so military families understand their rights. Current literature about military families focuses more on the mental health challenges families undergo because of deployment, separation, reintegration, and relocation (Nicosia et al., 2016; Nolan & Misca, 2018; Walsh & Rosenblum, 2018). Supports are available to service members and their families during pre-deployment, post-deployment, relocation, and separation.

When soldiers deploy, issues can arise within a family, affecting the overall health of all involved (Gewirtz et al., 2011; Green et al., 2013). Children must adapt to new parenting roles

and routines as military spouses temporarily become single parents. Military children face

challenges due to differences in curriculum, classroom routines, and established structures

(Jackson, 2010). Online network support helps military families relate to others going through

the same challenges.

The proposed research contributes to the existing knowledge about the experiences of

military families. The study focused on the academic component and the support currently

provided to military families and mental challenges. Limited research is available on the

academic challenges of military families during relocation and deployment. The study aimed to

fill the knowledge gap, so stakeholders are better prepared to support military families during

their transitions. An overview of the qualitative approach using the family stress theory is

provided in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The United States armed forces consist of five branches: (a) Army, (b) Navy, (c) Marine Corps, (d) Coast Guard, and (e) Airforce. Approximately 1.3 million active-duty service members and women, and more than 850,000 reserve military members across all branches (Department of Defense, 2018). With the large number of persons serving in the military, there are equal, if not more, family members. There are 250 military-connected civilian school districts (Department of Defense, 2018). Family members were significantly affected by their loved ones' military service. A change, such as relocation, deployment, temporary change of station (TDY), or family separation may cause an increase in physical, mental, and academic challenges. Therefore, the government's support of military service members, spouses, and immediate dependents is a central concern. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What are military service member's perspectives about the academic challenges their children experience when there is a transition from one military installation to another?

Research Question 2: What are military service members' perspectives about their children's academic support?

Components of the methodology section include: (a) an attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants; (b) the steps of the process that were used in conducting the research; (c) the use of interview questions, and (d) a questionnaire for instrumentation; and (e) how data was collected for interviews and questionnaires regarding how data analysis followed

a model and the inductive approach, (g) the components of reliability and validity to include

reliability and validity: trustworthiness, member check, and confirmability; and (h) ethical

considerations to include the Belmont report principles: (a) respect of persons, (b) beneficence,

and (c) justice (Ohio State University, 2019; Office for Human Research Protections.)

Research Methodology, Design, and Rationale

A qualitative methodology and a basic qualitative research design were implemented to

explore the thoughts and perceptions of military families. The study blended established

methodologies but remained distinct from other qualitative designs (Kahlke, 2014). According to

Kahlke (2014), qualitative research produces a low-inference description of a phenomenon. The

study aimed to explore the subject's experiences through open-ended questions and an analysis of

common themes derived from conversations with participants. The goal of qualitative research

was also to gain insight and explore the depth and richness of the phenomenon. Basic qualitative

research uncovered the participants' experiences, the meaning the participant ascribes to those

experiences, and the process involved (Kahlke, 2014; Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Methodology

Qualitative research draws conclusions or findings from summarized research (Kahlke,

2014). According to Pathak et al. (2013), qualitative research develops an understanding of

people's experiences, attitudes, behaviors, interactions, and beliefs. The study was not a

quantitative study that sought to gather numerical data across groups of people. Qualitative

research is the act of collecting data that is non-numerical. The qualitative methodology was

appropriate to explore the academic perspectives of military parents, focusing on the experiences

instead of any numerical data collected. The themes collected from the methodology added

additional literature for future research.

Basic Qualitative Research

The chosen design for the study was a basic qualitative approach. A basic qualitative study seeks to understand how people interpret, construct, or make meaning from their world and experiences (Dunn & Moore, 2019; Kahlke, 2014). Other guidelines of methodologies do not bind to a basic qualitative approach. According to Kahlke (2014), the basic qualitative approach was not guided by an established set of philosophical assumptions. The basic qualitative design explained the view of military families as it relates to their child's academic experiences and the support provided to families. Several components of the study derived from the challenges of military life. The basic qualitative study described the participant's perspective while refraining from any pre-given framework and remaining true to its facts. The basic qualitative study was an interchange of views between the participant and the researcher and a discussion of a theme of mutual interest (Coe et al., 2017; Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Conducting the basic qualitative study was an interpretive experience of how military families view their world. Beliefs, attitudes, opinions, or ideas were not the sole focus of a basic qualitative research design. Although the beliefs and opinions emerged as part of the findings, this was not the purpose of conducting a basic qualitative research design. A basic qualitative approach is not bound by the guidelines of other established methodologies, such as grounded theory or narrative research. The study aimed to explain how the challenges of deployment separation, reintegration, and temporary duty station (TDY) affected a military child's academic success.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Teherani et al., 2015). The process involved asking people

personal questions. I presented the participant's perspectives using exemplars from their

narratives (Sutton & Austin, 2015). There were no relationships with the study participants,

except for our connection with the military. Ethical issues involved asking study participants

questions related to their experiences of military life versus letting the study participants evolve

their themes through telling their perspectives. Another potential ethical issue developed when a

military spouse shared a personal relationship with the researcher before participating in the

study. To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, if there was a personal relationship

between the participant and me before the study began, I declined the participant in the study

(Sutton & Austin, 2015; Teherani et al., 2015). Participants were informed they had the right to

refuse to participate without penalty.

Research Procedures

The outlined research procedures discussed the study's components: (a) population

sample, (b) recruitment, (c) participation, instrumentation, and data collection. The first two

steps were identifying the population. The population and recruitment were gathered from social

media military sites where military service members and spouses can voluntarily sign up for the

research study. Participation was voluntary (OSU, 2019). The allotted time for the survey

distribution and completion was 2 weeks. After surveys were collected from participants, phone

calls were made to set up the initial meeting with each participant.

When conducting a basic qualitative research study, the best approach was to engage

participants in an in-depth interview to express thoughts and ideas without any preconceived

guidelines (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Teherani et al., 2015). This basic qualitative research focused

on the personal learning experiences of others (Dunn & Moore, 2019). Appendix A is the

Recruitment letter for participants. Appendix B is the Site approval request letter. Appendix C is

the Fort Gordon Site Approval communication. Appendix D is the demographic survey.

Appendix E is the Interview Questions. Appendix F includes communication with the subject

matter experts. Appendix G is the informed consent.

Population and Sample Selection

Due to the number of military service members across the five branches, a recruitment

letter was distributed through a neutral social media platform to gain research participants. The

number of participants was 15 military service members, their spouses, or veterans. A purposeful

sampling method was used to select participants. The purposeful sampling process identified and

selected individuals or groups that are especially knowledgeable or experienced with the research

topic (Jones et al., 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015). The criteria for acceptance were participants who

have relocated at least once and had children enrolled in a public or private K-12 setting. The

recruitment letter, see Appendix A, also encouraged former military spouses and military

veterans to participate in the study.

Recruitment Strategy

Facebook was the primary source for recruiting participants. The Fort Gordon Military

Spouse group was the recruitment site. Once the site was selected, the site approval request form,

see Appendix B, was sent to the site administrator. According to Kristensen and Ravn (2015),

recruitment and selection criteria were based on what the researcher believed would best

accommodate their study.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation used tools to measure or document items of interest in the data collection

process. According to Salkind (2010), good research specifies where, when, and under what

conditions data was obtained. This research utilized two forms of instrumentation: questionnaires

and (b) interviews.

Interview Protocol

In-depth interview questions were semi-structured. Participants were asked open-ended

questions allowing for a discussion with the interviewee rather than straightforward question-

and-answer format (Doyle, 2020). Prior statistical data and literature supported the need to

pursue this research. An interview schedule was created to gather information from participants.

Interviews were conducted via the Zoom platform. See Appendix C for screenshots of the

participation survey distributed to each potential participant. The interview questions were also

included in Appendix C. Communication was held with SMEs, and all communications are

included in Appendix C to ensure reliability and validity. Recommendations by SMEs were

provided based on the formatting of the questions. In-depth interviews were purposeful

interactions that allowed the researcher to cross the separation boundary that sets participants

apart based on their experiences. Coe et al. (2017) recommended multiple interviews with each

participant to reach beyond the facts of an experience to the reflection.

Questionnaires

When a survey is used in research, a clear goal should be outlined (Jones et al., 2013).

Conducting research using surveys required time, effort, and planning. Surveys can be used to

collect data quickly and efficiently. The survey in this research collected demographic data on

the participants and is in Appendix D. The survey was distributed electronically. According to

Jones et al. (2013), the proper design was vital to analyzing results.

Field Testing

Communication with subject matter experts ensured reliability and validity. Recommendations by three subject matter experts were provided based on the formatting of the questions. Three subject matter experts in the field of education were selected to review and provide feedback regarding the content of the research instrument (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). One expert recommended additional questions to support the research. Another expert provided recommendations regarding the demographic survey and the interview questions. Specifics about the recommendation are included in Appendix F. The subject matter experts were selected based on their years of experience in teaching, research, and scholarship.

Data Collection

Data collection involved observable, verifiable, and confirmable evidence to support the research questions. Data were collected using interview questions and surveys. Durdella (2019) recommended using a standardized open-ended interview guide to have the structure of a script.

Interview Protocol

Data collection was gathered through individual in-depth interviews held via zoom. Participants were informed that all sessions were recorded. However, participants had the option to opt-out of being recorded. If participants choose not to be recorded, they could still participate in the research study. Before data analysis began, recordings were transcribed (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Participants were provided with the interview questions and reminded that they could opt out of the session at any time. Gratitude was expressed before the session for their time. Demographic data were collected through surveys and emails. Participants were chosen based on demographic data. Sutton and Austin (2015) recommended maintaining field notes to complement audio-recorded interviews. The minimum number of participants for the study was 15. All sessions were recorded unless the participant opted out of the recording and were

transcribed via the zoom platform. Sessions were a minimum of 30 minutes long. A survey was

sent to volunteers interested, asking for demographic information such as race, ethnicity, military

affiliation, and the number of years affiliated with the military.

Data Collection: Questionnaire

The survey provided to participants was distributed via Microsoft Forms, and the

participants' names and emails were recorded as the form was completed. The information

collected was organized based on the response to the questions received. The data collected

during the Zoom sessions were recorded and transcribed before the analysis began using Zoom

software.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was the shift from the data collected to the interpretation of the data based

on the response provided by participants. The analysis process created categories that led to

themes. Roulston (2014) recommended not fitting data into preconceived categories by sifting

through data sets to locate data to support one's preconceptions about findings. The steps for data

analysis for the interviews are outlined below.

Interviews with Field Notes

Data collection occurred using a set routine to organize and analyze the data presented by

participants. Interviews were recorded and notes were taken throughout the interview process.

After the interview was complete, the notes were analyzed, and key details were written about

each participant's comments. Field notes were secondary data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Field

notes were written using an observational approach (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Teherani et al.,

2015). Gaining the necessary insights to answer the research questions required informed

consent from the participants. The field notes were used along with transcripts from the recorded sessions as documentation to support the data analysis process.

Data Analysis Model

The process used to analyze the data collected from the interviews and the survey were as follows: a) Field notes gathered, audio data, and field transcripts from the audio; b) Data were reviewed several times to get a sense of what it contains; c) Themes were derived from in-depth interviews with participants, and findings were presented. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), the most important part of data analysis and management was to be true to the participants. With an inductive approach, the researcher collected the data and moved from experiences to a set of propositions about those experiences (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the data collected. According to Powell and Renner (2003), Excel is one of the most popular and reliable tools for managing and analyzing data and discovering trends in data sets. Excel is commonly used in quantitative research, but it can also be used in qualitative data to organize participants' responses and identify common themes. Themes may be determined using ideas, concepts, behaviors, and interactions. Data were organized into coherent categories that summarize and bring meaning to the text (Powell & Renner, 2003).

Reliability and Validity

The qualitative research study included the components of reliability and validity: trustworthiness, member check, and confirmability. According to Hayashi et al. (2019), validity was continually built throughout the research, not the isolated event or test. Different research participants were asked the research questions, and data were collected from the sources (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Teherani et al., 2015).

Member Checking

Trustworthiness was the root of quality qualitative research. Findings were reported fully and did not omit relevant data within the context of the research questions (Birt et al., 2016). Results were also reported even if they contradicted the expected outcomes. Electronic data were password-protected and stored on a password protected computer. To verify trustworthiness through member checks, participants verified the statements they provided in the interview. According to

Birt et al. (2016), member checking can involve several activities, from returning the interview transcript to participants to review, conducting a member check interview using the transcript, or using a member check focus group. Each participant in this study was given an interview transcript to verify their trustworthiness. One benefit of member checks was that participants could reconstruct their narrative by deleting extracts they feel no longer represent their experience or present them negatively.

Confirmability

Confirmability ensured that the results were based on the participant's responses, and potential bias or personal motivations were avoided (Nyirenda et al., 2020). Adequate information was provided through the research so that another researcher could replicate it. Interviews were recorded to ensure the reliability and validity of the research (Ohio State University, 2019). Findings were reported fully and did not omit relevant data within the context of the research questions. Results were described even if they contradicted the expected outcomes. Confirmability involves the researcher maintaining neutrality in research findings (Nyirenda et al., 2020).

Ethical Procedures

The principles of the Belmont Report of 1979 are respected persons, beneficence, and justice (OSU, 2019; Office for Human Research Protections, 2018). Respect of persons acknowledged that a person was an independent, distinctive, and free individual. Researchers were truthful and conducted with no deception. Details of respect of the person were outlined in the informed consent process. Research studies included only people who chose to take part, participation was entirely voluntary, and participants could stop at any time. Participants may choose not to participate in the study or stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences (OSU, 2019; Office for Human Research Protections, 2018). The participant could skip any questions they did not wish to answer.

Through beneficence, all persons were treated ethically while respecting their decisions. Beneficence is meant to do no harm while maximizing the benefits of the research process (Kim, 2012; Office for Human Research Protections, 2018). Ensuring justice means procedures are administered fairly and equally (Kim, 2012; Office for Human Research Protections, 2018).

Every effort was made to protect the participant's well-being. The third principle of the Belmont Report was justice. All persons had fair treatment and fair distribution of the research benefits and risks (Ohio State University, 2019). See Appendix G for further detail regarding informed consent. There was no exploitation of vulnerable persons in the research study. Participants' responses may be shared with other researchers. However, the participant's identity was not linked to responses. The participants' confidentiality was protected by adhering to the following practices. The study's contact lists, and recruitment records are kept in an electronic password protected format for 3 years and then destroyed (Responsible Conduct of Research,

n.d.). Information was archived with the American College of Education database resource, and the research was given a persistent identifier (DOI).

Chapter Summary

According to Shafer et al. (2016), military families contend with frequent moves, deployments and separations, and new schools. A Joining Forces initiative, spearheaded by Michelle Obama and Jill Biden paved the way for more research and support for military families (Garg & Lyons, 2015). Children of active-duty military families move an average of six times during their school-aged years (Shafer et al., 2016). Challenges may arise due to frequent moves, separation from loved ones, and the adjustment of their loved ones coming home. Military families are resilient, yet there is a gap in the support that military families receive.

School districts and other community agencies may lack a complete understanding of the necessary support to help military families in their communities. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. I aimed to fill the knowledge gap to better prepare stakeholders to support military families during their transitions. An overview of the research findings, data analysis results and the effects of reliability and validity are covered in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results

Separation, relocation, temporary duty station assignment (TDY), deployment, and reunification pose obstacles for military service personnel, wives, and dependents. Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) and the Families Overcoming Under Stress (FOCUS) program, for example, are already in place (Julian et al., 2018). With the uncertainty of when they will be separated, military service members and their spouses work hard to restore connections. It is also difficult to move from one state to another. According to the Military Child Education Coalition (2017), military service members require a process that includes proper collection and transmission of student records.

The problem began when the government started having families accompany their military service members when they relocated from one base to another. Military families face a variety of state-by-state policies that obstruct their children's education. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (ICEOMC) was established to address the educational policy issues that military service members experience (Esqueda et al., 2013). As more military families relocate, the situation worsens as they are uninformed or unaware of the advantages and resources available to military spouses and children.

The problem was the academic roadblocks students of military service members face when they move from one duty station to another. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. The basic qualitative design explained the view of military families as it relates to their child's academic experiences and the support provided to families. Several components of the study derive from the challenges of military life. The basic qualitative study described the participant's perspective

while refraining from any pre-given framework and remaining true to its facts. The following

section comprises the data collection, data analysis and results, data figures, reliability and

validity, and the chapter summary.

Data Collection

An infographic was posted to the Fort Gordon spouses page. Recruitment for participants

began on March 25, 2022. The recruitment post included a link to a demographic survey to

screen potential participants. The initial number of potential participants was 40 participants.

After reviewing the initial demographic data, 20 potential participants fit the criteria for the

research study. A follow-up email was sent to each potential participant with guidance regarding

the Informed Consent Form. DocuSign was used to send all informed consent forms to the

twenty potential participants. Eighteen to twenty potential participants signed and returned the

informed consent forms.

The time frame to send and receive the informed consent forms was approximately 2

weeks. Interviews were scheduled immediately once a participant returned the form. However,

several times, the interview schedule was adjusted based on scheduling conflicts with

participants. Interviews occurred between April 20 and May 29, 2022. In the original proposal,

interviews were required to be 60 minutes long. After the initial interview, the interview length

was not 60 minutes. IRB approved a shorter time length for interviews. The average interview

was a minimum of 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted with 83% of the potential participants.

The final number of participants for the research study was 15. The location of the interviews

was via Zoom. Each participant's response questions were recorded in audio format, a written

transcript, and on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Data Analysis and Results

The data analysis of the research study sought to answer the following research questions.
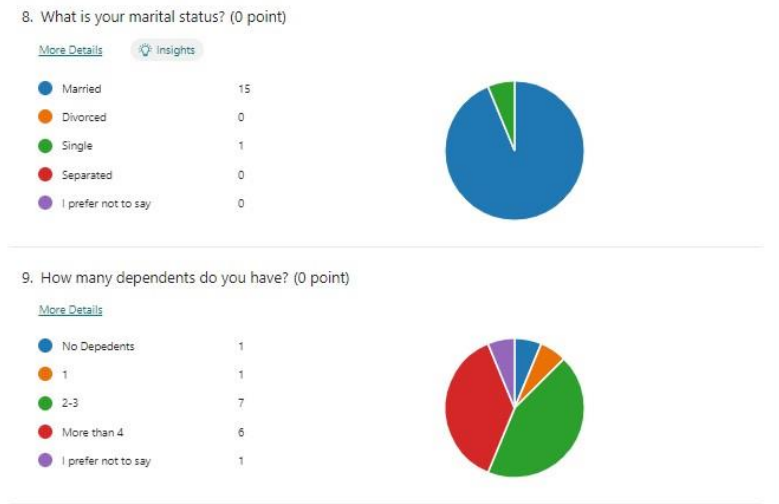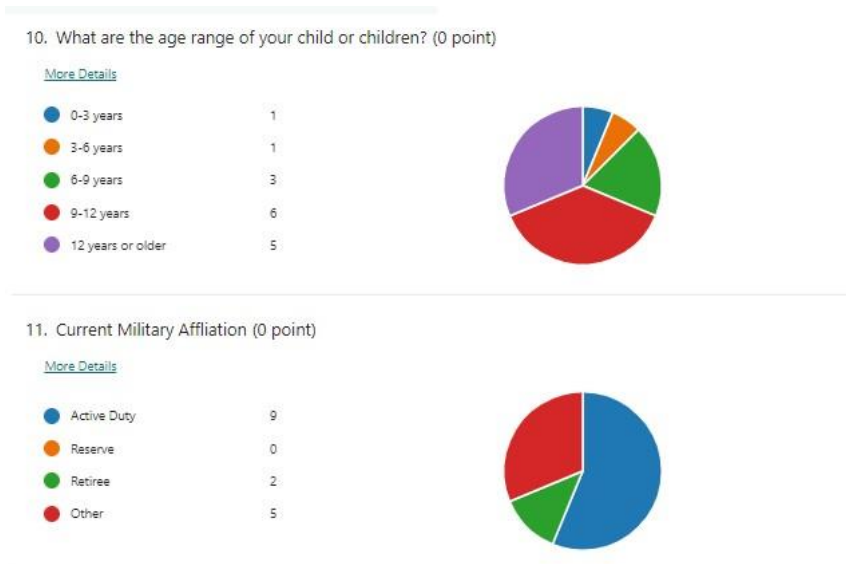
Research Question 1: What are the military service member's perspectives about the academic challenges their children experience when there is a transition from one military installation to another?

Research Question 2: What are the military service members' perspectives about their child's academic support?

Data Analysis Model

The transition from data collection to data interpretation based on participant responses is known as data analysis (Nyirenda et al., 2020; Paradis et al., 2016). Data were secured using a Microsoft form survey form to collect initial demographic data. Figures 1 and 2 represent the demographic data collected. The inductive approach was used in analyzing the data. With an inductive approach, the researcher collected data and moved from specific experiences to a set of propositions about those experiences (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The initial screening process involved a survey asking potential participants a list of questions. The questions included their name, email, age, military bases where they have lived, number and ages of children, and their current military status. A chart was generated with the initial number of potential participants and sorted according to specific demographic information using Microsoft Excel.

Figure 1

Demographic Data

Figure 2

Age of Dependents and Military Affiliation

Once the minimum number of informed consent forms were returned, the interview

began. Each participant was assigned a letter from A-O based on how the informed consent form

was returned. Data were collected in an Excel spreadsheet as interviews were conducted. Themes

emerged based on responses from participants. Steps in the inducive process were as follows: a)

Gather all notes, audio data, and transcripts from the audio; b) Review data several times to get a

sense of what it contains; c) Combine themes from the data derived from in-depth interviews

with participants and present as the findings.

Step 1 in the process was straightforward. Notes were taken throughout the interview

with participants when they mentioned something interesting, or a key detail was mentioned in

the conversation. In Step 2, notes were inserted into a Microsoft survey format so that an Excel

spreadsheet could be downloaded and used to analyze the data. In Step 3, Table 1 represents the

emerging themes from data analysis.

Results

The research results are organized according to themes that emerged from the analysis of

the conversation. Table 1 represents original words and phrases that emerged to represent the

five major themes. Interview questions were built from the research questions. Research

Question 1 addressed the service member's perspective about the academic challenges

experienced by their children when they move from a military installation to another base. The

second research question concerned the academic support that the children received in military

schools. Qualitative data yielded words rather than numbers to get to the core of a problem that

cannot easily be answered (Paradis et al., 2016). The following themes emerged from data

analysis: (a) lack of support given to military families, (b) career and family security, (c)

minimal support for students with disabilities during relocations, (d) the need for improved

communication and consistency, and (e) resiliency and support.

Table 1

Emergent Themes

Emergent Codes Or Phrases	How those were coded and collapsed	Final Themes
No support was given during moves	Combined with phrases involving moving.	Lack of support given to military families during relocation and PCS moves
Figuring the process out alone	Combined with phrases of being left alone with minimal support	
Anxiety from Frequent Moves	Combined with phrases involving moving.	
Job Security for self and family	Combined with the challenges of balancing personal life and civilian job	Career and family security
Family Care Plan	Combined with the challenges of balancing personal life and civilian	
Lack of support as a female	Combined with phrases of being left alone with minimal support	
Became both parents (mother and father) to my children	Combined with phrases of being left alone with minimal support	
Minimal support for students with disabilities	Combined with thoughts of students with disabilities	Minimal support for students with disabilities or gifted abilities during relocations
Gifted programs are not enforced for military children	Combined with thoughts of students with disabilities	
Struggled to find a job after military life	Combined with phrases of being left alone with minimal support	
No consistency between military locations	Combined with phrases involving moving.	
A better system of communication is needed from schools to parents	Theme based on communication participants received	Need improved communication
Resiliency to push through a situation	Theme based on multiple participant responses	Resiliency and support

Theme 1: Lack of Support Given to Military Families During Relocation

During times of relocation, participants B, C, E, F, and G discussed the frustrations of not knowing the steps in the relocation process. Military soldiers have a checklist of things they are accountable for, but no list or document was provided to families to use. All participants learned to rely on other military friends when they had questions. "The process could have been smoother when we made our first move if we were given more guidance. We were given military orders with a report date, but no further guidance" (Participant O). When a military family receives orders, several steps must occur to ensure that a family transitions in time.

The orders include a date of the report for the military service member. The military soldier must follow a checklist of out-processing that involves different departments. Families are given a stipend that supports the move. Still, there are necessary documents that families must collect, such as medical documents, school records, specialized records, shot records, and any other documents pertaining to their family. Also, families would have benefited from information about the areas they were relocating to, such as schools, and housing, registration info for cars.

Theme 2: Career and Family Security

The desire to have a career as a military spouse is secondary to the role of being a parent. Since most participants were military spouses, they spoke of the frustrations of finding a stable income and career while juggling the role. Times were especially difficult during redeployments because the burden of taking care of the family was left to the military spouse left behind. All participants spoke of the reason that their spouses joined the military. The purpose was financial security, consistent monthly income, and medical, dental, life, and vision insurance. Participants E, G, I, J, and K struggled to find a consistent career but spoke of the excitement of having all

their children in school to pursue career goals. Since the pandemic, several participants have sought remote or virtual jobs to have consistent careers.

Theme 3: Minimal Support for Students with Disabilities

A major concern of participants A, B, F, N, and G were the lack of school preparation to support their gifted child who had excelled in academics. Many participants assumed a process was in place so that when a new student enrolls at a school, someone can review records to ensure a child is placed in the correct classes. Participant N stated, "My child should not have to ask when they will be going to their gifted class. If I provide the documents, this should be done from day one or two after enrollment." Participants A, B, F, and G discussed that some states provide gifted services for elementary school students but not for middle and high school students. Information should be readily available regarding the support and process for students with disabilities and those who are gifted.

When a child has an individual educational plan (IEP), a new meeting must be held when the student is enrolled. Several participants mentioned the inconvenience of having a meeting when they are settling into their new homes. Participants A, B, F, and G understood that laws and regulations protect students with disabilities, but parents expressed confusion about understanding how that works during military relocation. Participants B and F believed that if the level of support provided to families with children with disabilities and who are gifted was improved, the relocation would more positive.

Theme 4: Need for improved communication and consistency

All participants represented the following branches of the military: (a) army, (b) air force, and (c) navy. Please see Table 2 for the table of military branches. Through dialogue with respondents, it was revealed that these military branches have varying expectations for soldiers

versus the responsibilities of families when they move from one location to another. Participant B indicated:

> I needed a detailed list of things I had to do before moving. No one took the time to inform me of what those things were. I relied on friends and other military spouses to guide us. My husband had his checklist for processing, and I managed to gather documents without knowing the proper protocol.

Participant D said, "Moving for the first time was rough. Still, once you have done it, things become easier. The lack of communication does not matter as much once you have been there, done that."

All participants noted that transitioning from one school to another could have run smoother if schools directly communicated after a family had enrolled at a new school. Participants A and E, who relocated from Germany to the United States, shared that the "Department of Defense Education Activity Schools (DoDEA) do a fantastic job of keeping parents informed of the next steps when moving. These schools provide a checklist for parents to follow and give to their gaining schools record." Participants F, I, and M commented on the need for clear communication between teachers and the schools, especially when moving from a DoDEA school to a traditional public school. Participants spoke about the challenges associated with schools and how school districts did not understand the demands involved when a family must relocate. Participant G noted, "It would be helpful if my child's new school and the teacher took the time to explain a routine in the classroom." Participant C mentioned how each state and school has a distinct set of protocols and norms that they follow. Participant G stated, "There is stress when communicating our concerns with schools. Before moving, I need to have information available so my spouse and I can make an informed decision and keep our children

informed." These norms are not advertised, so when a new family comes into the school, there

might be some uncertainty about the process.

Table 2

Military Branches Represented

Participant	Military Branch
A	Army
B	Army
C	Army
D	Air Force
E	Navy
F	Army
G	Navy
H	Army
I	Army
J	Air Force
K	Navy
L	Army
M	Army
N	Army
O	Army

Theme 5: Resiliency and Support

All participants spoke about their families' resilience during deployments, separations,

and PCS moves. Participant B noted, "We learned to adapt to the moves. The more PCC moves

we made, the stronger we became." Participants N and O spoke about the challenges associated

with schools and how school districts did not understand the demands involved when a family

must relocate. Children are expected to adapt to a new school environment almost immediately.

Participant E stated:

> It would be helpful if my child's new school and the teacher took the time to explain a
>
> routine in the classroom. My child needs more than one day to adapt to a new classroom
>
> environment. My husband signed up for the military and knew the expectation, but our
>
> children did not.

Participants A and G mentioned the amazing support of the Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) and the academic counselors at their children's schools. MFLC and counselors were available to assist children with becoming adjusted or acclimated to the new schools. Participants A and E believed that support was not needed. However, participants B, C, D, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, and O believed that school support is necessary for the family to avoid significant interruptions in the child's academic process. Participant I mentioned the benefits of having stabilization for their family when their son was in high school. Instead of getting orders to a new location, the military provided stabilization orders, preventing any moves until their child was complete with high school. Based on the response, military families have learned to cope with the stress of moving from one state to another. They have learned how to push through a circumstance versus quitting.

Research Question Answers

Research Question 1 was the military service member's perspectives about the academic challenges their children experience when there is a transition from one military installation to another. Participants C, E, F, J, and K had mixed feelings regarding their children's challenges transitioning from one school to another. Participants A, B, and I had positive experiences with the Department of Defense Education Activity school district. DoDEA already has steps to make the relocation process smoother for military families. The academic challenges could be resolved if schools knew how military children performed at their previous schools. All participants expressed concern about whether the new school their child moved to take the time read information about the prior school in their child's school records. Participants C, J, and K also noted that the academic challenges involved confusion about the standards and

the level of instruction. Participants B, D, H, and M said: "that their child struggled

academically, and the struggle usually stemmed from anxiety adjusting to a new environment."

Research Question 2: What are the military service members' perspectives about their

child's academic support? All participants believed their child's support should include social

and emotional support to help counter anxiety from consistent moves. Participants A, B, C, D, E,

F, G, I, M, and O also affirmed that teachers who work for DoDEA and regular public schools

did an excellent job supporting their children academically. Participants H, J, K, L, and N were

concerned about the interventions provided for their children who have Individual Education

Plans (IEP) since interventions and support vary from state to state. Failure and retention were

not concerns of participants. Participants B and O mentioned that when their child is aware of the

routines and structures of their new schools, there is growth in their academic performance.

Reliability and Validity

Based on the information discussed in Chapter 3, the qualitative research study included

the components of reliability and validity: (a) trustworthiness, (b) member check, and (c)

confirmability. After participants signed the Informed Consent document, text messages and

emails were used to make contact to set up the interview. Data saturation occurred when no new

information was discovered in data analysis, signaling the researcher that data collecting may be

stopped (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). After 15 respondents were asked the same interview

questions, data saturation was reached, and no added information surfaced after coding the data.

There was adequate data to duplicate the study after coding replies from 15 individuals.

During the interview process, an audio session was conducted via Zoom. Some

participants opted not to be recorded, but detailed notes were taken and recorded in a Microsoft

Excel spreadsheet. Participants were assigned codes from A-O to protect their names.

Trustworthiness is a necessary component of qualitative research. According to Nyirenda et al. (2020), participants can critically analyze data and investigate multiple interpretations of findings thanks to effective communication and an open dialogue approach. Participants signed an informed consent form before collecting demographic data and the interview. Participants were selected based on their responses to the demographic survey to eliminate bias during the interview. The purposeful sampling process identified and selected individuals or groups that are especially knowledgeable or experienced with the research topic (Jones et al., 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015). The criteria for acceptance were participants who have relocated at least once and had children enrolled in a public or private K-12 setting.

During the member-checking process, participants verified the statements they provided during the interview by viewing the Microsoft form used to transcribe their comments. According to Birt et al. (2016), several tasks, such as submitting the interview transcript to participants for approval, might be included in member checking. Data saturation occurred after the 15 participant interviews were conducted and analyzed. According to Fusch et al. (2018), data saturation evaluates whether the intended research goal has been met. The adequacy of data obtained to address research questions is a major factor in the validity of qualitative findings (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Chapter Summary

Five themes emerged from the interviews conducted regarding the academic perspectives of military families. The themes were a lack of support given to military families, career and family security, minimal support for students with disabilities during relocations, the need for improved communication and consistency, and resiliency and support. Participants agreed that transferring from one school to another may have gone more smoothly if schools had spoken

directly with families once they had registered in a new school. MFLC and academic counselors were helpful to students when they are assigned to a school. However, participants mentioned that not all schools have an academic or military family life counselor.

Participants believed that although military families are resilient, school support is necessary for the family to avoid significant interruptions in the child's academic process. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. An overview of Chapter 5 will include the findings, interpretation, conclusions, limitations, recommendations, and implications for leadership.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. Research Question 1: What are the military service member's perspectives about the academic challenges their children experience when there is a transition from one military installation to another? Research Question 2: What are the military service members' perspectives about their child's academic support? In response to Research Question 1, participants had mixed feelings regarding their children's challenges transitioning from one school to another. In response to Research Question 2, all participants believe their child's support should include social and emotional support to help counter anxiety from consistent moves.

Findings, Interpretations, Conclusions

Literature Review

Research gathered from the prior literature review represents an assortment of themes from the analysis. The following themes emerged from data analysis: (a) lack of support given to military families, (b) career and family security, (c) minimal support for students with disabilities during relocations, (d) the need for improved communication and consistency, and (e) resiliency and support. The following themes emerged from prior literature: (a) academic challenges of military children, (b) students with disabilities, (c) communication between stakeholders, (d) coping strategies for military families, (e) resiliency during separation and deployment, (f) mental health challenges related to deployment and separation, and (g) supports available to military families (Classen et al., 2019; Esqueda et al., 2013; Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017; Moeller et al., 2015).

The research gathered extends the knowledge regarding the perceptions of academic challenges related to military families. Previous studies indicated there were limitations to the perspectives of military spouses on educational opportunities, how their lives change after separation and relocation, how children are affected, and the general benefits and drawbacks of military life. However, there are gaps in the research about the effectiveness of the assistance initiatives designed for military families.

Research Results

Findings show that military families had varying views on the level of support provided by schools and the government during deployments and relocations to other military installations (Esqueda et al., 2013; Jackson, 2010; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). Participants confirmed that school counselors and military liaisons were beneficial during their moves and relocations. Families were unaware of the Interstate Compact agreement and the support previously outlined. Mental health challenges remained an issue for families during deployment and relocations. The themes that emerged from the data analysis revealed concerns that participants shared about the challenge of military life, including deployments and relocations.

Interpretations

The theoretical framework for the research study was the family stress theory. The family stress theory enabled parents of military children to consider the changes in military life and what they have learned to determine whether the stress they have experienced was positive or harmful (Price et al., 2019). The periodic, acute stressors that affect all families are described and investigated by the family stress theory (Price et al., 2019). The accumulation of these stressors can result in personal and family crises, such as physical, emotional, or relational trauma, if they happen frequently or if the person or family lacks the support of important relationships (Price et

al., 2019). Participants discussed the positive and negative experiences involved with the stress that comes from being part of a military family.

Positive Experiences

One of the benefits participants mentioned was job security for themselves and their families. Medical, dental, and vision insurance were offered to military families at reasonable rates. The relocation was challenging but simple to overlook because of the benefits provided (Houston et al., 2013; Huebner, 2018). Participants also spoke of the positive connections with some military families. Support was received from other military families who have deployed and relocated. Support received was not a common occurrence, but it did happen.

Negative Experiences

While some participants had positive experiences, many other participants had negative experiences to share. Figuring the process out alone was the common unspoken expectation for military service members and their families. When relocation occurred, anxiety led to mental health problems (Huisman, 2019). The life of a single military parent involved a lack of support, and there was a struggle to find consistency of care for children during separation and deployments. Eventually, the challenges of military life caused the single soldier to complete their contract and not reenlist in the military (Huebner, 2018; Price et al., 2019).

Minimal support was expressed for students with disabilities, or families were unaware of the support when they arrived at a new location. There was a need to have concrete information available to support families as they move while supporting their children with disabilities. Communication between schools and military families is needed to support the diversity that exists within military families (Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), 2018). Findings revealed that military families were unknowledgeable of the government's

support measures regarding the Interstate compact agreement (Mancini et al., 2020). The

Interstate Compact agreement should be reviewed for effectiveness, and input should be gathered

to address proper changes.

Conclusions

The data collected from participants answered the research questions and provided

further insight into the challenges military families have endured because of relocation and

deployment. Five themes became known from the interviews about the academic perspectives of

military families. The themes included the lack of support for military families, the stability of

one's profession and family, the scant assistance provided to children with disabilities during

moves, the necessity of increased communication and consistency, and resilience and support

(Huisman, 2019; Military Child Education Coalition, 2017).

Participants concurred that if schools had been in touch with families soon after students

registered at a new school, transferring from one to another may have gone smoother. Military

school liaisons and academic school counselors were a welcomed addition in supporting

families, but the support was limited to schools located on a military installation (Military

Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), 2018; Mancini et al., 2020). Families whose

children who attended military-affiliated schools did not receive the same support as students

who attended a military school (Huisman, 2019).

Limitations

A limitation was said to be imposed when it was out of the researcher's control. When

the research started, four different social media sites were used to reach out and recruit potential

participants. The first step in recruitment was reaching out to the site managers for each social

media site. After several attempts to gain a response, only one site manager responded to the

request for recruitment. The effect was a limited number of potential participants and participants who reside in one geographical area. According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018), the researcher might only be able to reach a narrow geographic area, which would limit the range of responses.

The data analysis of the research study is another potential limitation to the research because the methodology's quality may not be truly replicated per se (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The number of participants was a limitation of this study. The initial demographic data survey collected revealed 43 potential participants for the study. However, when participants were sent the informed consent forms, only 18 participants responded. Of the 18 participants who responded and consented to be part of the research, only 15 were available to be interviewed. It is possible that the next time a research study is conducted like the study presented here, the number of participants selected may be greater due to the response rate of potential participants.

Limitations also existed in the collection of data through the interviews. I cannot control the course of the interviews conducted or whether participants choose not to be a part of the research study. According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018), limitations may not always be identified at the beginning of a research study. However, a research study can best prepare for the unpredictable by allowing more time to select sites and seek approval from the site administrators. Communication through digital flyers and surveys were pushed out to all approved site locations weekly until the desired number of potential participants were obtained. The greater the participant pool, the greater the possibility of qualified participants. Appreciating depth of interpretation by concentrating on circumstances and a small number of participants is the intrinsic strength of qualitative research (Chong & Reinders, 2021).

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research can be expanded in the following ways: (a) seeking the perspectives of educators, (b) administrators, school district superintendents, and (c) government personnel involved in the policy-making guidelines. Researchers should focus on one of the areas listed above and expand the research study based on the perspectives of those participants. The viewpoints of educators, administrators, school district superintendents, and government personnel may provide insight into more significant changes and policies needed (DeSimone & Gohn, 2020).

Due to the limitation of the site and the number of participants recruited for the study, the researchers should expand recruitment to specific branches of the armed forces to gain a broader perspective of the challenges of military families. Regarding the Interstate Compact agreement of 2017, the document should be reviewed and updated yearly since changes are consistently occurring in the military. The government should ensure every state has an updated yearly copy of the agreement. The document should be routed to each state department of education. The department will then send the document to every school district.

At the state level, a video webinar or podcast should be created or shared that explains and outlines the Interstate Compact Agreement's requirements and how it affects military families. The interstate compact agreement should also be updated with specific requirements for school districts, local schools, administrators, and teachers to support military families better. The current version of the document specifies how the agreement supports DoDEA schools when military families relocate (DoDEA, 2017). However, detailed plans are also needed for military-connected schools.

The Interstate Compact could add the requirement that each school has a designated

military liaison team to support all military families. The liaison team should consist of an

administrator, a teacher, and a (Military Child Education Coalition, 2017). The Military

Interstate Compact Commission provides monthly podcasts to inform school partners how they

can improve their support to military families in the following areas: (a) relocation, (b)

separation, (c) deployment, (d) changes in family dynamics, (e) academic and intervention

support, and (f) students with disabilities (DeSimone & Gohn, 2020; Military Interstate

Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), 2018). Military families should also be informed of

the available benefits and support since many are unaware, according to the research study

results.

Implications for Leadership

There are five branches of the armed forces. Military families relocate across all

branches, and families face deployment regardless of the branch of service. Challenges arise in

the family dynamic during deployments and relocation. The negative effects involve mental

health and academic challenges, and the lack of support for students with disabilities (Briggs et

al., 2019; Nolan & Misca, 2018). However, positive change can occur because of this study. The

government and those who wrote the Interstate Compact agreement can use the information

shared to add updates that support military families whose children attend DoDEA schools and

military connect schools.

Families may gain the support needed from schools with their child's school counselor,

educators, and school administrators. Social change might occur when all stakeholders

understand the purpose of supporting military families during relocation and deployments

((Blamey et al., 2019; Briggs et al., 2019; Bush & Price, 2020). Few schools had procedures in

place to recognize pupils with military ties, making it challenging for teachers and counselors to

prepare the necessary support for these students. The benefits of the proper support can affect a

child's academic success, mental health, and stability, and it can show families that they are not

alone in their transitions (Nolan & Misca, 2018). DoDEA can form partnerships with other non-

military-affiliated schools to provide districts with training and guidance in better supporting

military families.

Conclusion

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military

service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently

provided at military-connected schools. New themes emerged from the collection of data. The

research study revealed more challenges than just the academic perspectives of military families

(Nolan & Misca, 2018; O'Neal et al., 2018; Price et al., 2019). The themes included the lack of

support for military families, the stability of one's profession and family, the scant assistance

provided to children with disabilities during moves, the necessity for increased communication

and consistency, and resilience and support (Blamey et al., 2019; Saltzman et al., 2016; Shafer et

al., 2016; Shaw, 2020). Participants believed that although military families are resilient, school

support was necessary for the continued growth and improvement of life of military families.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Letter/Email

Date: March 29, 2022

Greetings Potential Participant,

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study about the academic perspective of military families. Mrs. Valarie Espinoza is conducting this study via assigned and organized Zoom meetings hosted by the investigator. The proposed research will contribute to the existing knowledge about the experiences of military families but will focus on the physical, academic, and mental challenges. I also need the data element to determine if challenges are based on certain factors such as deployment, separation, age, time in service, etc. Current data highlights varying aspects of military relocation, deployment, and reintegration.

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. The study will also determine what academic supports were in place for military families to make the process smoother. Supports can also be related to counseling, deployment, reintegration, and separation from the military. You are being asked to participate in a research study that will add to current literature about the academic challenges that military families may have.

You may opt out any time by calling or emailing the contact on the letter. *An agreement to be contacted or a request for more information does not obligate you to participate in any study.*

Please fill out the survey below:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QC2yMGJzF0-DqSUwkntvZSe_1fZCkuhGn4U-70iltq5UMzU5RTJVVk5BU1pXTDZUQTVUNEZBOUxZSi4u

If you would like additional information about this study, please call ███████████████
███████████████████████████████████████

Thank you again for considering this research opportunity.

Sincerely,

████████████████

Appendix B

Date: January 24, 2022

Hello, █████████████████████████████████████,

My name is Valarie Espinoza, and I am a student at the American College of Education. I am in the process of researching the challenges that military families endure due to deployment, relocation, or temporary reassignments. I am seeking potential participants for this study. Potential participants will be guided to a secure Microsoft Office Form where general questions will be asked to determine eligibility. Potential Participants will have the right to decline at any point during the research. The social media site will only be used for initial recruitment. Any further communication with participants will occur individually once contact information has been shared.

I can supply further documentation if needed regarding my research. I appreciate your time, and I look forward to your response.

I can be reached at ████████████████████████████████████
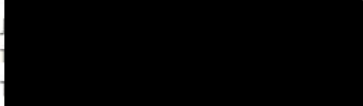
Best Regards,

████████████

Appendix C

Fort Gordon Spouse Group Site Approval

My name is Valarie Espinoza, and I am a student at the American College of Education. I am in the process of researching the challenges that military families endure due to deployment, relocation, or temporary reassignments. I am seeking potential participants for this study. Potential participants will be guided to a secure Microsoft Office Form where general questions will be asked to determine eligibility. Potential Participants will have the right to decline at any point during the research. The social media site will only be used for initial recruitment. Any further communication with participants will occur individually once contact information has been shared.

I can supply further documentation if needed regarding my research. I appreciate your time, and I look forward to your response.

I can be reached at

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Approval granted, on conditions of not spamming your info nonstop, limited to once a day, and in your post at the top include admin approved.

...

Once participants volunteer no further communication will be held via the site. I will also inform you via email once participants have been selected, so you will know when the search is complete.

Thank you again Jay.

...

Reply | Forward

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Qualitative Study on the Academic Perspectives of Military Families

The purpose of this survey to collect initial demographic information to determine if potential participants are a good fit for the study

1. How would you describe your gender

  ○ Male

  ○ Female

  ○ Gender Neutral

  ○ Prefer not to answer

2. Age

  ○ 18-29

  ○ 30-39

  ○ 40-49

  ○ 50-59

  ○ 60+

3. What is your ethnic background?

  ○ White / Caucasian

  ○ Asian - Eastern

  ○ Asian - Indian

  ○ Hispanic

  ○ African-American

  ○ Native-American

  ○ Mixed race

  ○ I prefer not to say

4. What Military Installations have you or your spouse been stationed at?

Enter your answer

5. What is your marital status?

○ Married

○ Divorced

○ Single

○ Separated

○ I prefer not to say

6. How many dependents do you have?

○ No Depedents

○ 1

○ 2-3

○ More than 4

○ I prefer not to say

7. What are the age range of your child or children?

○ 0-3 years

○ 3-6 years

○ 6-9 years

○ 9-12 years

○ 12 years or older

Submit

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Questions	Responses

Qualitative Study on the Academic Perspectives of Military Families

In-depth Interview guided by the following Research Questions: What are the military service member's perspectives about the academic challenges their children experience when there is a transition from one military installation to another?

What are the military service members' perspectives about their children's academic support?

1. What were some of the reasons that you joined the military?

Enter your answer

2. How did you choose your branch of service?

Enter your answer

3. How did you imagine military life before you joined?

Enter your answer

4. How did your perceptions change after serving?

Enter your answer

5. How did deployment and separation from family affect family relationships?

Enter your answer

6. Were there any personal challenges or professional challenge you and your family faced when moving from one installation to another?

Enter your answer

7. How did deployment and separation from family affect family relationships?

Enter your answer

8. Are there any changes you hope see occur , or supports you hope to see improved as families relocate or deploy?

Enter your answer

9. What academic support did the military provide you and you family?

Enter your answer

10. How did your child's school support you during the transition of relocation?

Enter your answer

11. What are some personal changes you had to make in order to adapt to military life?

Enter your answer

12. How did the military support your child academically during the transition of relocation?

Enter your answer

Appendix F

SME Communication

I appreciate you taking the time to look at my survey questions and interview questions to offer your insight.

Here is a brief synopsis of my research.

The purpose of the qualitative study is to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the supports provided to military families According to MCEC (2017), 1.2 million are school-age students of active-duty soldiers. Of the 1.2 million, 650,000 are affiliated with the military, but only 25,000 students attend a DoDEA school. The remainder of the students attend public or private schools across the United States. Military children are faced with challenges that affect their academic growth. Parents of children, young and older, must adjust to a lifestyle that may be full of unpredictability even though the military culture is driven by routine (Walsh et al., 2014).

The proposed research will contribute to the existing knowledge about the experiences of military families but will focus on physical, academic, and mental challenges. I am concerned about the perceived meaning and challenges that families face, but I also need the data element to determine if challenges are based on certain factors such as deployment, separation, age, time in service, etc. Current data highlights varying aspects of military relocation, deployment, and reintegration. However, there is insufficient research explaining how separation, relocation, TDY, deployment, and reintegration connect to academic challenges and the supports provided to families

This is a great topic. I'm curious to what your study reveals. Below are my thoughts and suggestions. Please let me know if you have additional questions or need clarification.

#3. Be more specific. For example, what are some of the personal changes you had to make in order to adapt to military life.

On yes/no questions, you want to include a follow up of,"If so, please describe ...

#5. Reword. How did deployment and separation from family affect family relationships?

#6. May need to be more specific. Personal? Professional? Both?

#7. May need to narrow this to a focus on education.

Add another question. How did the military support your child academically during the transition of relocation? You could even add a component pertaining to mental health.
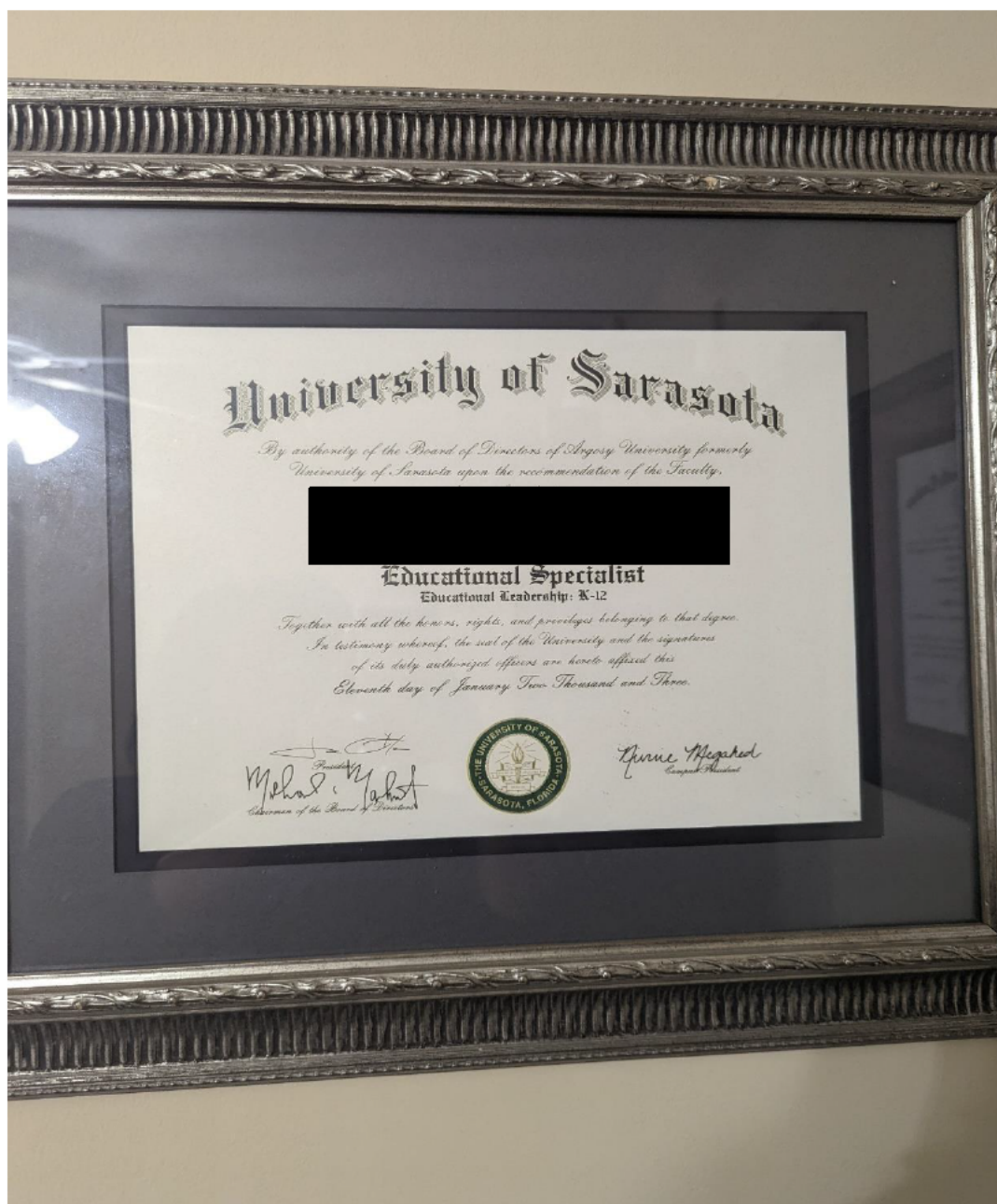
I hope this helps. Best of luck!

I appreciate you taking the time to look at my survey questions and interview questions to offer any insights.

Here is a brief synopsis of my research.

The purpose of the qualitative study is to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the supports provided to military families According to MCEC (2017), 1.2 million are school-age students of active-duty soldiers. Of the 1.2 million, 650,000 are affiliated with the military, but only 25,000 students attend a DoDEA school. The remainder of the students attend public or private schools across the United States. Military children are faced with challenges that affect their academic growth. Parents of children, young and older, must adjust to a lifestyle that may be full of unpredictability even though the military culture is driven by routine (Walsh et al., 2014).

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Sat, Dec 25, 2021, 10:59 AM

Sat, Dec 25, 2021, 11:04 AM

Your interview questions are lengthy. Shorten the questions. You may want to ask participants to explain their answers after each question. Make sure that you are framing the questions to get at the proper results based on your thesis statement.

VE

Greetings Dr. Gray,

I appreciate you taking the time to look at my survey questions and interview questions to offer your insight.

Here is a brief synopsis of my research.

The purpose of the qualitative study is to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the supports provided to military families According to MCEC (2017), 1.2 million are school-age students of active-duty soldiers. Of the 1.2 million, 650,000 are affiliated with the military, but only 25,000 students attend a DoDEA school. The remainder of the students attend public or private schools across the United States. Military children are faced with challenges that affect their academic growth. Parents of children, young and older, must adjust to a lifestyle that may be full of unpredictability even though the military culture is driven by routine (Walsh et al., 2014).
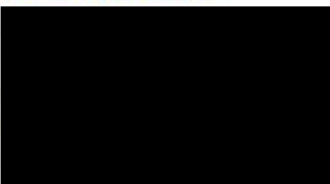
RM

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Got it. I remember this now.

PROJECT
NURTURE

VE

Please verify the attached message below is your recommendations regarding the research study interview questions. You may also add some additional information if you choose.

Your questions are interesting. I'm not sure if there are certain programs that were available for transitions. If so you might want their names. You have a typo on #5 of the questions. I would say "list the military installations where you have been stationed." It's not good to finish a sentence with at.
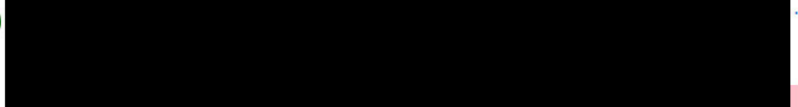
I wonder if parents can pinpoint specific deficits in skills/education. For example, we moved around a lot when I was in school. In spite of being in advanced classes, I struggled in math due to missing key concepts that were taught differently and at different times in school.

Good Luck!
K

Thanks in Advance,

...

RM

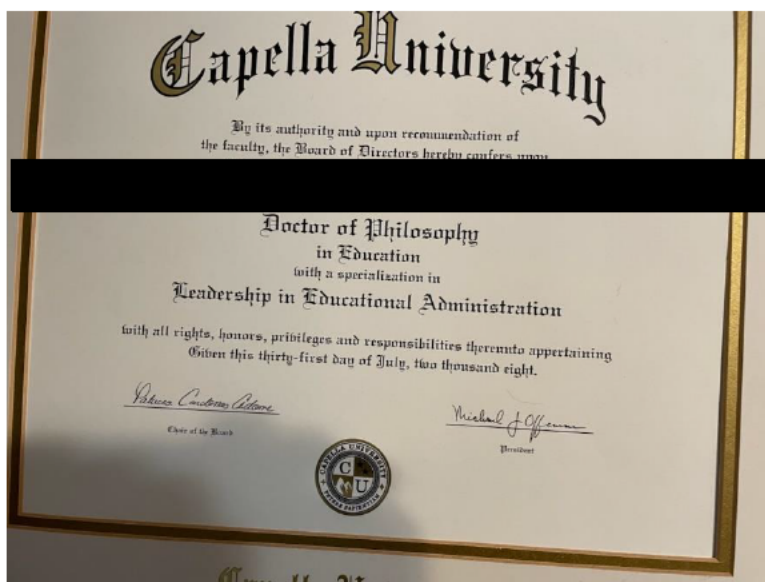This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Hi Val,
That all looks good. I thought of something else. I wonder if there is a difference between the grades that kids attend the DOD schools. For example, maybe elementary seems to cover all the basics, but what happens when they get into middle and secondary DOD classes? There might be limited exposure to some things. Just a thought.
Kim

PROJECT
NURTURE

Appendix G

Informed Consent

Prospective Research Participant: Read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Project Information Project Title: Academic Perspectives of Military Families

Researcher: Valarie Espinoza

Organization: ACE Doctoral Candidate

Email: ████████████████████████

████████████████████████████

Date of IRB Approval:

Please note that this research study has been approved by the American College of Education Institutional Review Board. The IRB approved this study on 24 March 2022. A copy of the approval letter will be provided upon request.

Researcher's Dissertation Chair: ██████████████████████████

Researcher's Committee Chair:

Organization and Position:

Email: ███████████████

Email: ███

Introduction

I am Valarie Espinoza, and I am a doctoral candidate student at American College of Education. I am doing research under the guidance and supervision of my chair, Dr. Kevin Dartt. I will give you some information about the project and invite you to be part of this research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. If you have questions, ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will explain. If you have questions later, feel free to ask me then.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of military service members regarding their children's academic challenges and the support currently provided at military-connected schools. The study will also determine what academic supports were in place for military families to make the process smoother. Supports can also be related to counseling, deployment, reintegration, and separation from the military. You are being asked to participate in a research study that will add to current literature about the academic challenges that military families may have.

Research Design and Procedures

The study will use a qualitative methodology and a basic qualitative research design. A demographic survey will be disseminated to potential participants to ensure they meet the research requirements. The study will comprise a minimum of 15 participants who will participate in interviews. The study will involve interviews conducted via zoom at a time most convenient for each participant. After the session, a debrief session will occur.

Participant selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your experience as a military service member, spouse, or veteran who can contribute much to the research seeking to be conducted, which meets the criteria for this study. Participant selection criteria are based on participants who have relocated at least once and had children enrolled in a public or private K-12 setting.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate. If you choose not to participate, there will be no punitive repercussions.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participation is voluntary. At any time, you wish to end your participation in the research study, you may do so by sending me an email explaining you are opting out of the study. There will be no repercussions for leaving the study.

Procedures

We are inviting you to participate in this research study. If you agree, you will be complete the demographical survey to ensure minimum qualifications for the survey are met.

Duration

The interview portion of the research study will require approximately 60 minutes to complete. If you are chosen to be a participant, the time allotted for the interview will be via Zoom at a time convenient for the participant. Prior to an interview, you will be asked to provide permission to have the interview recorded for the sake of having accurate transcripts for data.

Risks

The researcher will ask you to share personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take

part in the discussion if you do not wish to do so. You do not have to give any reason for not responding to any question.

Benefits

While there will be no direct financial benefit to you, the information gained in this study will benefit society by informing local school district of the academic impacts that military families endure when they transition from one military installation to another. Participation will also inform other government personnel and school districts of ways to better support military families and prepare students when they arrive at a new school or leave a new school.

Confidentiality

I will not share information about you or anything you say to anyone outside of the researcher. During the defense of the doctoral dissertation, data collected will be presented to the dissertation committee. Electronic data will be password-protected, and files will be stored on a private USB. Any information about you will be coded and will not have a direct correlation, which directly identifies you as the participant. Only I will know what your number is, and I will secure your information password protected. Federal regulations require research records to be retained for at least three years after the completion of the research (45 CFR46).

Sharing the Results

At the end of the research study, the results will be available for each participant. It is anticipated to publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Questions About the Study

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact Valarie Espinoza at ████████████████████████ This research plan has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of American College of Education. This is a committee whose role is to make sure research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to ask questions of this group, email ████████

Certificate of Consent

I have read the information about this study, or it has been read to me. I acknowledge why I have been asked to be a participant in the research study. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I certify I am at least 18 years of age. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print or Type Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES OF MILITARY FAMILIES

Print or type name of lead researcher: _____

Signature of lead researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H

IRB Approval Letter

AMERICAN COLLEGE of EDUCATION

March 24, 2022

To : Valarie Espinoza
    Kevin Dartt, Dissertation Committee Chair

From : Institutional Review Board
    American College of Education

Re: IRB Approval

"A Qualitative Study on the Academic Perspectives of Military Families"

The American College of Education IRB has reviewed your application, proposal, and any related materials. We have determined that your research provides sufficient protection of human subjects.

Your research is therefore approved to proceed. The expiration date for this IRB approval is one year from the date of review completion, March 24, 2023. If you would like to continue your research beyond this point, including data collection and/or analysis of private data, you must submit a renewal request to the IRB.

Candidates are prohibited from collecting data or interacting with participants if they are not actively enrolled in a dissertation sequence course (RES6521, RES6531, RES6541, RES6551, RES6561, RES6302) and under the supervision of their dissertation chair.

Our best to you as you continue your studies.

Sincerely,

Erin Maurer
Assistant Chair, Institutional Review Board
American College of Education